2014 Frontier Basketball Preview: Guards
Frontier women, not just a league for the players in the paint any longer

By George Ferguson
December 26, 2013

Frontier Conference women's basketball has long been known for having dominant post players. Seemingly every team which has ever had a high level of success in the Frontier has had a dominant forward or center leading the way.

But year-after-year, the guards in the Frontier are no slouches. And the crop of guards around the Frontier this season might be one of the best gatherings of shooters, scorers and point guards the league has seen in quite some time.

That list includes a pair of Montana State University-Northern standouts. Northern has a true point guard in junior Taylor Cummings, who made a lot of progress starting a year ago. Now more experienced, Cummings' game is really taking off. She's still the floor general for the Skylights, but she is also averaging close to 10 points per game, she shoots the 3-pointer at a 39 percent clip, and is a tenacious defender. Fellow junior Rachelle Bennett is also on the rise. Bennett can play several positions on the floor, but she is definitely a dynamic guard. She's got the ability to drive to the basket but can also step back and shoot from the outside. Bennett can also post up when needed, which makes her very difficult to defend, and she's proving so this season, averaging 11 points and five rebounds per game.

Interestingly, one of the best guards in the Frontier is one of the youngest. Great Falls sophomore Erin Legel (5-5) was the Frontier's Freshman of the Year last season, and now she's making a push to be the league's MVP. Legel is scoring 21 points per game, and though she has point guard size, she's a pure scorer. Her range is unlimited, but she can also drive to the hoop, and she's an excellent 3-point shooter.

Lewis-Clark State has the same type of standout in junior Brittaney Niebergall. Standing at just 5-3, Niebergall has been an impact player from the time she stepped on the floor at LCSC. She too was a Freshman of the Year two years ago, and is already a two-time All-Conference performer. Another true point guard, Niebergall is still a deadly scorer. She averages 15 points per game, three assists and three steals per outing this season, and she shoots better than 40 percent from beyond the arc.

In the same mold is Montana Tech’s Mandy Machinal. She’s already a two-time All-Conference performer and is having a big junior season for the Orediggers. Machinal (5-7) averages 15 points per game and shoots better than 44 percent from three, but like her counterparts at UGF and LCSC, she also has the capability of being a true distributor of the ball, which makes her almost impossible to defend.
Carroll College has no shortage of quality guards, and junior Bailey Snelling (5-8) and Kailee Junkermeier (5-10) are continuing that tradition. Together, the backcourt tandem averages 23 points and seven rebounds per contest.

Rocky Mountain College has a true scoring threat in senior guard Brittney Kumm (5-4), who averages 14 points per game, while Westminster’s stellar guard play is led by junior Amy Kroemenhook (5-7), who’s a two-year starter, and is averaging 11 points per night this season.

Dickinson State is also in the act this season. The Blue Hawks are off to a strong start, and a big reason why is 5-7 sophomore TaRica Linzy. The standout guard is averaging 16 points per game, while also shooting 46 percent from three. She also is a tenacious defender, and can play several different positions on the floor.

Note: For a glance at the top men’s and women’s post players in the Frontier, see Friday’s Havre Daily News.