



Eagles dust off cobwebs to beat Holcomb

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For nearly three-and-a-half quarters of basketball, the Colby Eagles looked like a team that hadn't played together in two weeks.

Once it got down to crunch time, the Eagles reminded fans why they were off to a 5-2 start and ranked eighth in class 4A.

Trailing 3A #8 ranked Holcomb 41-40 with 6:08 to play, the Eagles scored 27 points and made 17-18 free throws at the end to hold off a game Longhorn team 67-57 Friday at the community building.

Two big three's from Ethan Stover and Cade Carter, two baskets inside from Stephen Dinkel and 17 free throws from five different players were the ingredients for Colby's fourth quarter explosion that allowed them to improve their record to 6-2.

"To beat a ranked team in 3A, this is definitely a quality win for us," said Eagle head basketball coach Beau Sheets. "It wasn't just one guy that stepped up for us at the end and that's what I like to see."

This was the first game for the Eagles since their Dec. 21 loss at Hays 79-74. It showed in the first half where the Eagles shot 33.3 percent and committed 10 turnovers.

"It's good to get a win right after the break," said Dinkel, who finished with a season-high 15 points, including 10 in the final five minutes.

"You could obviously tell we were pretty rusty in the first half."

That rust was also evident at the free throw line where the Eagles were just 8-15 in the first two quarters.

It continued into the second half where they made only one of their first six, including missing two one-and-one's early in the fourth quarter. But when it counted most, the Eagles were nearly automatic.

"Free throws are a goofy thing sometimes," said Eagle head basketball coach Beau Sheets. "Sometimes they can go down easy and other times it's a struggle. It was a tale of two halves for us, but we shot 'em well at the end."

Much to the chagrin of Holcomb head basketball Scott Stegman, the Eagles were given plenty of opportunities to get out of their early funk.

Holcomb was whistled for 33 fouls, leading to 39 Eagle free throw attempts compared to only 19 for his Longhorn team. In the fourth quarter alone, the Eagles shot 24



Colby Eagle junior guard Stephen Dinkel, left, battled for a loose ball with Holcomb's Nathan Roth during the first half of the Eagles 67-57 win over the Longhorns Friday at the community building.

free throws. "I don't like to talk about the referees, but we just couldn't get any breaks," said Stegman. "It's hard to beat a team that shoots 39 free throws."

Holcomb had three players foul out, including their two top post players Leroy Tafoya and Bryan O'Rourke who each finished with eight points.

"Sure it wears you down when you have three kids sitting on the bench," said Stegman. "Bryan's had a double-double for us every game. He only had eight points tonight and he couldn't get in the flow."

Instead, the Longhorns had to settle for perimeter jumpers, which didn't work so well either.

Holcomb shot only 36.4 percent and 23.1 percent from behind the three-point line. Their top guard Jordan Wilcox finished with 22 points, but was just 7-23 from the field.

"It wasn't just Jordan, none of us could get things going," said Stegman.

Despite the foul trouble and their shooting woes, Holcomb led with less than six minutes to go and had the game tied at 43-43 with 5:13 to play. But only 31 seconds later the Longhorns were trailing by five.

After two free throws from Levi Schlick made it 45-43, Mitchell Gaede missed a three-pointer for the Longhorns which led to an open three-pointer for Cade Carter in transition.

"We weren't patient enough," said Stegman whose team fell to 5-2

with the loss. "We were a little too aggressive and it hurt us."

The lead grew to 51-43 for the Eagles after a tough bucket in traffic by Dinkel with 3:28 left.

Holcomb got within five at 55-50 a minute later, but another strong finish by Dinkel on a backdoor cut pushed the lead back to seven with 2:10 left.

"It made it easier with all the cutting for me to get inside," said Dinkel.

The Longhorns would get no closer, thanks in large part to Dinkel who made four free throws in the last 55 seconds to ensure the Eagles the victory.

Dinkel's fourth quarter surge came after a rocky first half in which he was 1-5 shooting and had three turnovers.

"He stepped up big for us and it didn't matter whether he messed up earlier," said Sheets.

Dinkel was one of three Eagles in double-figures led by Stover with 19 points.

Levi Schlick had a double-double, finishing with 14 points and 13 rebounds, but was limited to just six shot attempts.

"Usually Levi and Ethan are get there 15-20," said Dinkel. "I usually have a couple of good minutes. It's nice to know we have someone that can score when they have a bad game."

Bad games have been rarity for the Eagles at home this year after winning their first three home games

by an average of 27 points.

The Longhorns led Colby 11-7 after one quarter, becoming the first team to lead the Eagles and hold them under double-digits in the first quarter at home this year.

"It took a while for us to get adjusted to them," said Sheets. "It looked like they wanted it more for a while until we adjusted to their physical play."

Colby bounced back with a solid second quarter to lead 26-25 at half.

The Eagles led through most of the third quarter until a Wilcox three-ball gave Holcomb a 38-37 lead with 1:01 left in the period. The lead changed hands a couple more times and 11 times total in the game before Colby asserted its control in the fourth quarter.

"It's a lot better feeling winning a close game," said Dinkel.

"It shows you're getting better. If you don't beat Oakley or St. Francis by 30 or 40 points, it's like you didn't play good. This was real satisfying."

If their first matchup was any indication, the Eagles will likely have to grind out another win 8 p.m. Tuesday when they host McCook.

The Eagles escaped the Bison 50-48 earlier this season at the Top Side Tip-Off Tournament in Goodland and Sheets expects another tough game.

"I'm sure they're wanting to get back at us after that first game, so I expect them to be ready to play," said Sheets.

Box Score				
	1	2	3	4
Holcomb (4-2)	11	14	13	19- 57
Colby (6-2)	7	19	13	28- 67
Holcomb (57)- Brau 7, O'Rourke 8, Gaede 7, Wilcox 22, Bovack 3, Roth 2, Tafoya 8				
Colby (67)- Stephens 3, Stover 19, Carter 7, Winger 6, Dinkel 15, Sager 1, Schlick 14, Ziegelmeier 2				
Team Stats:				
Turnovers: Colby 18 Holcomb 17				
Points Off Turnovers: Colby 9 Holcomb 6				
Rebounds: Colby 41 Holcomb 30				
Points in the Paint: Colby 18 Holcomb 24				
Assists: Colby 18 Holcomb 17				
Fouls: Colby 19 Holcomb 33				
Field Goal Percentage: Colby 19-42 (45.2%) Holcomb 20-55 (36.4%)				
Three-Point Percentage: Colby 3-7 (42.9%) Holcomb 3-13 (23.1%)				
Free Throw Percentage: Colby 26-39 (66.7%) Holcomb 14-19 (73.7%)				

Eagles dominate Liberal Invitational

For the second consecutive year, the Colby Eagle wrestling team won the Liberal Invitational Tournament and did so in impressive fashion.

Colby had 13 of 14 weights reach the finals and 10 of 14 advance to the finals.

The Eagles won the tournament with a score of 270. In second place was Liberal with 206. Goodland was third.

The Eagles had four individual champions including Taylor Moeder (103 pounds), Nathan Reed (119 pounds), Bryan Brewer (125 pounds) and Tanner Kriss (171 pounds).

Cody Wark (112 pounds), Hunter Olsen (135 pounds), Heath Stephens (140 pounds), Garrett Zwegardt (145 pounds), Treat Bugbee (189 pounds) and Nick Kriss (215 pounds) each finished second in their weight classes.

Taylor Brown (285 pounds) finished third. Bob Schroeder (130 pounds) took fourth and Breck Arnerberger (160 pounds) took fifth.

Ethan Stickel (152 pounds) was the only Eagle that didn't place.

The Eagles are back in action 6 p.m. Thursday for duels with Hoxie and Quinter at the high school.

Brewster teams lose to Greeley County

The Brewster Bulldog basketball teams both started the year on the wrong foot, losing to Tribune/Greeley County Friday in Tribune.

The boys lost 58-48 while the girls were pounded 48-19.

In the boy game, Brewster got behind by 12 points in the first quarter but battled back to cut the deficit to 18-11 after the first quarter.

The lead remained seven at half. In the third quarter, Brewster made a charge and took the lead near the end of the period. Tribune regained the lead in the fourth quarter and head by three with two minutes to go, the Jackrabbits made their free throws at the end to pull out the win.

"Greeley's a good team and that's a tough place to play," said Brewster head boys basketball coach Jon McKee.

Brewster was led by Jance McKee and Corey Siruta who each had 14 points. Chris Williams had 11. Michael Collett chipped in nine.

Tribune was paced by Jace Young who had 16 points.

Unlike the boys, the Brewster girls were never in their game. Tri-

bune busted out to a 17-4 lead after the first quarter and held Brewster scoreless in the second period to extend to a 21-4 lead at the half.

Tribune cranked up its offense again the third quarter, outscoring Brewster 17-7 to take a 38-11 lead and put the game out of reach.

"We really struggled shooting the ball," said Brewster head girls basketball coach Dean Anderson. "Their pressure defense gave us trouble, but we still had good shots. They just didn't fall."

The Lady Bulldogs were led by Nichelle Erskine who had eight points and 13 rebounds. Baylee Westover had five points. Abbie Allen and Melissa Baird each had three.

Both the boys and girls head into the Western Kansas Liberty League Tournament with 4-2 records.

The boys are the #1 seed and will play the winner of Cheylin/Healy 7:30 p.m. Tuesday in Sharon Springs.

The girls are the #3 seed and will take on #6 seed Wheatland Grinnell 3 p.m. Tuesday in Sharon Springs.

Lady Eagles struggle, but still remain perfect

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It wasn't a performance Eagle head girls basketball coach Parker McKee was especially proud of, but the Colby Lady Eagles improved to 8-0 on the season with a 55-28 win over Holcomb Friday at the community building.

The Eagles won handily in their first game back from the holiday break despite committing an uncharacteristic 20 turnovers and making only six field goals in the second half.

"That's definitely fair to say," said McKee when asked whether he was displeased with the performance. "I think part of it was having two weeks off. We weren't back at game speed yet. But we'll take a win any way we can get it."

The Lady Eagles were also without the services of starting forward Paige Stephens who was injured over the break after a collision with her dog. Junior forward Taylor Young started in her place and finished with eight points on 4-5 shooting, but McKee could the difference in his team without Stephens on the floor.

"Basically, you could tell there wasn't as much chemistry on the floor," said McKee. "She does the little things for our team you can't replace, and we really missed her athleticism tonight."

As out of sync as the Eagles looked at times, Holcomb was unable to get anything going themselves. The Longhorns committed 26 turnovers, including 17 in the first half. Colby's pressure defense allowed Holcomb 10 shot attempts in the first half and held them to 39 percent shooting for the game.

"Colby's a great team with a lot of talent," said Holcomb head girls basketball coach Kelly Snodgrass. "We tried to adjust to their pressure, but it's hard when you have 5-4



Lady Eagle senior guard Tasha Wagoner, left, went up for a three-pointer with Holcomb's Zoe Roth defending the shot. Wagoner finished with three points as the Lady Eagles won 55-28.

guards throwing over two 5-11's."

One of those 5-11's, actually 6-1 sophomore April Gee, had her best game of the season, finishing with 18 points on 7-10 shooting.

Gee has struggled for much of the year finishing inside, but she was the Eagles most consistent player all night.

"Part of that is her attitude is improving everyday," said McKee. "It's starting to show on and off the court."

Gee scored 12 of her 18 points in the first half, which helped the Eagles jump out to a 14-4 lead after the first quarter.

Holcomb was able to trim the deficit to 16-8 with 6:25 left in the second quarter.

It was all Colby from that point on.

The Lady Eagles went on a 13-0

run to extend to a 29-8 lead only three minutes later. Tasha Wagoner, who finished with just three points, made her only basket near the end of the quarter to give the Lady Eagles a 32-10 lead at the break.

Aubrette Stephens got the Lady Eagles out of the gate with five points to start the half. Besides Gee, she was the only other Lady Eagle in double-figures, finishing with 10 points.

The rest of the second half moved at a snails pace as Holcomb got in the penalty early on, allowing the Lady Eagles 17 free throw attempts of which they made 10.

The lead grew to 31 at the start of the fourth quarter before McKee again was able to rest his starters and put it on a cruise control.

The 27 point win marked the seventh time in eight games this

year the Lady Eagles have won by at least 15 points.

"Being a good team is more than just winning by 30," said McKee. "It's about being disciplined enough to stay focused all the time. The girls do a fair job of not playing down to their competition."

But as McKee again reiterated, there was a lot to be desired from Friday's performance and a lot to work before his team's next contest 6:30 p.m. Tuesday against McCook at the community building.

Stephens is not expected to be back until the Lady Eagles play Friday at Hoxie.

As the Longhorns just found out, even with Stephens missing, without playing their best and with their top scorers only combining for 11 points, the Lady Eagles are still a tough team to beat.

Box Score				
	1	2	3	4
Holcomb	4	6	9	9- 28
Colby (8-0)	14	18	17	6- 55
Holcomb (28)- Baier 6, Wolf 4, Gottschalk 1, Bennett 8, Sheldon 7, Stegmen 2				
Colby (55)- Hockersmith 2, Wagoner 3, A. Stephens 10, Katherine Kaus 5, Gee 18, Young 8, Mazanec 8, Katrina Kaus 1				
Team Stats:				
Turnovers: Colby 20 Holcomb 26				
Points Off Turnovers: Colby 19 Holcomb 14				
Rebounds: Colby 29 Holcomb 19				
Points in the Paint: Colby 18 Holcomb 10				
Assists: Colby 6 Holcomb 1				
Fouls: Colby 12 Holcomb 20				
Field Goal Percentage: Colby 19-40 (47.5%) Holcomb 11-28 (39.3%)				
Three Point Percentage: Colby 2-7 (28.6%) Holcomb 1-1 (100.0%)				
Free Throw Percentage: Colby 15-24 (62.5%) Holcomb 5-9 (55.6%)				

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