

## Northern spikers roll in South Dakota

*George Ferguson, Havre Daily News*

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If the preseason is about building a team, about getting the most preparation a team can before the start of conference play, then the Montana State University-Northern volleyball team certainly accomplished that mission.

This past weekend, the Skylights ended nonconference play by going 4-0 at the Dakota Wesleyan Tournament in Mitchell, S.D. And MSU-N head coach Bill Huebsch said things are right where they need to be heading into to Northern's Frontier Conference and home debut against UM-Western this Friday.

"It was really good," Huebsch said. "What we were able to do down there, how we played this weekend, I was very pleased. It was good for us to be able to and do what we did, and it really gives us a lot of momentum heading into conference play. I was just very pleased with the way the team performed."

On Friday, the Skylights opened the tournament with a 3-0 sweep of Valley City State. Northern won by scores of 25-19, 25-11 and 25-17. Kelsey Williams led the way with nine kills, three aces and 13 digs, while Sierra Diehl had seven kills and Nahe Keanaaina had 22 assists. Northern then swept Dakota State by scores of 25-14, 25-14 and 26-24. In that match, Williams had 12 kills and eight digs, Holly Cartwright had 25 digs and Keanaaina had 28 assists.

MSU-N kept rolling on Saturday too.

The Skylights beat Dickinson State for the third week in a row, this time by scores of 10-25, 25-13, 25-12 and 25-17. Hillary Isleifson garnered 12 kills and a block, Keanaaina had 27 assists and two aces and Cartwright had 10 digs.

"That match was important," Huebsch said. "We came out flat, we didn't play well early on. But the kids responded. You saw them clean up their mistakes and after that first set, they played really, really well. I was really pleased with how they responded to that first set."

In the finale Saturday, Northern took care of York College 3-1 by scores of 25-12, 23-25, 25-12 and 25-17. Again, in the three sets they won, the Skylights were dominant. Isleifson had a match-high 18 kills while Williams added 14. Keanaaina had 51 assists, Cartwright had 20 digs and Diehl and Victoria Polo had two blocks each.

And with a perfect weekend, the Skylights (8-4) will turn their attention to their season-opening conference matches.

"This last weekend was a good test for us," Huebsch said. "It was good that we had a long trip, that we had to wake up and play early, things like that made it a great challenge for us and that's what we wanted. And the girls responded to every one of those challenges and I'm really excited about that. As a whole we just played really well this weekend, and it was a lot of fun."

Northern will host UM-Western Friday night at 7 p.m. in the Frontier opener for both teams. The Skylights will also host Montana Tech on Saturday at 2 p.m.