Conference play is fast approaching for both the Montana State University Northern men’s and women’s basketball teams. And with not many games left in December, the Lights and Skylights used a weekend trip to Canada as another step in the process of getting ready for the Frontier.

In four games against Augustana-Alberta in Camrose, Alberta this weekend, MSU-N went a perfect 4-0. The No. 24 Lights beat the Vikings 81-54 Friday and 71-58 Saturday afternoon. Meanwhile, the Skylights took the Vikings down 69-56 Friday night and won again, 66-48 Saturday.

Both games for the now 9-0 Skylights were battles, just as head coach Chris Mouat knew they would be.

Friday night, Northern jumped out quickly on offense, which led to a 36-22 halftime lead. The Vikings battled back in the second half, but the Skylights were able to play well while they were ahead. Junior Rachelle Bennett scored 19 points while freshman Natalee Faupel added 13 and Kassie Barta chipped in with nine off the bench. A’Jha Edwards also gave MSU-N nine points and nine boards, while Megan Feldman grabbed 11 rebounds.

MSU-N continued to play well offensively Saturday, while clamping down even more on defense. The Skylights allowed Augustana to shoot just 34 percent for the game, while also holding their own on the boards against a tall Vikings squad. Cummings led the way with 16 points, while Edwards recorded her fifth double-double of the season, scoring 12 points and grabbing 13 boards. Barta played well off the bench again, scoring 11 points and hitting two 3-pointers.

"We played hard. We didn't shoot the ball terribly well and we definitely had to adjust to some things,” Mouat said. “Augustana was a nice team with solid posts and very quick guards. A break during finals week will be good for us. We've done some good things and are looking forward to playing at home again.”

Meanwhile, the two wins the Lights picked up in Camrose over the weekend now give them a six-game winning streak.

Friday, Northern jumped to a 16-point halftime lead, and the Lights were stellar from the 3-point-line, making 10 of 23 attempts. Nicholas Blount scored 17 points and Corbin Pearson added 13 points and nine rebounds. Alfie Miller hit three trey’s and scored 11 points, while Gabe Finley gave the Lights 10 points off the bench.

Northern’s hot shooting in Canada continued Saturday afternoon. The Lights made 12 3-pointers, which was too much for the Vikings to overcome. Miller hit six bombs and scored a career-high 29 points. Jesse Vaughan and Allan Brown each added 11 points, while Anfernee Standing Rock hit two three’s and scored eight points off the bench.

"I was very proud of the guys this past weekend,” Northern head coach Shawn Huse said. "Augustana really played well, pushing us to our limits. They led us in the first quarter of play on the weekend and cut it to three late in our last game, but our kids dug deep to make some key plays to give us comfortable leads down the stretch in both games. In addition to that, we certainly faced some tough challenges considering the travel we had immediately following our Lethbridge game here on Thursday. Playing three games in 44 hours is not an easy task, especially when over 400 miles of travel and minus 40 temperatures are involved. We got a nice effort from everyone, and that is exactly what we hoped for as the semester ends and we head into Christmas break."
The two wins improved the Lights to 11-2 on the season. Northern is now off until the Lights host Northwest Indian College Dec. 27-28 in what will be the Lights final non-conference games.

The Skylights have a week off before they return to action, hosting the annual Duck Inn Holiday Classic Dec. 19-21 at the Armory Gymnasium.

**Skylights 69, Augustana 56**

MSU-N – Natalee Faupel 4-9 4-6 13, Rachelle Bennett 7-16 4-5 19, Taylor Cummings 4-11 0-0 9, Megan Feldman 2-7 2-2 6, A'Jha Edwards 2-3 5-8 9, Kassie Barta 3-12 2-2 9, Molly Kreycik 0-1 0-0 0, Taybra Teeters 2-4 0-0 4. Totals: 24-63 17-23 69.

Halftime: Northern 36-22. MSU-N: 3-pointers 4-19 (Faupel 1, Bennett 1, Cummings 1, Barta 1); Rebounds: 40 (Feldman 11, Edwards 9); Fouls 17. Fouled out: Teeters, Feldman.

**Skylights 66, Augustana 48**

MSU-N – Natalee Faupel 2-8 0-0 4, Rachelle Bennett 2-7 4-4 9, Taylor Cummings 7-11 0-0 16, Megan Feldman 2-8 4-4 8, A'Jha Edwards 6-14 0-0 12, Kassie Barta 4-6 1-3 11, Molly Kreycik 0-2 2-2 2, Jordan Powers 0-1 0-0 0, Taybra Teeters 2-4 0-0 4. Totals: 25-61 11-13 66.

Halftime: Northern 36-24. MSU-N: 3-pointers: 5-11 (Bennett 1, Cummings 2, Barta 2); Rebounds: 35 (Edwards 13); Fouls: 10. Fouled out: None.

**Lights 81, Augustana 54**

MSU-N – Roshawn West 2-4 1-2 6, Allan Brown 1-4 2-2 5, Corbin Pearson 5-9 2-4 13, Alfie Miller 4-10 0-0 11, Jesse Vaughan 4-7 0-3 8, Gabe Finley 4-5 2-4 10, Anfernee Standing Rock 2-3 0-0 5, Mike LaValley 0-4 0-0 0, Pat Jensen 2-3 0-0 4, Nicholas Blount 7-14 0-0 17, Xavier Shaw 0-2 0-0 0. Totals: 31-65 9-17 81.

Halftime: Northern 43-27; MSU-N: 3-pointers :12-26 (Pearson 1, Brown 1, Pearson 1, Miller 3, Standing Rock 1, Blount 3); Rebounds: 33 (Pearson 9); Fouls: 7; Fouled out: None.

**Lights 79, Augustana 58**

MSU-N – Roshawn West 2-6 0-0 4, Corbin Pearson 1-5 0-0 3, Alfie Miller 8-11 7-8 29, Mike LaValley 0-5 2-2 2, Jesse Vaughan 4-10 3-3 11, Nicholas Blount 2-6 0-0 5, Allan Brown 5-7 0-0 11, Gabe Finley 1-3 0-0 2, Anfernee Standing Rock 3-4 0-0 8, Pat Jensen 1-3 1-1 4, Xavier Shaw 0-2 0-0 0. Totals: 27-62 13-15 79.

Halftime: Northern 30-24; MSU-N: 3-pointers :12-26 (Pearson 1, Miller 6, Blount 1, Brown 1, Standing Rock 2, Jensen 1); Rebounds: 31 (Pearson 10); Fouls: 11; Fouled out: None.