Skylights win tourney opener
By PATRICK DOUGLAS • November 18th, 2011

With each game they play, the MSU-Northern Skylights are enjoying the 2011-2012 season more and more.

Junior guard Nikki Tresch sank a key late 3-pointer and stole the ball moments later to help secure a 62-52 victory over Valley City (N.D.) State Friday at McLaughlin Center in the first game of the Holiday Inn Classic Tournament.

The Skylights improved to 6-0 on the season and are starting to fire on all cylinders.

"We're very young right now. This is the second game, it's really the first game since our opening game where we've had all of our players in uniform because of one thing or another," said MSU-Northern coach Chris Mouat. "We played a couple games with seven kids. We're finally just getting back healthy and that's really nice."

Both teams struggled early on with missed shots and trying to find a rhythm on offense as the game remained scoreless for the first two minutes.

Senior guard Laramie Schwenke of Malta had 11 of her game-high 15 points in the first half as MSU-Northern went to the locker room down 31-29.

When both teams returned to action, it seemed the Lady Skylights were the only ones on the floor as they scored 11 unanswered to kick start a 20-5 run.

It was just a matter of making shots, according to Mouat.

"We just executed. We had similar shots in the first half and just missed 'em. They do a really nice job. They're a really good coached team and a national tournament team for a reason," he said. "We knew we were in for it if we didn't show. They're tough but I think we tried to run what we run a little bit better, a little crisper and with a little more confidence."

Valley City rallied back going on a 10-0 run to get to within a point at 53-52.

That's when Tresch took over and hit a three, followed moments later by a steal which culminated in nine unanswered points to end the game.

"I was just not being guarded on the three and naturally coach tells me if I've got an opening to shoot it so when I wasn't being guarded I tried the shot," said Tresch, who finished with 14 points. "It felt good."

"Nikki hit a huge three down the stretch and then comes down and gets a steal. She came in as a well known 3-point shooter but she's really upped her intensity and effort and smarts on defense," said Mouat. "That was a play she thought she could get and she got it. I'm proud of her for the way she played. She's a good shooter."

MSU-Northern will take on Central Baptist College today at 4 p.m. at McLaughlin Center to close out the two-day tournament.
VALLEY CITY STATE (52)


MSU NORTHERN (62)


Halftime — Valley City 31-29. Three pointers — Valley City 5-7 (Titus 1, Jihad 1, Lehner 1, Evens 2), MSU Northern 7-12 (Schwenke 3, Tresch 2, Denham 2). Rebounds — Valley City 23 (Jihad 5), MSU Northern 20 (Schwenke 6). Assists — Valley City 6 (six with 1). MSU Northern 9 (Schwenke 4, Denham 4). Total fouls — Valley City 21, MSU Northern 13. Fouled out — Valley City (Titus). Technicals — none.