Unbeaten Skylights get back to work
MSU-Northern women travel to Great Falls for a pair of tough games
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It’s back to work for the undefeated Montana State University-Northern women’s basketball team.

Tonight and Saturday, the Skylights (5-0) will be on the road at the UGF Tournament where Northern will be up against two quality opponents. Tonight, MSU-N will take on Dakota Athletic Conference powerhouse Valley City State, then MSU-N will battle Central Baptist College on Saturday afternoon.

The Skylights are coming off an exhibition game at the University of Montana on Nov. 7. In that game, Northern played the Lady Griz tough in a 70-48 loss in which MSU-N head coach Chris Mouat said his team gained valuable experience playing one of the premier women’s basketball programs in these parts.

The game in Missoula also marked the return of senior Laramie Schwenke. The Northern point guard injured a knee in the first game of the season, but returned to score 15 points against the Lady Griz. The Skylights have been banged up throughout the early part of the season. Northern has also seen Laci Keller miss time with injuries as well as starting guard Kylee Denham. But through all of the setbacks, MSU-N has persevered, and a big reason why is the play of junior forward Jordan Bruursema. Bruursema is averaging a career-high 17 points and seven rebounds per game and she’s leading the Skylights in field goal percentage. MSU-N is also getting good contributions from true freshman Rachelle Bennett as well as freshman guard Taylor Cummings.

And the Skylights will need to be good tonight against Valley City. The Vikings are back from a trip to the NAIA Division II national tournament a year ago, and though they are off to a 2-4 start this season, several losses have come against opponents from a higher level of basketball. The Vikings are a guard-oriented team with only one player at 6-0. But they play five forwards who are 5-10 and all of their players can shoot well from the outside.

Not as much is known about Central Baptist. The Mustangs come from Conway, Ark., and play in the NCCAA. The team is quick on the perimeter and has good shooters, but the Mustangs lack size with just one player at 5-11.

Never-the-less, Mouat said his team will be tested in Great Falls with two tough games, and especially tonight against the Vikings. Northern is in the midst of an eight-game road trip, and the Skylights won’t play at home again until Dec. 8 when they take on Dickinson State University.

Tonight’s game against Valley City will tip off at 5 p.m. Northern’s game against Central Baptist tips off at 4 p.m. and both games will take place at the McLaughlin Center in Great Falls.