Skylights slip past Evergreen State

George Ferguson  
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With not a lot of game experience this season, it was unclear just how the Montana State University-Northern women’s basketball team would respond under the pressure of a tight game on the road.

On Thursday night in Olympia, Wash., Northern responded like a winner. The Skylights staved off two last-second shots and held on for a 52-50 win over Evergreen State College of the Cascade Conference.

The Skylights managed to shake off 17 first-half turnovers and a 29-21 deficit by outscoring the GeoDucks 31-21 in the second half. Northern took the lead with under four minutes to go, and though the GeoDucks tied the game at 50-50 with 2:48 to play, Nikki Tresch answered with a layup just seconds later, and that turned out to be the winning basket.

“I’m really proud of our kids,” Northern head coach Chris Mouat said. “Evergreen State is a very quick and athletic team and they really disrupted what we wanted to do in the first half. But I thought our kids really hung in there and played very hard in the second half. In games like that, you have to find ways to win and we did that tonight.”

MSU-N also got a huge lift from true freshman Kacie McKeon. The Butte Central star scored a game-high 15 points, and hit three 3-pointers, including one with under nine minutes to play, which gave the Skylights just their second lead of the half.

Both teams struggled shooting on Thursday night, with Northern coming in at a 39 percent clip. The MSU-N defense did hold the GeoDucks to just 35 percent shooting and a 2-of-13 performance from three.

Tresch scored 14 points to compliment the play of McKeon. Jordan Bruursema added eight points and seven rebounds, while Taylor Cummings chipped in with eight points and Laci Keller added seven boards.

MSU-N (4-3) remains on the road for games at New Hope Christian, tonight in Eugene, Ore., and at Willamette University Saturday night in Salem, Ore.

Skylights 52, Evergreen State 50

**MSU-N** — Jordan Bruursema 7, Laci Keller 5, Nikki Tresch 14, Kylee Denham 0, Taylor Cummings 8, Kassie Barta 0, Kacie McKeon 15, Rachelle Bennett 0, Maurisha McKissic 2, Michaela Howe-Cobb 0. Totals: 17-44 12-19 52.

**ESC** — Danielle Swain 12, Randi Boseman 8, Sammi Clark 9, Jessica Denmon 4, Jessica Edge 11, Maddie Graves 4, Brittnee Williams 2. Totals: 21-58 6-11 50.

Halftime: Evergreen 29-21. 3-pointers: MSU-N 6-17 (Bruursema 1, Tresch 2, McKeon 3), ESC (Clark 1, Denmon 1), Rebounds: MSU-N 39 (Bruursema 7, Keller 7), ESC 35 (Swain 9). Foules: MSU-N 11, ESC 17.