

Skylights split difficult road trip

The MSUN Skylights came roaring from behind in the final 13 minutes to defeat the Rocky Mountain College Bears Saturday night in Billings. Rocky Mountain was 4-0 at home in Frontier Conference games going into the game.

The Skylights trailed 51-39 with 13 minutes left in the game before battling back to outscore Rocky Mountain 34-18 the rest of the way. MSUN shot a blistering 54% from the floor in the second half and were led by Zivile Gaizutyte with 14 points in the half and 26 in the game. Gaizutyte converted a pass from Samm Schermele with 6.3 seconds left to put the Skylights ahead for good 71-69.

The 6-2 junior from Vilnius, Lithuania also was fouled on the play. She missed the free throw but hustled after her own rebound and was fouled again with 4.2 seconds on the clock. This time, Gaizutyte calmly converted both ends of a pressure-packed one-and-one free throw situation to give the Skylights an important Frontier Conference road win. In addition to her career-high 26 points, Gaizutyte pulled down 10 rebounds.

MSUN point guard Taylor Keller added 15 points and was the Skylights' second-leading rebounder with eight. Awilda Hernandez, a 5-5 guard from Oxnard, CA, added 11 points and four steals. Casceal Swaggard, a 5-10 junior from Oakland, CA, came off the bench to score eight points and pull down five rebounds in the final 15 minutes of action. Schermele, added seven points and nine assists.

The win gives the Skylights a 12-11 overall and 3-4 Frontier Conference record.

Rocky Mountain, now 4-3 in league play, got 18 points and five rebounds from 6-4 junior post Adrienne Green while Molly Schenderline and Tana Stewart added 13 points each and Shannon Hildreth 10.

The teams battled to a 38-38 standoff on the boards. The Skylights drilled 18-21 free throws to 6-15 for Rocky Mountain.

Two nights earlier the Skylights lost to Carroll College 65-52 in Helena. The teams were tied at 28-28 at the half before Carroll pulled away thanks to a 36-24 rebounding advantage and 21 points by guard Elly Bruursema.

MSUN hit only 19-45 field goal attempts and was 2-8 from the three-points line. Carroll was 25-53 from the field.

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