Montana State University-Northern women’s basketball team has been very good on the road this season. And the Skylights were again Friday night. However, that didn’t quite carry all the way over into Northern’s rivalry game with Carroll College Saturday night in Helena.

The No. 15 Skylights earned a Frontier Conference road split this weekend, beating Montana Tech 58-42 Friday night in Butte. One night later, MSU-N was upset by Carroll, 66-60 in Helena.

“A split in this league, on the road is big,” Northern head coach Chris Mouat said. “The win at Tech was a big one. We needed it. It was the way we wanted to start this road trip off. Unfortunately, we just didn’t quite play well enough to get both games.”

Northern did play plenty well enough in Butte, especially defensively. For the fifth time in league play, the Skylights held an opponent to under 50 points. Tech was efficient offensively, shooting 45 percent from the floor and 50 percent from the 3-point-line, but MSU-N’s defense suffocated the Orediggers, and really limited what they were able to accomplish on the offensive end.

Still, the game was close after the first 20 minutes as Northern led 25-21. However, a series of big shots by Rachelle Bennett, Kassie Barta and Natalee Faupel, who all made second-half three’s helped MSU-N pull away for good. By the 4:30 mark, Northern’s lead had grown to 54-37 and the game was over.

On the defensive end, MSU-N forced Tech into 15 turnovers and held star scorers Kelsey DeWit and Mandy Machinal to a combined 15 points. Together, the duo was averaging 25 points coming in. MSU-N also out-rebounded the Diggers.

“We did play very well defensively, for a full 40 minutes,” Mouat said. “Tech has a lot of firepower, but I thought our kids came in very well prepared and extremely focused and we did a nice job on them (Orediggers).

“Offensively, we didn’t make shots in the first half,” he continued. “But in the second half, Rachelle and Kassie made some big three’s and that got us going. It came down to making shots, and we did much better at that in the second half and we were able to build a nice lead. So I was very pleased.”

Offensively, Bennett hit two trey’s and scored 13 points, while Taylor Cummings added 11. Faupel, who along with Kacie McKeon, was playing in front of hometown fans, hit two triples and scored eight, while A'Jha Edwards scored nine points and grabbed 11 boards.

While Friday night's win was a big one, and Northern was again spectacular defensively, the Skylights couldn’t quite find the same formula in Saturday night’s loss to Carroll. Northern had beaten the Saints back in November, holding them to just 41 points, but Carroll’s offense found its way against the Skylight defense Saturday night.

In an unusually high-scoring first half, the Skylights led 37-36. Then, Carroll’s Kalee Junkermeier nailed two triples in the first three minutes of the second half, and for much of the last 20 minutes, the Saints led by six to seven points. Meanwhile, Northern went cold on offense. The Skylights shot just 29 percent in the second stanza, but was able to stay in the game by making 12 free throws. Northern trailed by just three points with 30 seconds left, but after a flagrant foul was called on MSU-N, the Saints were able to ice the game at the foul line.
"For the first time this season really, we just weren’t very good defensively," Mouat said. "Carroll is athletic and talented and they really hurt us on dribble penetration. They broke us down defensively and did some really good things. And they made some big shots.

"Offensively, I thought we were much too tentative," he continued. "They (Saints) did some things to keep us off balance, too. But we were too tentative the entire game and we turned the ball over too much. In the end, Carroll earned it, they played better than we did, and while I was proud of our kids for fighting hard and keeping it close, we just couldn’t get over the hump."

Edwards had a big night for MSU-N, scoring 21 points on 9-of-10 shooting, while also pulling down nine rebounds. Cummings scored 11 and Faupel added nine. Northern was just 4-of-17 from beyond the arc, while the Saints went 5-of-13.

The road split means MSU-N is now 5-2 in league play and 15-4 overall. Northern is still firmly in third place in the Frontier standings, two games ahead of a host of teams, while the Skylights are two games behind unbeaten’s Westminster and Lewis-Clark State.

Northern returns to the Armory Gymnasium to face rival Great Falls this Friday night.

*Skylights are 5-2 in the Frontier, 15-4 overall; Next Up: Vs Great Falls Friday Night*

**Skylights 58, Montana Tech 42**

**MSU-N** - Megan Feldman 1-1 3-4 5, A’Jha Edwards 4-6 0-1, Natalee Faupel 3-7 0-0 8, Rachelle Bennett 5-10 1-4 13, Taylor Cummings 4-10 2-2 11, Kassie Barta 1-3 2-2 5, Kacie McKeon 0-3 4-4 4, Taryn Norby 0-0 0-0 0, Molly Kreycik 2-2 0-0 4, Jordan Powers 0-1 0-0 0, Taybra Teeters 0-2 0-0 0. TOTALS: 20-45 12-18 58.

**TECH** - Kabri Emerson 6-7 0-0 13, Kelsey DeWit 5-9 1-2 11, Hattie Thatcher 1-2 0-0 2, Mandy Machinal 1-7 2-4 4, Shayla Mack 0-1 0-0 0, Bryn Hasquet 1-1 0-0 3, Rachel Farris 0-2 0-0 0, Martha Dembek 1-4 0-0, Sophia Baetz 0-1 0-0, Callee Remsen 3-6 0-0. TOTALS: 18-40 3-6 42.

Halftime: Northern 25-21; 3-point FG: MSUN 6-17 (Faupel 2-3, Bennett 2-4, Barta 1-3, Cummings 1-4), Tech 3-6 (Hasquet 1-1, Remsen 1-1, Emerson 1-1); Rebounds: MSUN 27 (Edwards 9), Tech 26 (Emerson 8); Assists: MSUN 9 (Feldman, Faupel, Cimmings, 2 each), Tech 12 (Remsen 3); Blocked Shots: MSUN 1 (Edwards 1), Tech 1 (DeWit1); Steals: MSUN 8 (Cummings 3), Tech 4 (DeWit and Thatcher 2 each); Total Fouls: MSUN 13, Tech 15; Fouled Out: None; Turnovers: MSUN 9, Tech 15.

**Carroll 66, Skylights 60**

**MSU-N** - Megan Feldman 0-3 2-4 2, A’Jha Edwards 9-10 3-6 21, Natalee Faupel 2-5 3-3 9, Rachelle Bennett 0-6 6-6 6, Taylor Cummings 3-4 4-4 11, Kassie Barta 0-2 0-0 0, Kacie McKeon 1-3 0-0 2, Molly Kreycik 1-4 2-2 5, Taybra Teeters 2-2 0-0 4. Team totals 18-39 20-25 60.

**CC** - Baylee Watson 0-0 3-4 3, Jordan Bagley 4-5 2-2 10, Kaley Junkermier 5-10 3-7 16, Bailey Snelling 3-12 7-10 13, Katie Estey 1-3 2-2 4, Mikala Osborne 0-0 0-0 0, Jordan Pfau 2-3 2-2 8, Alison Sullivan 1-2 0-0 2, Kayvonne Vaver 0-0 0-0 0, Jordan Johnston 3-8 0-0 6, Kaye Bignell 2-2 0-0 4. Team 21-45 19-27 66.

Halftime - MSU-N 37, CC 36. 3-pointers - MSU-N 4-17 (Feldman 0-1, Faupel 2-5, Bennett 0-5, Cummings 1-1, Barta 0-2, McKeon 0-1, Kreycik 1-2); CC 5-13 (Junkermier 3-5, Snelling 0-4, Estey 0-1, Pfau 2-3). Rebounds - MSU-N 27 (Edwards 9); CC 18 (Pfau 5). Assists - MSU-N 12 (Bennett 3); CC 12 (Snelling 3). Personal fouls - MSU-N 22, CC 22. Fouled out - Bagley.