Westminster women take care of MSU-N
George Ferguson, Havre Daily News sports editor
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Two blowout wins at home one week, two tough road losses the next. That’s life in the Frontier Conference and that’s been the life of the Montana State University-Northern women’s basketball team the last two weeks.

The Skylights were red-hot coming into this week’s trip to nationally-ranked Frontier powers LC State and Westminster. But after the week began with a tough loss at LC State, it ended on a difficult note for the Skylights.

On Saturday night in Salt Lake City, Northern fell to 11th-ranked Westminster College, 66-53. It was the sixth straight win for the first-place Griffins and the fifth road loss of the league season for the Skylights.

Westminster took a 9-7 lead at the 11:02 mark of the first half on a Dana Bates layup. That basket gave the Griffins a lead they would never relinquish and was part of a 12-2 run. A Nicole Yazzie 3-pointer at the 3:10 mark gave Westminster its largest lead of the first half of 14 and they would carry a 36-23 advantage into the intermission.

The Griffins started slow in the second 20 minutes and when Samm Schermele hit a three at the 12:17 mark, Northern trailed just 41-37 behind a 12-2 run of their own. Westminster would get consecutive layups from Brooke Larsen and Michelle Pace to regain momentum and an eight-point lead. An 11-4 run capped by another Yazzie three would push the advantage to 17 at the 5:46 mark where Northern would never recover.

"We had cut the lead to four and had a chance to really push the game even further,” Northern head coach Chris Mouat said. "But the game really came down to just not making enough shots. Last weekend, we made shots and this weekend we didn’t. That’s the big difference.

“I thought we did some very good things defensively, especially considering how explosive Westminster is,” he added. “But we also had some key breakdowns and they (Griffins) make you pay for them and usually it’s with three’s. And that’s what happened. They made shots and we didn’t.”

Samm Schermele had a huge game for the Skylights, scoring 29 points and going 14-of-14 from the foul line. But as a team, MSU-N shot just 31 percent from the field, while the Griffins went 55 percent, Northern also made just four three’s on 18 attempts.

While the Griffins soared to a 6-1 league record and solo first place, the Skylights’ losses this week dropped them to 2-5 in league play and 11-12 overall. Northern can take solace in the fact that five of its last seven games are at home and the Skylights are getting better as the season goes on.

The Skylights currently sit tied with Great Falls and Um-Western at 2-5 in the conference, and they have both those teams at home in the next two weeks.

“There were a lot of things we did really well this weekend,” Mouat said. “We held two very good teams well under their averages and we have a lot of kids playing hard right now. We made both games very competitive where in years past, we haven’t done that on this trip. But the bottom line is, at this point, playing hard isn’t enough. We have to play hard and win games, and that’s the challenge we have in front of us, and that starts this weekend at home.”

The Skylights return home to square off against UGF Saturday night at the MSU-Northern Fieldhouse.
Westminster 66, Skylights 53

**MSU-N** — Laramie Schwenke 2, Sam Schermel 29, Jordan Bruursema 4, Nicole Wilk 5, Courtney Blume 5, Kylee Denham 2, Monica Hollowell 4, Stren Tramelli 2. Totals: 15-47 19-25.
