

Frontier Conference Basketball Preview 2012: Top Women's Post Players

Frontier women big in the paint once again

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And as the 2012 Frontier Conference season gets underway this week, there's no question, the Frontier is once again a post-dominated league, and scoring in the paint will be at a premium with so many talented post players going against each other, night in and night out.

The MSU-Northern Skylights have a steadily emerging post presence of their own in junior Jordan Bruursema. While she isn't as tall as many of her rivals around the league, Bruursema has been playing big for the 13-1 Skylights. In her second year of starting, Bruursema has become the heart of Northern's team in the paint, all the while still stepping out to be one of the team's best 3-point shooters. So far in 2012, Bruursema is averaging 14 points and six rebounds per game, while shooting 48 percent from beyond the arc.

Here's a look at the top forwards and centers around the rest of the Frontier Conference this season.

When talking about bigs, you have to start with Lewis-Clark State. The Warriors have been a force inside for years and a pair of seniors lead the way this season. Kirsi Voshell (6-3, Sr.) is a star in the middle for the Warriors. She's already a two-time all-conference performer and is averaging 13 points and nine rebounds per game so far this season. Voshell can also step out and shoot a long jumper making her ultra-tough to defend.

Joining Voshell is fellow senior Alyssa Fierro (6-2). She has started all four years at LC State and is a three-time all-conference star. Fierro is a top-notch shot blocker and rebounder, and is an offensive force as well, averaging nine points and a team-high 10 rebounds this season.

There's also a force in the middle at UM-Western right now in 6-2 junior Hayley Pettit. An all-conference standout a year ago, Pettit averages 15 points and a Frontier best 11 rebounds per outing this season. Pettit is also one of the top shot blockers in the Frontier Conference and is eerily similar to former MSU-Northern great Stacie Barker.

Montana Tech has a monster presence in the middle too. The Orediggers' inside game is led by 6-2 sophomore Kelsey DeWitt and 6-0 senior Danielle DeVaney from Australia. DeWitt was an all-conference performer as a freshman and is averaging 11 points and eight rebounds in her second season in Butte. DeVaney scores 10 points and brings down five rebounds per, and is another center who can shoot from long range.

Not known for having dominant centers, UGF is changing that this season with transfer Kindra Jones. Jones is a 6-3 junior who can do it all. She's averaging 11 points and 10 rebounds in her first season in Great Falls, and is an imposing shot blocker, rebounder and a great forward who can run the fast break.

In Billings, Rocky Mountain College returns a pair of standouts inside. Callie (Kautzmann) Eike is a returning all-conference standout who is averaging eight rebounds per outing. Like Bruursema at Northern, Eike plays much bigger than her listed 5-10 and is also a shooting threat. Senior Erin Cooke (6-2) is also a big presence in the middle for the Battlin' Bears, averaging 13 points and nine rebounds per game.



Montana State University-Northern's Jordan Bruursema is having a big junior season for the Skylights. And she's one of the many quality post players this year in the Frontier Conference. Bruursema and the Skylights open Frontier play this Friday night at home against UGF. For a look at the top guards in the Frontier, see Wednesday's Havre Daily News.

Carroll has a veteran and an up-and-comer making waves in Helena. The Saints return all-conference power forward Jeni Guertin (6-1, Sr.), who averages nine points and five rebounds, but 6-3 Joey O'Neil could be one to watch this season as well.

Westminster has been a guard-oriented team for years now, but the Griffins have size too. Freshman Shelby Ellsworth (5-11) is a star in the making and is already averaging 11 points and eight rebounds per outing. Junior Brooke Larson (6-0) also provides the high-octane Griffins with more size and strong rebounding in the middle.

Note: For a look at the top guards in the Frontier, see Wednesday's Havre Daily News.