



JOHN VAN NOSTRAND/Colby Free Press

Colby's Aubrette Stephens, left, looked for an open teammate during Colby's 6-53 double-overtime win over Columbus Thursday in the first round of the state 4A basketball tournament in Salina. Colby plays Tonganoxie at 6:30 p.m. today in the semifinals.

Colby's free throws finally fall in double-overtime win

By John Van Nostrand
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What may have been the death of Colby ended up being the life saver.

Made free throws in the second overtime helped Colby girls beat the Columbus Titans 63-53 Thursday in the first-round of the 4A state high school basketball tournament in Salina.

Colby missed nine free throws in the fourth quarter.

"Free throws killed us and free throws saved us," said Colby coach Derek Bissitt.

With the win, Colby plays Tonganoxie in the semifinal round 6:30 p.m. today at the Bicentennial Center in Salina.

Tasha Wagoner's two free throws with 2:46 left in the second overtime gave Colby a 55-51 lead. That started to separate the score. With 1:16 left, Wagoner was back at the line to give Colby a 59-51 lead. Wagoner led Colby with 19 points.

But it was more than free throws that had to go in the hoop. Both teams relied on single plays to continue their chance to win.

"It was a gut wrencher," Bissitt said.

Tied at 40 with about two minutes left in regulation, Colby's intentionally stalled the offense to wait for a last second shot. But that strategy backfired as Columbus came up with a steal and scored to lead 42-40 with 23 seconds left. Colby quickly answered as Lissa Mazanec scored an inside shot with 11 seconds left.

Colby's Aubrette Stephens'

three-point shot with 20 seconds left in the first overtime tied the score at 48. It was her only three-point shot and points in the game.

Bissitt said moments like that, and the game, showed what Colby is all about.

"This game shows a lot of what this team is about, character, resilience," he said. "The cream rises to the top at the end."

Columbus led 13-9 at the end of the first quarter thanks to a slow-paced, ball-control offense. Colby had multiple possessions where they only got one shot off and missed the rebound.

"We had the deer-in-the-headlights in the first half. We were timid," Bissitt said.

Columbus held that lead in the second quarter and led 20-17 at halftime. Columbus was led by Kayla Derusse with 20 points and seven rebounds. Center Kayla Holding scored 18 and Maddy Overman added 10.

Derusse and Overman were instrumental in trimming Colby's 39-32 lead with 4:45 left in regulation. Overman's three-point shot tied the game at 40 with 2:45 left.

"The one that killed us was 32 (Derusse)," Bissitt said. "She is going to take the ball to the hole."

Holding fouled out of the game with 10 seconds into the second overtime.

"It was different with Holding out," Bissitt said.

Holding on the bench complemented what Bissitt said about the Colby girls' character as the game progressed.

"We got ticked off in overtime," he said. "Sometimes you have to play a little upset."

Mazanec scored 14 points for Colby and freshman April Gee scored 12 points. Colby was 24-43 from the free throw line compared to Columbus' 2-6. Each team had 36 rebounds. Colby's defense forced 24 turnovers and had 10 of their own.

Fourth-seed Colby will meet top-seeded Tonganoxie (23-1). Tonganoxie defeated eighth-seed Abilene 45-36 Thursday in the first round. If Colby wins today, they will play in the championship game 4 p.m. Saturday.

On the other side of the bracket, seventh-seed Augusta defeated second-seed Holton 60-48. Andover-Central (2) defeated Paola (6) 70-64. Augusta and Andover-Central play at 3 p.m. today.

If Colby loses today they will play in the third-place game at noon Saturday.

Scores

Results of state tournament games Thursday:

Quarterfinals
Class 4A
Andover Central 70, Paola 64
Augusta 60, Holton 48
Colby 63, Columbus 53, OT
Tonganoxie 45, Abilene 36

Class 2A
Cimarron 51, Colgan 39
Minneapolis 38, Berean Academy 31
Oakley 59, Lyndon 48
Osborne 61, St. John 57

Colby Trojans share wins with Cloud County

The Colby Community College baseball team split a doubleheader at Cloud County on Wednesday winning the first game 1-0 and losing the second game 3-1.

Mike Schmitt and Steve Blankenship combined for the shut-out in the game one victory, blanking Cloud County and allowing only two hits.

Schmitt started the game and picked up the win, going six innings and striking out seven. Blankenship earned the save, pitching a scoreless seventh inning. Marshall McDonald drove in the game's lone run with a single that scored Jason Chatwood.

The second game also turned out to be a pitcher's duel as the Trojans only had four hits, and Cloud County managed only two hits.

Steve Hogue got the loss for the Trojans despite allowing one hit. Hogue walked six batters in five innings and allowed three runs, two earned. Aaron Dunsmore was 2-4 for the Trojans and Marshall McDonald and Chris Gordon each had one hit.

The Trojans are 7-5.



GOLDEN PLAINS SCHOOL PHOTO

Golden Plain's Kendra Spresser tried to stop the Randolph-Blue Valley player during Golden Plains' 48-44 loss Wednesday in the first round of the 1A state tournament in Hays.