Being shorthanded isn’t easy, especially when it looks like the women’s side of the Frontier Conference is loaded yet again. But being shorthanded on the road is an even more daunting task, and winning on the road is hard enough, even at full strength.

And this weekend, the Montana State University-Northern women’s basketball team found life on the road to be difficult yet again, as the Skylights lost at Montana Tech 64-54 on Friday, then fell at UM-Western 70-59 Saturday night in Dillon.

Northern has now dropped three straight road games to start conference play, but MSU-N head coach Chris Mouat said this weekend’s losses weren’t due to effort or defense. Instead, the Skylights simply didn’t make enough shots in either game.

“I thought both nights our defense for 40 minutes was very good, and it was certainly good enough to win both games,” Mouat said. “I’m very proud of our effort and our desire, especially on the defensive end. But we just didn’t make shots or execute our offense at times when we really needed to to stay in games. We just didn’t make enough shots when they mattered and that was really the big difference this weekend against two very good teams.”

Against the Orediggers, the Skylights were in the game right down to the wire. Northern trailed by just one point at the half, and was within four points with two minutes to go. But like Mouat stated, a few missed opportunities turned a game the Skylights could’ve won, into one in which Tech was able to put away at the foul line.

“It was a tight game throughout,” Mouat said. “And we really went in there and defended a very good offensive team really well. I couldn’t have been happier with how we played on the defensive end. But credit Tech, they made some big shots down the stretch and we didn’t. And they got in front of us just enough to where we had to put them on the line at the end of the game and they made free throws. But I really liked our defensive effort in that game.”

MSU-N senior Samm Schermele continued her torrid shooting with 23 points against Tech, while Jordan Bruursema and Laramie Schwenke added nine points each in the loss.

Northern also played well on defense in Saturday’s defeat in Dillon. But like the night before in Butte, the Skylights didn’t shoot it well enough to make a late run at the bulldogs, and this time, Western’s immense size also wore the smaller Skylights down.

“We just didn’t answer them offensively,” Mouat said. “Between poor execution and not making shots, we just weren’t able to give ourselves a chance late in the game. And their size really got to us too. They are so big and they pounded us all night on the offensive boards. So between our inability to score and their ability to rebound, especially on the offensive glass, it was just too much for us to overcome.”

Schermele again led the way with 17 points in Saturday night’s loss. Schwenke scored 14 points for the Skylights and Bruursema had a second straight strong outing with 12 points.

The losses this weekend dropped MSU-N to 0-3 in league play and 9-10 overall. The Skylights are now home to take on Frontier frontrunners Carroll College (1-2, 14-5) on Friday night and Rocky Mountain College (1-2, 8-10) on Saturday.
Montana Tech 64, Skylights 54

**MSU-N** — Jordan Bruursema 2-8 5-6 9, Courtney Blume 1-4 1-2 3, Laramie Schwenke 4-11 1-3 9, Samm Schermel 6-13 10-10 23, Nicole Wilk 1-2 0-2 3, Kylee Denham 1-3 0-0 3, Valerie Gee 0-1 0-0 0, Monica Hollowell 2-6 0-0 4, Stren Tramelli 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 17-48 17-23 54.

**TECH** — Kelsey DeWit 5-8 1-2 11, Brooke Pokorny 1-4 5-6 7, Taesha Higbee 8-17 7-7 23, Tabitha Tomlinson 0-5 2-2 2, Meghan Eisenmann 1-7 0-0 2, Bryn Hasquet 3-4 1-2 9, Amanda Krieg 0-1 0-0 0, Brette Rubie 0-0 0-0 0, Brianne McClafferty 4-8 0-0 10, Erika Jenkins 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 22-55 16-19 64.


Western 70, Skylights 59

**MSU-N** — Jordan Bruursema 12, Laramie Schwenke 14, Sam Schermel 17, Nicole Wilk 4, Kylee Denham 3, Valerie Gee 6, Monica Hollowell 3. Totals: 28 11-12.


Halftime — U of M-Western 35-31. 3-pointers — MSU-Northern 8-18 (Bruursema 2, Schwenke 1, Schermel 2, Wilk 1, Kenham 1, Hollowell 1). U of M-Western 5-17 (Kerbs 1, Bignell 2, Thurman 2). Fouls — MSU-Northern 16, U of M Western 14. Fouled out — none. Technicals — none.