Skylights pick up two wins in Spokane
Northern women sweep tough Cascade Conference foes
By George Ferguson
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With so many tough road games in the month of November, getting off to a good start at home was critical for the Montana State University-Northern women’s basketball team. And the Skylights did just that by winning their first two home games of the new season.

But that tough road stretch started this past weekend in Spokane, Wash., and it was going to be interesting to see just how the new-look Skylights would respond. And after two games against Cascade Conference teams, the Skylights response was stellar.

Last Friday, Northern toppled defending Cascade champion Eastern Oregon 58-55, while the Skylights took care of Corban College, 66-48 Saturday afternoon.

Playing EOU, Northern was up against a team that went 33-3 a year ago and advanced to the quarterfinals of the NAIA DII national tournament. EOU also came into Friday night’s game ranked No. 17 in NAIA DII, so MSU-N head coach Chris Mouat knew his team would have its hands full.

And the Skylights did in a game which went right down to the end. Northern took a 26-20 lead into halftime, but EOU fought the Skylights the whole way. But big 3-pointers from Kassie Barta and Taylor Cummings helped MSU-N keep its cushion, while the Skylight defense played outstanding in holding the potent Mounties to just 55 points.

"We gutted this one out," Mouat said. "Defensively, I thought we did a good job, especially in transition. EOU is fast and really potent on the break, so finding them and giving them nothing easy in transition was vital. We had a great push from our bench, and got some timely three's from Kassie Barta when they went zone. It was the first time we'd seen zone defense all year and we did struggle with it at times. We had three kids in double figures, and very good balance. Everyone that played contributed positively."

A’Jha Edwards paced Northern with 12 points and nine rebounds, while Cummings had two three's and 10 points, and Barta hit three trey's. Megan Feldman also give the Skylights a big 12 points off the bench in the win.

Northern had a full, 40-minute battle with EOU on Friday night, but things weren’t any easier against Corban Saturday. However, the Skylights jumped went on a big second-half run, again shot the ball well from the floor and never looked back in a convincing win.

Against Corban, Edwards had a double-double, with 11 points and 10 boards, while Cummings had two three’s and 10 points, and Barta hit three trey’s. Megan Feldman also give the Skylights a big 12 points off the bench in the win.

"We got off to a little bit of a slow start, but managed to open up a big lead in the second half," Mouat said. "Again, I thought we defended fairly well and did a pretty good job on the boards. A’Jha had a double-double and was a force inside, and our balance was again a huge positive for us. We played hard, took pretty good care of the ball, and got after it. It was a quick turnaround from a tough, late game on Friday. I was really impressed with our energy and effort throughout the weekend. We grew a lot as a team."

With their first two road wins of the season, the Skylights improved to 4-0, but now Northern faces two bigger road tasks. MSU-N will play the University of Wyoming Friday night in Sheridan Wyo., and then face
the famed University of Montana Lady Griz Sunday in Missoula. Both games will be exhibition games for the Skylights.

Skylights 58, Eastern Oregon 55

**MSU-N** – A’Jha Edwards 4-9 4-4 12, Taylor Cummings 4-5 0-0 10, Taybra Teeters 3-8 2-4 8, Rachelle Bennett 0-6 4-4 4, Kacie McKeon 0-6 0-0 0, Megan Feldman 6-7 0-0 12, Kassie Barta 3-6 0-1 9, Molly Kreycik 1-3 0-0 2 3, Natalee Faupel 0-1 0-0 0. Totals: 21-51 10-13 58.

Halftime: Northern 26-20. 3-pointers: MSU-N 6-16 (Cummings 2, Barta 3, Kreycik 1), EOU 5-20; Rebounds: MSU-N 38 (Edwards 9, Teeters 8), EOU 30; Fouls: MSU-N 13, EOU 17. Fouled out: None.

Skylights 66, Corban 48

**MSU-N** – A’Jha Edwards 5-8 1-7 11; Taylor Cummings 4-6 1-1 10, Rachelle Bennett 1-7 7-7 9, Kacie McKeon 3-5 0-2 8, Taybra Teeters 0-3 0-0 0, Molly Kreycik 3-6 1-3 8, Kassie Barta 2-4 0-0 6, Megan Feldman 3-5 0-0 6, Natalee Faupel 2-5 1-2 6, Jordan Powers 1-3 0-0 2, Taryn Norby 0-1 0-0 0. Totals: 24-53 11-22 66.

Halftime: Northern 30-21. 3-pointers: MSU-N 7-13 (Cummings 1, McKeon 2, Kreycik 1, Barta 2, Faupel 1), CC 6-18; Rebounds: MSU-N 40 (Edwards 10), CC 39; Fouls: 20, CC 22. Fouled out: None.