



JOEY FALKOFF/Colby Free Press

Senior Lady Eagle Lissa Mazanec flew through the air for a kill during the team's last home regular season match against Quinter. Mazanec will look to do more of the same when the #1 seeded Lady Eagles begin sub-state action 1 p.m. Saturday against #8 seed Russell. The winner of Colby's sub-state advances to the 4A State Volleyball Tournament Oct.26-27 in Salina.

Eagle volleyball team faces pressure to continue magical year this weekend

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No matter what hurdle or obstacle was thrown in their way this season, the Colby Lady Eagle volleyball team has been able to handle it in stride.

No one gave the Eagles much respect before the year started, but three weeks into the season they had a 10-1 record and were ranked second in the state in 4A.

The Lady Eagles dropped out of the polls after losing to 1A #1 ranked Wheatland/Grinnell, but bounced back to beat the Thunderhawks a week later in Oakley and then a week after that in Scott City.

They hadn't had much success against either Oberlin, Oakley or Atwood in recent years, but went 9-0 against those teams this year.

The Eagles hadn't won the Northwest Kansas League championship in over a decade, but won five straight matches Saturday in St. Francis to bring the league title back to Colby.

To this point, it's been a nearly picture-perfect year for the Lady Eagles (31-5), who are now ranked fourth in the state.

But all the accomplishments and success the Lady Eagles have had throughout the regular season could go to waste should the Eagles not win the Colby Sub-State tournament Saturday at Colby High School and advance to their fourth consecutive state tournament in Salina.

"The girls think it would be so disappointing to lose at home," said Lady Eagle head coach Lesley Wagoner. "We don't even want to think about it. We just know we can't overlook anyone."

The Lady Eagles are seeded first in the eight team tournament and begin play 1 p.m. Saturday against the #8 seed Russell.

It's the first time since 2003 Colby has hosted a volleyball sub-state and

they are excited at the opportunity to play extra matches at home.

"Any time you get another home match it's really exciting," said Wagoner. "Especially because we only played two home matches all year, it's good to play here again. Hosting in the post-season is cool for the fans and the players."

"It's all very exciting this year since we were seeded #1," said Lady Eagle senior Leah Cox. "We all have the drive and desire to leave a legacy by getting back to state this year."

The Lady Eagles have to win three straight matches to capture the sub-state title and although they come into play riding a seven match winning streak, the Ladies struggled mightily at times Saturday at the league tournament.

It's been an intense week of practice for the girls, who will need to be sharp in all facets of the game this weekend.

"Saturday was a matter of we knew we could beat everyone we faced and we finished it off when we had to," said Wagoner. "We've tried to regain our momentum this week. We're working on things we've overlooked and hopefully we'll have it straightened out."

"I think we let up too soon at league," said Cox. "We should have been pushing the whole time. As far as improving skills and working on little things, it's been a very detailed week."

Specifically, Wagoner says she's been working on getting her hitters to put the ball away better and her setters getting their passes closer to the net. A head coach, though, can only do so much and Wagoner knows that as well as anyone.

"You can have the greatest coaching, but it comes down to them doing it," said Wagoner. "They've worked hard, but they have to put it all together."

Should the Lady Eagles defeat the Russell Broncos, they would advance to the semifinals and take

on the winner of Smoky Valley/Pratt at 5 p.m.

The Lady Eagles haven't played either team this year, and neither enters with a winning record, but the Eagles know you can throw the records out when facing teams from other parts of the state.

"Records don't mean much with teams from the eastern side of the state," said Wagoner. "Schools like Nickerson (the #3 seed in the field) and Smoky Valley played against a lot of great competition this year."

"I don't know a whole lot about the teams in our pool, but we can expect different levels of competition facing eastern Kansas schools," said Cox.

On the other side of the bracket the aforementioned Nickerson Panthers will take on #6 seed Hugoton in the first round. Ulysses, the #2 seed, will match up with #7 seed Goodland.

The Lady Eagles beat Ulysses earlier this year in Liberty, but Wagoner knows her girls can't depend on that should they face off Saturday.

"Ulysses didn't play well against us when we played them earlier, but they're playing better and they should be contenders this weekend," said Wagoner.

It's been a dream season for the Lady Eagles, but all of the success they've had this year means little beginning Saturday.

It's a feast or famine weekend for every volleyball team that is still alive in the state of Kansas and the Lady Eagles aren't shying away from the pressure that's on their backs at sub-state.

"We're pretty confident," said Cox. "Our team has the talent to pull together and come out on top."

"This is do or die. You either move on or your season's over," said Wagoner.

"Today will either be our last practice or the first practice of state championship week. It's exciting."

Red Sox take game five to stay alive

CLEVELAND (AP) — Back to Boston they go. Just the Red Sox being the Red Sox.

Josh Beckett, blocking out everything but Jason Varitek's target, dominated the Cleveland Indians for the second time and Manny Ramirez drove in the go-ahead run with a 390-foot single as the Red Sox stayed alive in the AL championship series with a 7-1 win Thursday night in Game 5.

Kevin Youkilis set the tone with a first-inning homer off C.C. Sabathia. The Red Sox, trailing 3-2, sent the best-of-seven series back to Fenway Park to continue a season that was on the brink of being canned for the cold New England winter.

The Red Sox — and Beckett — have done this before. And clearly, Ramirez & Co. cared.

"We weren't trying to win three games in one night," Youkilis said.

"We were just going out there to play the game, go out there and fight and do whatever we had to do to win."

In 2004, Boston rallied from an 0-3 deficit to win the 2004 ALCS against the New York Yankees and went on to sweep the St. Louis Cardinals in four straight for its first World Series title since 1918.

The Red Sox forced Game 6 on Saturday night, and will start one of October's brightest stars, Curt Schilling, who has a 9-3 record in 17 career postseason starts, against Fausto Carmona.

Beckett, the calm, cool and cocky 20-game winner, ignored a shrilling crowd, some chirping from Indians outfielder Kenny Lofton and even the appearance of an old girlfriend to deny Cleveland fans a chance to see their first pennant-clinching win at home.

"Josh is unbelievable," Youkilis

said. "This year has been unbelievable for him and we hope he wins the Cy Young. He's shown here in the playoffs why he should."

In the late innings, drummer John Adams, whose tom-tom beat has pulsed through a special season at Jacobs Field, slumped against his instrument as the Red Sox tacked on runs.

Meanwhile, in the Boston bullpen, two relievers used water bottles to playfully bang on backup catcher Doug Mirabelli's shinguards.

The 27-year-old Beckett, who beat Cleveland in the opener, once again came through with the stakes at their highest.

The right-hander allowed only a run in the first, and five total hits in eight innings. He struck out 11, walked one and was around the plate with almost every one of his 109 pitches.

Eagle seventh grade football wins

The Colby Middle School seventh grade Eagles football team got back on the winning track Oct. 1, when they defeated the Burlington Cougars by the score of 26-0.

The Eagles offense started the scoring the first quarter on a 62-yard run by tailback Wiatt Binder.

The second quarter was all Eagles as they had two touchdown runs by quarterback Todd Kane on a 1-yard run with Binder running in the two-point conversion and fullback Beau Brown scored on a 6 yard run to put the Eagles ahead at half-time 20-0.

After a scoreless third quarter, Brown scored his second touchdown of the game also on a 6-yard run.

Coach John Miles said, "The team was happy to get another win. Our offensive line did a better job of blocking against the Cougars. The offensive line consist of Brandon Gaede, Dustin Burleigh, Ben Guida, Troy Quenzer, Zell Bieberle, and Baker Bugbee.

Miles was also pleased with Trek Keck with his first start at defensive end. The team was also pleased with their performance against strictly seventh graders. We play a seven game schedule and only three

games against their own grade level. The other four games are against combined seventh and eighth grade teams."

Other Eagles with good defensive games were Macen Shull, Dustin Reed and Kurt Sloan.

On Sep. 27, the Colby Middle School seventh grade football team lost to Scott City Blue Jays by the score of 32-7.

Coach John Miles said, "Our offense won the toss and preceded to drive down the field and scored on our first possession with Wiatt Binder on a 6-yard run.

Wiatt also kicked extra point to take an early 7-0 lead. We played fairly even with the Blue Jays the rest of the game but gave up some big plays and made some mental mistakes that we need to correct.

The Blue Jays were probably one of the best teams we had faced this year. They were undefeated coming into the game and we gave them our best effort.

Wiatt's kick of the extra point was only the second time since I've been head coach that it has happened. The first time was by this year's seniors at Burlington, Co with Todd Ziegelmeier snapping the ball and

Mikel Ladenburger doing the place kicking. The seventh grade have been practicing this and have been doing a good job."

The Eagles did record one turnover as Kurt Sloan recovered a fumble. Other Eagles with good defensive games were Beau Brown, Devin Langdon, Dustin Reed, Todd Kane and Macen Shull.

On Sep.24, the Colby Middle School seventh grade football team lost to the combined seventh and eighth grade Rawlins County Middle School by the score of 22-0.

Rawlins County used balanced scoring the first, third, and fourth quarters to defeat the young Eagles.

Coach John Miles said, "Since our eighth grade team played Rawlins County earlier in the season, they started their seventh grade backfield against us and used their eight grade players on the line. We had a difficult time handling their size and strength. The seventh grade must learn to go against players that are bigger and stronger."

The defense was led by Wiatt Binder, Troy Quenzer, Trek Keck, Dustin Reed, Kurt Sloan and Baker Bugbee.

Colby Class 4A Sub-State Volleyball Tournament

1 Colby (31-5)

Match #1 1 p.m.

8 Russell (3-31)

4 Smoky Valley (18-18)

Match #2 2 p.m.

5 Pratt (15-19)

2 Ulysses (20-14)

Match #3 3 p.m.

7 Goodland (4-29)

3 Nickerson (19-14)

Match #4 4 p.m.

6 Hugoton (13-18)

Match #5 5 p.m.

Match #6 6 p.m.

Match #7 7 p.m.

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