Bulldogs stun Skylights in Havre, again
George Ferguson, Havre Daily News sports editor
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The Montana State University-Northern women’s basketball team had been here before. A big lead, late in the game against a dangerous UM-Western team. And like before, the Bulldogs did the unthinkable yet again.

On Friday night at the MSU-Northern Fieldhouse, the Bulldogs erased a 14-point second-half deficit and beat the Skylights 72-69 in the final minute of the game.

Northern has lost similar games to Western in several seasons recently.

“It’s disappointing because we were really in control and felt like we were playing well,” MSU-N head coach Chris Mouat said. “We just didn’t close the game out the right way. You have to give them (Dawgs) credit too; they made three’s and got open shots, and they crashed the offensive boards and wore us down, but we did some things that also let them hang around. The bottom line is, we opened up a big lead on a good team and we didn’t finish. And that’s tough.”

Northern’s big lead came by way of an 11-0 run to start the second half. The Skylights were cruising, leading 59-45 with eight minutes to go. But Western slowly chipped away. The Bulldogs got big offensive rebounds time and time again, which led to second chance points and they hit big shots. Eventually, Western had reeled off a 17-2 run and led 62-61 with under four minutes to play.

From there, the game was a battle of attrition. The Skylights’ Laramie Schwenke did all she could to give Northern a chance, hitting not one, but two big 3-pointers in the final two minutes. Her last shot pulled the Skylights to within one point with :42 left, and after Hayley Pettit upped the Western lead to three points with :15 left, the Skylights had one last chance to send the game into overtime. But Northern never got a final shot off, as Samm Schermele was called for traveling just before time ran out, and Western left Havre with a huge Frontier Conference win.

“Again, we just didn’t finish down the stretch,” Mouat said. “We didn’t do some of the things you need to do to close a good team out, and that goes for me too. I got a technical foul at a time when you just can’t and that’s my fault. I made a big mistake in that juncture of the game, and that’s on me. It’s tough, because for most of the game, the kids played hard and certainly played well enough to win.”

Schwenke scored 16 points and played brilliantly to lead the Skylights. Schermele added 15 points, but struggled, going just 5-of-20 from the floor. The Bulldogs got a game-high 18 points from Pettit, and again, Western outrebounded Northern 47-24, including a host of offensive rebounds down the stretch. Courtney Blume led the Skylights with eight rebounds.