

Tiger’s back, but he’s showing a bit of rust

SAN DIEGO (AP) - The gallery crammed around the first tee and stood elbow-to-elbow on a clubhouse balcony to get a glimpse of Tiger Woods, playing in his first tournament Thursday since knee surgery two months ago.

It took awhile to see the kind of play they were expecting. Woods hit only two fairways on the front nine -leading to his only two birdies - and was 1 under par through nine holes at the Buick Invitational when the first round, already delayed by fog, was suspended by rain.

Aaron Oberholser was at 6 under par through 16 holes, although none of the 156 players completed the round.

Woods had to wait two months to return to competition, then another four hours as a soupy fog covered Torrey Pines and made it impossible to see the green on a couple of par 3s along the Pacific Ocean.

With his tee time minutes away, Woods’ entourage made its way along a path to the first tee on the North Course, but Woods was not part of the group. He ducked into the gallery and walked virtually unnoticed.

“I needed some space,” he joked.

He found plenty of that once his round started. No sooner was his tee shot in the air that he extended his right arm and yelled, “Fore!” as his ball sailed into the trees. He failed to birdie the par-5 opening hole when he flubbed a chip.

Woods didn’t appear to have any problem with his left knee, even crouching for a long time to study the line of his putts.

If there was threat of injury, it

could have come from his rotator cuff, considering how often as he changed clothes - from a rain vest on the practice range in a drizzle, to a sweater, back to the vest, then to his shirt, and back to the vest when it rained at the end.

There was clearly some rust in his game - not to mention frustration.

Woods missed the second fairway to the left, flew the green on the par-3 third hole, then missed the fairway to the right on No. 4. His approach from thick grass was in trouble as soon as it left his club.

“Darn it! Bite! Bite!” he screamed.

Instead, the ball went into the gallery, some 30 feet beyond the hole.

His chip barely made it to the green, and Woods angrily tossed his wedge at the bag before the ball stopped rolling. He made bogey to go 1 over par, then slowly got back into form.

Woods hit his first fairway at No. 5, and a punch shot into 15 feet set up his first birdie. Two holes later, however, another drive sailed into the thick grass and Woods turned toward the Pacific and cursed again.

That was the last of the damage - no more bogeys the rest of the round. He spun back an approach to 6 feet for birdie on No. 8 to get to 1 under, but wasted another chance on a par 5 when his drive at No. 9 was in grass so deep he could barely see the ball.

His knee should get a real test Friday.

Woods will have to finish his nine holes in the morning, then play his second round on the tougher South Course.

Knight gets his own day

LUBBOCK, Texas (AP) — The honors just keep coming in for Texas Tech coach Bob Knight.

Lubbock Mayor Marc McDougal plans a news conference Friday to announce Coach Bob Knight Day in Lubbock on Saturday when the Red Raiders face Oklahoma at United Spirit Arena.

The special proclamation by

McDougal commemorates Knight’s 800th career win Feb. 5 when the Red Raiders beat Nebraska 74-49.

During his career, Knight’s Indiana teams won three national championships.

Knight, 62, also coached the U.S. Olympic team to a gold medal in 1984.

Trojans take on #3 Barton County Saturday

By DARREL PATTILLO
Colby Free Press

The Colby Community College Trojan men’s basketball team is facing its biggest test of the season Saturday night at the Colby Community Building.

Barton County, the #3 team in the country, is bringing a 10-game conference win streak to Colby where the Trojans have a 6-game conference win streak of their own.

All-time, Colby has just three wins against the Cougars, but the Trojans have beaten Barton County the last two times the Cougars were here.

“This will be great game for the fans,” Trojan head coach Brian Ostermann said. “And it’s a great challenge for the team, playing a nationally-ranked team like Barton County.”

Colby leads the Jayhawk Conference in three categories: rebounding margin (+14.0), offensive rebounds (16.4), and blocked shots (7.5).

Barton County is second in blocked shots (5.7).

The Trojans picked up a huge win Wednesday night, beating Seward County 89-78 at the Community Building. Seward is in second place in the Jayhawk West; Barton County is first.

The Trojans have tied the 1977-78 Trojans at 21-5 for the third-best team record ever. Only the 1992-93 team (23-10) and the 1984-85 Trojans (28-5) have done better.

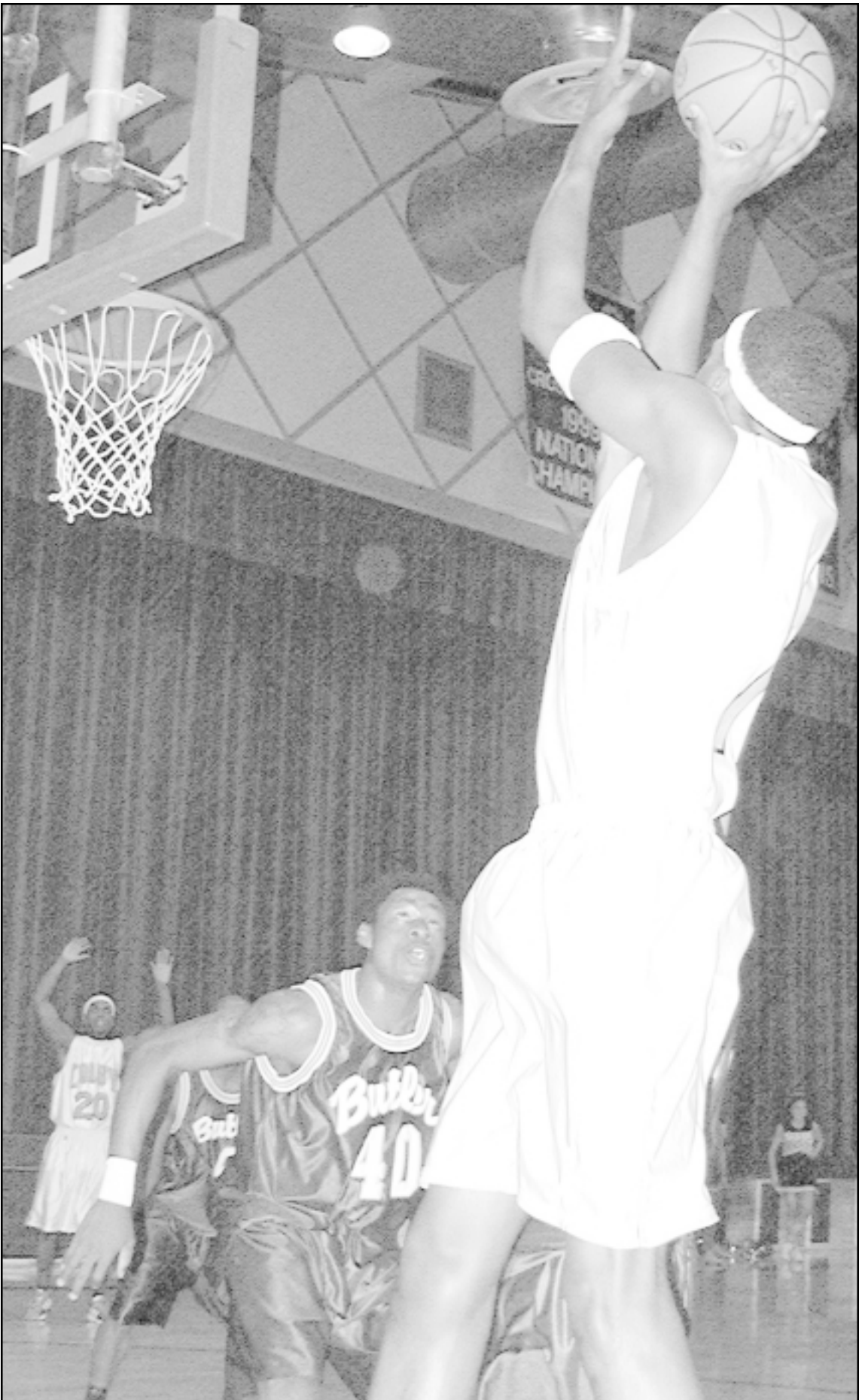
“We’re playing very well right now,” Ostermann said. “We’re playing with some confidence defensively, but we’re still alittle spury, in that we have yet to put together a full 40-minute game.

“It’s definitely the time of year when you want to be playing well.”

Probable starters for the game will be: Branden Miller, 5’10”, guard; Eric Fowlkes, 6’4”, guard; EJ Drayton, 6’9, forward; Dedric Spooner, 6’8”, forward; and Justin Williams, 6’9”, center, for the Trojans.

For the Barton County Cougars: Randy Pulley, 6’3”, guard; Justin Rose, 6’1”, guard; Rodney Epperson, 6’8”, forward; Nouha Diakite, 6’10”, forward, or Mauricio Branwell, 6’9” forward; Robert Whaley, 6’10”, center. Whaley was the NJCAA Player of the Year in 2002 and is a projected first-round pick after he finishes his college career at Cincinnati.

Game time Saturday is set for 8 p.m. at the Community Building.



DARREL PATTILLO/Colby Free Press

The Colby Trojans will need plenty of inside help Saturday against the Barton County Cougars, who may have two 6’10” players on the floor at the same time. ABOVE: Justin Williams scored against Butler County earlier this season. Williams, a freshman, is the team leader in rebounds and blocked shots.



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