Hosting a game in the first round of the Frontier Conference playoffs is a huge asset. It’s something the Montana State University-Northern women’s basketball team has done often during head coach Chris Mouat’s tenure. But in order to make sure they would host a first-round game on Tuesday night, the Skylights had to win one more battle on the road.

And the Skylights did exactly that as they beat Dickinson State 66-59 in the Frontier’s final regular season game Saturday night in Dickinson, N.D. The win secured a fourth-place finish for the Skylights and a home playoff game with Rocky Mountain College on Tuesday night.

"With so much at stake, this win is big," Mouat said. "Give Dickinson a lot of credit. They played well, and they have been playing well for a while. We needed this one to make sure we finished fourth alone and we managed to get it done. So I’m really proud of our kids."

The Skylights trailed the Blue Hawks, who crushed UGF just two days earlier, for much of Saturday night’s game. In a high-scoring first half, Northern trailed 35-33 at intermission, and the game was close nearly the rest of the way.

However, in the final four minutes, Northern was able to grab a slim lead and not let go. And even though senior Jordan Bruursema fouled out, MSU-N made key free throws down the stretch and held on for a win which gave the Skylights a 4-4 road record in conference play.

"It was a battle," Mouat said. "They (Blue Hawks) played well and I thought we played really well. I thought we answered all of their big shots and runs with big shots of our own. We hung in there through a tough and emotional first half, and in the last four or five minutes, we finally got control of it and made some big shots and free throws to hold them off."

Laci Keller paved the way for Northern with 13 points and four rebounds, while Bruursema chipped in with 12 and Taylor Cummings scored 10. Kassie Barta also gave the Skylights 10 big points off the bench, and she, Bruursema and Cummings each knocked down two 3-pointers apiece.

Saturday night’s win helped Northern to an 8-8 finish in the Frontier and a 16-12 overall record. The Skylights will now prepare to host the Battlin’ Bears Tuesday night at 7 p.m. in the first round of the conference playoffs.

"We were picked to finish sixth and we finished fourth," Mouat said. "It’s not a conference championship but we can be proud of what we accomplished in the regular season. We’ve had a lot of ups and downs and it’s been a tough season. It always is in this league. But our kids have fought and battled, they’ve found ways to win big games on the road and they’ve grown and improved along the way. So we’re excited and proud of what we’ve done so far."
Skylights 66, Dickinson State 59

**MSU-N** — Jordan Bruursema 5-12 0-0 12, Laci Keller 4-6 5-6 13, Nikki Tresch 1-8 3-4 5, Taylor Cummings 2-3 4-4 10, Kylee Denham 2-9 2-6 6, Kassie Barta 3-7 2-2 10, Kacie McKeon 1-7 0-0 3, Rachelle Bennett 0-3 4-6 4, Maurisha McKissic 1-2 1-2 3. Totals 19-57 21-30 66.

**DSU** — Janae Moore 6-8 4-5 16, Jenna Cabello 2-7 4-4 8, Yianna Nadeau 3-6 2-2 10, Mariah Duran 2-10 6-7 11, Ashley Jelly 1-8 0-0 3, Dawne Degel 4-6 1-1 9, Lesina Manuatu 0-0 0-0 0, Jess Bygate 0-1 2-4 2, Jaylyn Klauzer 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 18-47 19-23 59.