The Montana State University-Northern women’s basketball team wrapped up a three-game road trip with an exciting victory on Saturday night.

The Skylights opened the road trip with a close win over Evergreen State on Thursday night in Olympia, Wash., then rebounded from a Friday night loss at New Hope Christian by beating Willamette University 68-53 Saturday night in Salem, Ore.

Northern broke open a close game against the Bearcats via an 11-1 run early in the second half. The Skylights led the Bearcats 27-23 at halftime, and they shot 55 percent in the final 20 minutes to pull away from Willamette, an NCAA DIII squad.

“I thought the kids did a really good job of picking themselves up after a heartbreaking loss on Friday night,” Northern head coach Chris Mouat said. “We were tired. This was a really tough trip traveling to three different places in three nights. So I was really happy with how well we played on Saturday night.

“We shot the ball pretty well, and we got to the free-throw-line and made our free throws,” he added. “Those things make a difference. And we played well with the lead. We opened up a nice lead in the second half, and played really well down the stretch.”

Nikki Tresch scored 20 points against the Bearcats, while Jordan Bruursema added 18 points, including two 3-pointers. Rachelle Bennett gave MSU-N a big lift as well, scoring 10 points and grabbing a game-high eight rebounds. As a team, the Skylights shot an outstanding 29-of-36 from the foul line.

The win over the Bearcats followed a gut-wrenching 68-64 loss to New Hope Christian Friday night in Eugene, Ore. Against the Deacons, the Skylights had to fight uphill all night. The Deacons shot really well from the field and built a 38-32 lead after the first 20 minutes. Northern battled hard, but had to deal with foul trouble, as well as being short-handed as senior guard Kylee Denham was sidelined with an injury she suffered in Thursday’s win at Evergreen State.

“I was really proud of the way our kids fought,” Mouat said. “We had a lot of things working against us in that game and the kids battled hard. We played well in the second half, but we just didn’t quite get over the hump.”

Against the Deacons, Northern got 24 points and seven rebounds from Bruursema. She also nailed three triples, while Tresch added 22 points and two trey’s in the close loss. Kacie McKeon scored seven points and hit two three’s as well.

With the 2-1 road trip over the weekend, the Skylights improved to 5-4 on the season. Northern is home to host Walla Walla College Thursday and Saturday as part of the MSU-Northern Duck Inn Holiday Classic.

“This was three really tough games in three days,” Mouat said. “And it really took a toll on our kids. But we needed these types of games to help us continue to get better, and I’m really proud of the way our kids responded this weekend.”

New Hope 68, Skylights 64
**MSU-N** — Kassie Barta 0, Kacie McKeon 7, Nikki Tresch 22, Rachelle Bennett 0, Taylor Cummings 4, Jordan Bruursema 24, Maurisha McKissick 3, Laci Keller 4.

**NHC** — Lei Lolohea 12, Deanna Tupai 26, Chelsea Dyon 8, Ginna Lorusso 1, Emily Gonzalez 3, Dorian Perkey 10, Kyrsha witherspoon 2, Ellie Gould 6.

Halftime: New Hope Christian 38-32. 3-pointers: MSU-N 7-25 (McKeon 2, Tresch 2, Bruursema 3), NHC 3-16 (Dyon 1, Gonzalez 1, Perkey 1). Rebounds: MSU-N 38 (Bruursema 7), NHC 42 (Lolohea 8). Fouls: MSU-N 21, NHC 19.

### Skylights 67, Willamette 53

**MSU-N** — Nikki Tresch 20, Rachelle Bennett 10, Taylor Cumming 4, Jordan Bruursema 18, Laci Keller 5, Kassie Barta 2, Kacie McKeon 7, Maurisha McKissick 1, Michaela Howe-Cobb 0.

**WU** — Jojo DeLong 9, Katie Laughin 6, Jo Johnston 7, Julia Brand 2, Deana Mau 6, Katelyn Nordilen 4, Sophie Wilson 1, Alexa beeson 4, Ali Babji 5, Rebecca Josephson 9.

Halftime: Northern 27-23. 3-pointers: MSU-N 4-17 (Tresch 1, Bennett 1, Bruursema 2), WU 3-9 (DeLong 3). Rebounds: MSU-N 32 (Bennett 8), WU 34 (Johnston 8). Fouls: MSU-N 13, WU 25.