LC State women beat MSU-N
George Ferguson, Havre Daily News sports
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The Montana State University-Northern women’s basketball team suffered an emotionally devastating loss to Westminster College on Friday night. In fact, it doesn’t get any more difficult than getting beat at the buzzer.

Then the Skylights had to turn around and say goodbye to senior greats Samm Schermele and Taylor Keller before Saturday night’s regular season finale against No. 10 Lewis-Clark State. And if that wasn’t emotional enough, Northern then suffered its second straight heartbreaking loss to boot.

On Saturday night at the MSU-Northern Fieldhouse, the Skylights outplayed the Warriors for much of the game, but in the end, LC State stood tall and beat Northern 57-47, leaving the Skylights with a 4-10 finish and in seventh place overall in the final Frontier Conference standings.

“I’m proud of the kids,” Northern head coach Chris Mouat said. “I’m proud of them for becoming back tonight and fighting so hard after the way we got beat on Friday. We started tonight’s game with a lot of energy and we played very well. We played a great first half, and I’m very proud of the kids for that.

“But in the end, their (Warriors) tenacity on the boards, their size really wore us down,” he added. “That’s what they do, that’s what their known for. So rebounding and our inability to score in the second half was pretty much our undoing tonight. And a lot of credit has to go to LC because they are not just a good rebounding team, they are a great defensive team.”

As well as the Warriors played in the second half, the Skylights might have been even better in the first – on both ends of the floor. Despite being completely outsized, Northern jumped out to a quick 5-0 lead, defended well in the paint and got great post play from Courtney Blume on its way to a 25-18 halftime lead.

The Skylights continued to hold their own deep into the second half as Keller buried another three, Blume continued to be a force in the middle and Laramie Schwenke was running Northern’s offense to perfection.

But leading 38-32 with 10:15 to play, things started to come apart for the Skylights. Tasha Bishop nailed a three for the Warriors, then Madison Mendenzona banked home a 3-pointer to tie the game at 43-43 with under four minutes to go. And with Schermele hampered by foul trouble in her home finale, the Skylights were finding it tough to score down the stretch. Kenna Reiter capped off a 9-0 run with a triple, giving LC the lead for good at 46-43, as like Mouat said, the warriors just wore the Skylights out.

“It’s frustrating because we did play so well,” Mouat said. “We played well enough to win for about 36 minutes. But we didn’t do enough down the stretch to hang on, and LC state did the things they do so well to win games. So credit to them, they were great down the stretch.”

Blume scored 13 points and grabbed eight boards, although the warriors outrebounded MSU-N 38-30. Schwenke led the Skylights with 14 points and two three’s, while Keller scored 10 points in her emotional home farewell. Schermele fouled out with just five points, but received a minute-long standing ovation from the Skylight faithful, and she also moved into third in on the Northern all-time scoring list this
weekend. LC, which finished second in the Frontier, got Kirsi Voshell, while Northern did hold star scorer Jasmine Stohr to just eight points.

With the losses to Westminster and LC State this weekend, the Skylights finished the regular season with a 13-17 overall record. Northern will now turn around and travel to Lewiston, Idaho for a first-round Frontier playoff game with the Warriors on Tuesday night.