Skylights aiming to get on track
George Ferguson, Havre Daily News sports editor
Friday, January 14th, 2011

The Montana State University-Northern women’s basketball team suffered a heartbreaking defeat at the University of Great Falls last Friday night.

And even before that loss, the Skylights were dealing with a host of injury problems, none of which have been resolved. So to say this weekend’s road trip to Montana Tech and UM-Western is daunting would be an understatement.

The Skylights (9-8, 0-1) visit Tech tonight in Butte, then play at Western Saturday night in Dillon.

“It’s a very tough trip for us,” MSU-N head coach Chris Mouat said. “All road games in this league are tough, but the way these two teams are playing right now, it makes it that much more of a challenge.

“But the kids are ready to go,” he added. “We put the game with UGF behind us and our kids have worked hard on our game-plans this week. Now, we just have to go on the road and execute, and see what happens against two very good teams.”

The Orediggers (12-5, 1-1) might be playing better than anybody in the Frontier right now, and they have a commanding road win over Westminster College last Thursday to prove it. Tech is a national tournament team from a year ago, and the Diggers’ appear to have gotten even better. They returned a bulk of their team from last season, including all-conference guard Tashae Higbee (13 ppg). And sophomore Brooke Pokorny has stepped up to average 13 points per game this season, giving the Diggers’ even more depth. But the addition of 6-0 junior Meghan Eisenmann, who averages 15 points and six rebounds a game has turned Tech into an instant championship contender in the Frontier Conference.

And the Orediggers don’t just have stars, they have skill and depth and they execute everything they do very well.

“If they aren’t playing the best, they are playing as well as anybody in our league right now,” Moaut said of the Diggers’. “They are loaded. They have national tournament experience and they can do a lot of different things very well. And that has added up to them playing really, really well right now. They are just playing with a swagger and a confidence right now, and that makes them very dangerous.

“We’ve managed to find ways to have success against them in the past,” he added. “But we’re a different team this year, so we’ve gone back to the drawing board to find new ways to try and have that success against them this weekend. But it’s certainly going to be a big challenge for our team.”

But the Skylights can find success, if they do a couple of things very well – defend and rebound. Northern also has to get better offensive production, as only Samm Schermele, who’s second in the Frontier at 18 points per game, is averaging in double figures. Laramie Schwenke has also come on strong this season, but as a team, the Skylights have been inconsistent shooting the ball, and on the road, they’ll need to make shots, as well as get after the glass.

Defense and rebounding will also be at a premium Saturday night in Dillon. UM-Western (4-10, 0-2) has a deceiving record, and the Bulldogs present matchup problems for the Skylights. Center Chloe Mosey (6-0) is almost impossible to guard because of her long-range shooting, and the Bulldogs added 6-3 Carroll transfer Hayley Pettit to an already big lineup. So once again, Northern will have its hands full.
“They (Bulldogs) are big, and are one of the best rebounding teams in the country,” Mouat said. “They are a nightmare on the boards. So we have to be flawless in that respect if we’re going to have a chance to win. Their record doesn’t indicate how good they are either because they’ve played a really tough schedule this year.

“We feel good about our chances in both games this weekend,” he added. “Because we know when we play like we’re capable of, we can play with and beat anybody in this league. But we’re going to have to play at a very high level both nights if we’re going to have some success this weekend.”

Tonight’s game between MSU-N and Montana Tech tips off at 5:30 p.m. in Butte. The Skylights face the Bulldogs at 5:30 p.m. Saturday night in Dillon. Both games can be heard locally on 92.5 KPQX FM.

### Frontier Conference
### Women's Standings

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**Tonight's Games**

UGF at UM-Western

MSU-Northern at Montana Tech

**Saturday's Games**

UGF at Montana Tech

MSU-Northern at UM-Western

LC State at Carroll

Westminster at Rocky Mountain