Skylights head back to LC State
George Ferguson
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The Montana State University-Northern women’s basketball team has given the Lewis-Clark State Warriors all they can handle in two games this season.

On Saturday night, the Skylights will try and do it one more time – and keep their remarkable season going in the process.

Following a thrilling 67-63 win over the UM-Western Bulldogs on Wednesday night, the Skylights will make the long trek to Lewiston, Idaho for a Frontier Conference semifinal showdown with the No. 13 Warriors Saturday night at 8 p.m. M.S.T.

Northern just returned from LC State last weekend, where the Skylights (21-8) played the Warriors (26-4) right down the wire. Northern fell 53-46, but gave the warriors plenty to think about heading into tonight’s game. MSU-N is one of only four teams to beat the warriors this season as well. The Skylights knocked off LCSC 55-48 back in January in Havre. So there’s no doubt the Skylights will go into Saturday night’s game with plenty of confidence.

“They (Warriors) are pretty good at their place,” Northern head coach Chris Mouat said. “But we competed pretty well there last week. They had one big run that finished off, but for the most part it was a back and forth game. Our kids want to keep playing. So they are going to go down there and play their hardest and see what happens.”

But as confident as the Skylights are, and as well as they are playing, having won four of their last six games, including Wednesday night’s triumph over Western, Northern has never won at LC State, and the warriors are literally unbeatable at home.

LCSC also has the best player in the Frontier in 6-0 guard Jasmine Stohr, who averages 20 points and five rebounds per game. And the Skylights’ smaller lineup will once again have to contend with the twin towers of Alyssa Fierro (6-2) and Kirsi Voshell (6-3).

“They (Warriors) defend so well,” Mouat said. “So you have to be sharp offensively against them. You have to make shots because they don’t hurt themselves on the defensive end. So we’re going to have to find ways to score, and rebound the ball as well. Those things are key for us.”

However, as good as LCSC is, the Skylights are certainly playing their best basketball of the season. Senior Laramie Schwenke is winding down her career with some spectacular play, averaging 18 points, five rebounds and three assists over her last nine outings. Nikki Tresch and Kylee Denham also give MSU-N a strong scoring presence in the backcourt and Jordan Bruursema adds 13 points and seven rebounds per game.

And Northern has plenty to play for. A win on Saturday night would put MSU-N in a position to at least get a consideration for an at-large bid to the NAIA national tournament, but perhaps even more importantly, give itself a shot at the Frontier postseason title, and the league’s automatic berth to Tennessee.

“This team has accomplished a lot,” Mouat said. “To finish third behind Westminster and LC, that’s saying something. Our kids have had a great season and now they have an opportunity to keep it going and get into the championship game. They are excited for that opportunity and are looking forward to this game.”
Saturday night’s game between the Skylights and Warriors tips off at 8 p.m. M.S.T. in Lewiston, Idaho. The game can be heard locally on 92.5 KPQX FM. The winner advances to face either Westminster or Carroll College in the Frontier championship game next Tuesday night.