

Big defensive play preserves Eagle win

By **Joey Falkoff**
Free Press Reporter
jfkalkoff@nwkansas.com

Colby senior guard Ethan Stover is known mostly for his offensive prowess, but Monday the Eagle sharpshooter showed he can also make a game-winning play on the defensive end.

With the Eagles ahead of Thomas More Prep-Marian (Hays) 73-70 with less than a minute left, the Monarchs Nolan McNeil rebounded Keith Gustin's missed free throw and was in position for a potential putback that would have cut the deficit to one.

Instead, Stover stepped in front of McNeil and drew a charge with 51.2 seconds left.

Colby held TMP scoreless the rest of the way and hit three free throws to pull out a 76-70 win over the 4A defending state champion Monarchs at the Colby Community Building.

"It was a very physical game. There was so many close plays, but that was a big one," said Eagle head coach Beau Sheets.

The call drew a boisterous negative reaction from the Monarch contingent and head coach Joe Hertel, who had reached his boiling point after seeing his team whistled for 27 fouls in the game.

"I was unhappy with the call, because they call tick-tack stuff on us on one end and then call that on us," said TMP head coach Joe Hertel whose team fell to 7-8.

Sheets certainly wasn't complaining as his team improved to 12-4 and beat TMP for the first time since the 2003-2004 season.

"It's a big win for us. Even though they're a younger team, they're the returning state champs and there's a reason why," said Sheets. "They're very solid, aggressive and physical. I tip my hat to them."

It's not telling where the Eagles would have been without Stover, who also had a big offensive night

with 25 points on 7-12 shooting, including 4-6 from three point range.

"Twenty-five points and only one turnover, and he guarded their best player the whole game, he did a great job for us," said Sheets.

Stover had 18 of his points in the first half which saw Colby shoot 67 percent.

The trio of Stover, Levi Schlick and Stephen Dinkel combined for 55 points. Schlick was 7-8 for 14 points while Dinkel scored 14 of his 16 points in the second half.

Colby shot a sizzling 27-42 (64 percent) for the game, but still had a hard time putting away the pesky Monarchs who had 12 second half offensive rebounds and forced the Eagles into 21 turnovers.

"I felt like we initiated all of the action and we were the more aggressive club," said Hertel.

The Monarchs trailed by seven with 4:45 remaining in the fourth quarter, but could never get closer than three points the rest of the way as the Eagles answered every time TMP made it a one possession game.

"It was good to battle back after every shot they made," said Schlick.

"I don't know if its toughness or we're lucky. It shows some resiliency," said Sheets.

The Eagles were also helped down the stretch as TMP's point guard and leading scorer Drew Hertel fouled out with 3:26 left after scoring 13 points.

"That was huge," said Sheets. "He was real smart and was able to initiate their offense. I was surprised he only had 13 points. It seemed like he had three times that."

Hertel was one of three Monarchs to foul out of the game. Both of their leading scorers McNeil (18 points) and Austin Budke (15 points) also took an early exit.

Hertel picked up his third foul just over 3 minutes into the game. His dad/coach took a chance and



JOEY FALKOFF/Colby Free Press

Colby junior forward Cory Sager, front, went up for a reverse layup against the defense of TMP's Nolan McNeil, right, during the Eagles 76-70 win over the Monarchs Monday at the Colby Community Building. Sager finished with seven points.

left him in only to see him pick up his fourth foul with 27 seconds left in the first half. Hertel set out the third quarter and played just 16 minutes in the game.

"I wouldn't change anything," said coach Hertel. "He was the reason why we were able to stay in the game in the first half. I'm sorry he fouled out. I figured they (the referees) would make sure he fouled out."

Even with Hertel out of the game, the Monarchs were able to overcome a 38-34 halftime deficit and grab a 47-46 lead with 4:35 remaining in the third quarter.

It was their first lead since the opening minutes of the game and it would be their last.

Sheets called a timeout and the Eagles responded with an 8-0 run to go back ahead by seven points.

"Offensively, they were switching all the screens and we talked

about doing some things different to find the open spots," said Sheets. "Defensively, we got some good box outs."

TMP shot just 41.2 percent in the second half after shooting 55 percent in the first. They also finished 2-9 (22 percent) from the three point line.

In the final minute of the game, the Monarchs were 0-3 from the field and had a turnover.

"I'm frustrated for my kids, because they layed it all on the line," said coach Hertel. "I don't have one varsity kid that logged a second of varsity last year. We had more energy and had them on their heels, but you still have to find away to put the final stamp on things."

It was the Eagles that put the final stamp on Monday's game and made for an unhappy ride home in the snow for TMP.

Box Score				
	1	2	3	4
TMP (7-8)	18	16	16	20-70
Colby (12-4)	24	14	20	18-76

TMP (70)-	Hageman 2, Hertel 13, Budke 15, McNeil 18, Meyers 6, Thomas 8, Gustin 8
Colby (76)-	Stover 25, Carter 4, Winger 5, Dinkel 16, Sager 7, Schlick 14, Ziegelmeier 5

Team Stats

Rebounds:	Colby 28 TMP 27
Assists:	Colby 16 TMP 5
Turnovers:	Colby 22 TMP 15
Field Goal Percentage:	Colby 27-42 (64.3 percent) TMP 26-56 (46.4 percent)
Three Point Percentage:	Colby 4-6 (66.7 percent) TMP 2-9 (22.2 percent)
Free Throw Percentage:	Colby 18-27 (66.7 percent) TMP 16-21 (76.2 percent)
Fouls:	Colby 27 TMP 17
Points in the Paint:	Colby 24 TMP 34

JV Lady Eagles handle TMP for 14th victory

The Colby Lady Eagle junior varsity team kept on rolling Monday as they defeated Thomas More Prep-Marian (Hays) 65-40 to improve to 14-0.

Katherine Kaus led the way with 21 points on 10 field goals. Brittany Schuette also reached double-figures with 13 points.

"Defensively and offensively we were in sync all night," said Lady Eagle junior varsity head coach Jack Elliott.

"Even with TMP playing varsity players because of a lack of numbers, the ladies controlled the game by taking it to them."

Also reching the scoring column for Colby was Katrina Kaus (eight points), Shelby Terrell and Kayla Hockersmith (seven points), Kelsey Shields (five points) and Rhett Martin and Amy Schroeder (two points).

The JV Lady Eagles are back in

action 8 p.m. Friday at Quinter.

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Eagle Notebook

By **Joey Falkoff**
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jfkalkoff@nwkansas.com

With their 76-70 victory over TMP, the Colby Eagles surpassed last year's 11 win total with still four games remaining in the regular season.

The improvement has been so sudden it even caught junior Levi Schlick by surprise.

"I didn't even notice," said Schlick. "It definitely shows we're closer than last year. We couldn't put a full game together."

Should the Eagles run the table and finish 16-4 in the regular season, it would be their most wins since the 2003-2004 season in which they finished 16-6.

"We've played well in all of our wins and most of our losses," said Eagle head coach Beau Sheets. "I'm very pleased with how we've played as a whole."

Carter goes down
Eagle junior point guard Cade Carter played just 8:17 Monday. He left the game in the second after an apparent leg injury he received while taking a charge. Cart-

er finished with four points. Chaz Winger played in place of Carter and finished with five points in 25 minutes of action. Carter's status for Friday's game at Quinter is unknown.

Inside the numbers
Colby has three players averaging double-figure scoring led by Schlick and Ethan Stover (16.9 PPG). Stephen Dinkel is averaging 13.3 points per game. Schlick is shooting 66 percent from the field and is also averaging 10.4 rebounds per game. Dinkel is shooting 58 percent and 46 percent from three-point land. Stover is hitting 49 percent of his shots, including 47 percent of his triples. He leads the team with 112 three-pointers. As a team, the Eagles are shooting 53 percent.

Next up: Quinter Bulldogs
The Colby Eagles will look for their 13th win of the year 8 p.m. Friday at Quinter. Quinter is 15-1 and 4-0 in league play. They've won nine in a row, which includes an 86-82 win over 12-4 Rawlins County.

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