There were five NBA scouts in the stands Wednesday when Northern Illinois hosted Akron in men's basketball at the Convocation Center in DeKalb. They were there to see No. 13 in white, and they definitely got an eyeful.

Shooting guard Xavier Silas, standing 6-foot-5, has the size, quickness and ball-handling ability to play at the next level – but it is his ability to shoot the basketball that makes him stand out as one of the most NBA-ready players in the country. And in the Huskies 83-74 win over the Zips, his deadly touch from everywhere on the floor was on full display.

Silas, son of former ABA and NBA all-star James Silas, lit Akron up for 39 points (one off his career high) by knocking down 9-of-17 from the floor, including 5-of-9 from 3-point range and 16-of-20 from the free-throw line. He also grabbed eight rebounds as NIU improved to 7-11 overall and leveled its Mid-American Conference record at 3-3.

It has been a breakout season for Silas, who currently sits third in the nation in points per game at 24.4 (behind BYU's Jimmer Fredette at 26.7 and UConn's Kemba Walker at 25.0). He has scored 25 points or more in a game nine times, including a career-high 40 at Illinois-Chicago. He also has games of 39, 34 (three times) and 31.

He leads the MAC in scoring with that 24.4 average, and also is listed among the leaders in these categories: field goal percentage (10th at 48.6), free throw percentage (2nd at 85.8), 3-point percentage (3rd at 44.6) and total 3-pointers (5th with 41).

Silas came to Northern Illinois as a transfer from Colorado. He sat out the 2008-09 season, but made an immediate impact when he was able to suit up for the Huskies last season. He led NIU in scoring at 19.7 points per game and also grabbed 5.3 rebounds per game, hit 52 3-pointers and shot 81.1% from the charity stripe. He was good enough to declare for the NBA Draft, but changed his mind after learning that a solid senior season might improve his draft stock enough to put him in the first round. He also, after talking to some friends, was not sure he was ready.

“I know winning has a lot to do with it,” Silas told Scott Powers from ESPN-Chicago. “If I can’t help Northern Illinois win, how am I going to help the Knicks win or the Lakers win?”

He had another reason to return…his education. A communication studies major, Silas was Honorable Mention All-MAC last season and carries a 3.353 grade point average.