UGF stymies MSU-N women
George Ferguson, Havre Daily News sports editor
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GREAT FALLS — Just three weeks ago, the Montana State University-Northern women’s basketball team thumped the UGF Argos by 16 points in a nonconference game in Havre.

However, it didn’t take long for the Argos to return the favor.

On Friday night at the McLaughlin Center in Great Falls, the Argos pounced on the short-handed Skylights, who were without senior Taylor Keller and reserve forward Stren Tramelli, 85-73, handing MSU-N a difficult Frontier Conference opening loss.

And while Northern looked so solid against the Argos last month in Havre, the way UGF played on Friday night didn’t come as a surprise to MSU-N head coach Chris Mouat.

“We saw them last week in Vegas,” Mouat said of the Argos. “We knew how well they were playing and how much confidence they were playing with coming into this game. So the way they played against us wasn’t a surprise. We were well aware of the fact they were shooting it well and that they had been playing well coming in, so there was no overlooking them by us. The simple fact is, they just played better than we did. And you have to give them credit for that.”

Indeed. When the Argos are on from the perimeter, they make life difficult on opposing defenses, and that’s exactly what they did to the Skylights in Great Falls. UGF shot 58 percent from the floor, and also had a commanding 42-25 edge on the boards, a recipe Mouat said spelled doom for his team.

“They (Argos) played well on both ends,” Mouat said. “But we also have to look at ourselves in the mirror and realize that’s not the kind of defensive effort we need to have in this league. We were out-rebounded badly, we didn’t do a good job stopping dribble penetration, we missed too many free throws and we gave up way too many second and third-chance points and those things are on us. The fact is, when you get beat on the boards like we did, and when you give up 85 points, you’re not going to win many games in this league.”

Things didn’t start out that way for Northern however.

The Skylights got off to a strong start behind former GFH star Samm Schermele, who scored 11 of her 14 first-half points in the first 10 minutes of the game. And behind Schermele, the Skylights were in command at 19-13. But the Argos quickly took that momentum away, as another Bison standout, Kezia Ford drilled a 3-pointer with 9:41 left in the first half which sparked a 22-7 Great Falls’ run. The Argos took the lad at 23-22 and never trailed again.

“Again, you have to credit UGF for the way they played and the way they shot the ball, and they also did some good things on defense,” Mouat said. “But we also struggled to put the ball in the hole and when you give up the rebounding edge like we did, and a team shoots 58 percent from the field, you have to be able to score points and we just couldn’t seem to do that during key stretches. That’s kind of been our
M/O this year, when we don’t shoot the ball well, we struggle, and that’s something we just have to go back to work on and get corrected.”

A bright sport for the Skylights was junior Laramie Schwenke’s second half. Schwenke finished the game with a team-high 21 points, and she had a dominating second half where she hit a pair of critical three’s which allowed Northern to try and mount a comeback. Schermele added 18 points in the loss, while Monica Hollowell went for 13 points and Nicole Wilk added eight. UGF got a game-high 24 points from Ford.

The loss dropped Northern’s overall record to 9-8 and the Skylights embark on a road trip to Montana Tech and UM-Western this weekend with an 0-1 start to league play.

Argos hold court

Northern is now 0-1 in Frontier play and 9-8 overall

UGF 85, Skylights 73

**MSU-N** — Monica Hollowell 2-6 7-8 13, Courtney Blume 1-3 5-9 7, Nicole Wilk 3-10 0-0 8, Jordan Bruursema 1-6 2-4 4, Valerie Gee 0-1 2-2 2, Samm Schermele 4-13 9-12 18, Kylee Denham 0-1 0-0 0, Laramie Schwenke 7-14 5-7 21. Totals 18-54 30-42 73

**UGF** — Donica Chrest 0-0 0-0 0, Shorty Ramos 1-2 2-2 4, Jamie Young 2-8 3-4 7, Marissa Skogen 3-6 6-7 12, Sarah Sciascia 6-9 3-4 16, Kezia Ford 10-13 0-2 24, Chelsea Adams 4-7 0-0 8, Aline Lino 5-6 1-2 11, Katie Wright 1-4 0-0 3. Totals 32-55 15-21 85

Halftime: UGF 41-34 3-pt FG:MSU-N: 7-21 (Hollowell 2-3, Blume 0-1, Wilk 2-7, Bruursema 0-1, Schermele 1-4, Denham 0-1, Schwenke 2-4), University of Great Falls 6-13 (Young 0-1, Skogen 0-1, Sciascia 1-3, Ford 4-5, Adams 0-2, Wright 1-1). Rebounds: MSU-N 25 (Blume 6), University of Great Falls 42 (Young 8, Ford 8, Lino 8). Fouls MSU-N 20, University of Great Falls 27. Fouled out: none. Technical: none. Assists: MSU-N 6 (Wilk 2), University of Great Falls 14 (Adams 6). Steals: MSU-N 11 (Wilk 3), University of Great Falls 3 (Sciascia 1, Ford 1, Adams 1). Blocked shots: MSU-N 2 (Blume 1, Bruursema 1), University of Great Falls 2 (Skogen 1, Sciascia 1). Turnovers: MSU-N 9, University of Great Falls 20.