

Trojans snap seven-game losing streak

By Joey Falkoff

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The script was all too familiar. Eight times this season the Colby College Trojans have lost by five points or less.

After losing a seven point lead in the last three minutes Wednesday, Colby seemed destined for another agonizing close defeat.

This script, though, finally had a happy ending.

Some good fortune at the end of a regulation and clutch shots from Jordan Ottoway and Erick Peguero in overtime allowed the Trojans to break a seven game losing streak with a 90-84 win over Pratt at the Colby Community Building.

"Seven is not a lucky number for us," joked Trojan head coach John Woods. "Unless you consider it lucky that we broke the streak after seven games. I hope our fans enjoyed this tonight."

"Finally. Finally," proclaimed freshman Jordan Ottoway, who finished with 15 points. "It feels good. We've been talking in practice about playing together. This was real big. It's such a tough conference."

It was a gutty performance by the Trojans, 7-17 (3-7), who won despite playing without point guard Andrew Engel who was sidelined with an ankle injury.

Only seven players saw action for Colby, but six finished in double-figures led by Koance Davis with 19 points and 11 rebounds and Mike Boyd with 18 points.

But the heroes on this night were Peguero and Ottoway who each hit clutch three-pointers in overtime. Peguero's three-pointer from the top of the key came with 41 seconds left to give Colby an 88-84 lead. Pratt dared Peguero to shoot by playing off of him and he made them pay.

"They left me open so I took it," said Peguero, who finished with 13 points and seven assists. "I had confidence all the way."

It was the only three point attempt of the game for the Bronx, N.Y. native, who was just 6-28 (21 percent) on the year before that shot.

"Erick's turning into the fine player we knew he would be," said Woods. "To hit a shot like that is a big deal. It put the game out of reach."

Pratt missed their last three shots and Boyd converted two free throws with under 30 seconds left to secure the win.

Ottoway's fifth three-pointer of the game from close to NBA range gave the Trojans an 83-80 lead with 3:31 remaining in overtime, which they wouldn't relinquish.



JOEY FALKOFF/Colby Free Press

Trojan guard Mike Boyd, left, soared to the basket over Pratt's Jordan Hammond in the second half of Colby's 90-84 win over the Beavers Wednesday at the Colby Community Building.

"I feel comfortable out there," said Ottoway.

All 15 of Ottoway's points came in the second half. He finished 5-7 from three-point range.

"When he's feeling it, we just try to get him the ball," said Woods. "He can hit it from anywhere whether someone is in his face or not."

Peguero and Ottoway would have never even gotten their opportunities had Pratt's Jordan Hammond knocked down a wide open 10-footer with under two seconds left in regulation.

Hammond led the Beavers with 24 points and had seven in the last 2:40 to tie the game at 78-78.

But his final shot bounced off the iron, allowing the Trojans a second life.

"When you have a late lead like that and not to be able to finish it, we were very thankful to send it into overtime," said Woods.

Pratt's late run was the culmination of a wild second half that produced eight lead changes and five ties.

Neither team led by more than four in the second half until an Ottoway three gave Colby a 70-65

lead with 6:13 left. Davis's slam on an assist from Peguero gave Colby their biggest lead, 78-71, with 3:00 left. That, too, was shortlived.

Pratt jumped out to a 12-2 lead to start the game, but Colby slowly whittled it away and took their first lead of 37-34 on a three-pointer by Davis with 3:10 left in the first half. Colby led by as many six in the first half, but went to the locker room with just a 43-42 lead.

Mike Doll, who started in place of Engel, had 10 of his 12 points in the first half, including two three-pointers.

Colby finished the game 33-67 (49.3 percent) from the field and a remarkable 12-22 (55 percent) from three-point range.

Pratt shot only 31 percent in the second half and finished the game shooting just above 35 percent. They were also just 11-29 (38 percent) from three-point land.

"Anytime we can hold a team to 31 percent shooting in a half, I'm very pleased," said Woods.

Even with the extra five minutes, both teams combined for just 18 turnovers. Colby had 10.

The free throw shooting was good as well. Colby was 12-16 (75 percent) while Pratt was 15-19 (79 percent).

"This team believes they can beat anyone in the conference," said Woods. "To get a win against Pratt helps with momentum."

The Trojans will look to carry that momentum into their next game 8 p.m. Saturday against Dodge City Community College at the Colby Community Building.

Dodge City is 11-12 overall and 3-7 in the league. They are coming off a 76-74 win over Barton County Wednesday.

It will be the first meeting between these two teams since their infamous Jan. 9 game won by Dodge 78-72. The game was marred by an altercation between the two teams that led to the suspensions of Boyd and Davis.

"I'm sure emotions will be high," said Woods.

"We have to focus on playing team ball and finding a way to win. We can't focus on who took a swing at who. Hopefully, Dodge will be a good sport and play a clean game."



JOEY FALKOFF/Colby Free Press

Lady Trojan forward Nikki Welsh, left, scored two of her 12 points on this layup over Pratt's Sasha Crosby in the second half of Colby's 59-52 win over the Lady Beavers Wednesday at the Colby Community Building.

Lady Trojans overcome shooting struggles to even league record

By Joey Falkoff

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In their first game back home after a 1-2 road trip, the Colby Lady Trojans didn't exactly feed off the homecourt advantage.

The Lady Trojans turned the ball over 23 times and shot just 32 percent from the field and 7-30 (23 percent) from three-point range.

Fortunately, Colby found the home rims all too kind at the charity stripe.

Despite one of their worst offensive games of the year, the Lady Trojans knocked down 14-16 free throws including 6-6 in the final 34.4 seconds to prevail with a 59-52 win over Pratt Wednesday at the Colby Community Building.

"I feel fortunate as many turnovers as we had that we were able to win," said Lady Trojan head coach Tom Stephens. "We're a good free throw shooting team, and we're a good shooting team. We're playing hard. We just have to learn from our mistakes."

The win was the second in a row for Colby, improving its record to 10-14 and 5-5 in the league.

Pratt fell to 6-17 and 3-7 in the league.

As poorly as Colby shot the ball, Pratt was even more futile.

The Lady Beavers finished 19-63 (30.2 percent), including 8-31 (26 percent) in the first half.

Pratt appeared to find its offense late in the game as they went on a 7-0 run over a 1:13 span to cut a 10 point deficit to 52-49 with 3:07 left.

But the Lady Beavers went scoreless for the next 2:50 until Lindsee Bachica's three-pointer made it 55-52 with 17.2 seconds left.

It was too little, too late though, as Sandra Sormaz and Nikki Welsh each knocked down a pair of free throws to seal the game away for the Lady Trojans.

Sormaz led the way for Colby with 18 points on 6-15 shooting. She was also 4-4 from the line.

Also in double-figures were Welsh with 12 points and Whitney Archer with 10 points. Both finished just 4-14 from the field.

The Lady Trojans were able to make up for their shooting strug-

gles by beating Pratt 39-26 on the glass.

"We rebounded much better than the last time we played," said Stephens.

Colby led 27-23 half and never trailed in the second half despite never leading by more than four points until the 7:08 mark when Welsh knocked down a three-pointer to make it 46-39.

Lauren Fortin and Sormaz each hit three-pointers in the next 2:42 to give the Trojans as much as a 52-42 lead.

Colby jumped out to a nine point lead early in the first half only to see it briefly disappear as Wyneshia Webb's jumper gave Pratt their only lead of the game, 23-22. The Trojans closed the half with a 5-0 run and were able to hold off Pratt from there.

Webb and Bachica led the way for the Lady Beavers with 11 points.

The Lady Trojans are now just two games back of Hutchinson for fourth place in the Western division, which would get them a home game in the first round of the Region VI tournament.

Even with losses to the four top teams in the division, Stephens remains confident they can still snatch the fourth spot.

"We're not conceding anything, yet," said Stephens. "You never know what's going to happen. A lot of those teams still have to play each other. They're all must wins right now. It's good to get a win, but we want to try and stay real consistent in our approach."

That also means the Lady Trojans aren't going to shy away from shooting the three, even after Wednesday's 7-30 effort, when they host Dodge City Community College 6 p.m. Saturday.

"If we're open we are going to shoot it, unless someone is open inside," said Stephens. "If someone hesitates, they are going to be sitting by me."

The Lady Conquistadors, who feature Colby native April Weaver, enter with a 5-19 record, which includes an 0-10 mark in league play.

Wednesday wasn't the prettiest of wins, but the Lady Trojans now have a chance to make some hay as the season winds down.

Lady Eagle Notebook

By Joey Falkoff

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Despite their first half struggles, the Colby Lady Eagles made a believer out of at least one person at the Colby Community Building Monday.

TMP Lady Monarch head coach Allen Billinger has seen some of the top teams in the state this year, but says Colby is probably the toughest opposition they've faced.

"I would think so," said Billinger when asked whether Colby was the team to beat in 4A. "We've played Riley County (3A #1), Abilene (4A #3) and Concordia. This was the best team we've played."

Now that he's through playing them, Billinger says he is rooting for the Lady Eagles to repeat at state.

"We sure wish them the best of luck," said Billinger. "They're a class act. I respect their coach, Parker McKee, very much. Plus, they're representing western Kansas."

Mazanec returns

Colby Lady Eagle senior forward Lissa Mazanec returned Monday after sitting out two games with a back injury. Mazanec didn't start, but entered the game with 5:11 remaining in the first quarter and played just over 22 minutes.

"She's so good you just can't keep her on the bench," said Lady Eagle head coach Parker McKee.

The layoff showed in the first half where Mazanec was just 1-5 from the field with two points and two turnovers. In the second half,

Mazanec returned to form, going 2-2 from the field and connecting on 5-7 free throws to finish with 11 points and five rebounds.

"Once she settled down and got rid of the nerves, it showed," said McKee.

Taylor Young, who started in place of Mazanec, had to come out of the game late after having the wind knocked out of her, but is expected to be OK for the Lady Eagles' next game 6:30 p.m. Friday at Quinter.

April shines in January

Lady Eagle sophomore April Gee continued her red-hot month of January with a 20 point, nine rebound performance. Gee has now reached double-figure scoring in all eight games she has played in this month. McKee felt Monday was her best effort to date.

"She played better tonight than any other game," said McKee.

"Definitely athletically, she could be the best athlete in the area. If you combine that with her talent, it puts her right up there with the best players in the area."

Hottest team in the state

According to Colby Eagle broadcaster Rich Epp, the Colby Lady Eagles now own the longest winning streak in the state at 24 games. Defending 6A champion Wichita Heights held the state's longest winning streak at more than 30 games before they lost to Wichita South Friday; the same Wichita South team Colby beat 71-46 in the finals of the Orange and Black Classic Jan. 19. Colby won their final eight games last year and have started this season 16-0. They are ranked ninth overall in the state of Kansas.

Box Score Late Monday

	1	2	3	4
TMP (9-6)	9	10	6	16-41
Colby (16-0)	12	9	21	17-59

TMP (41)- Hammeke 12, Holub 6, Schippers 2, Stramel 16, Hoffman 5

Colby (59)- Martin 2, Terrell 2, Wagoner 9, A. Stephens 1, P. Stephens 11, Gee 20, Young 3, Mazanec 11

Team Stats

Rebounds: Colby 39 TMP 26
Assists: Colby 11 TMP 6
Turnovers: Colby 18 TMP 18
Steals: Colby 15 TMP 9
Points in the Paint: Colby 20 TMP 12
Field Goal Percentage: Colby 19-51 (37.3 percent) TMP 16-44 (36.4 percent)
Three Point Percentage: Colby 1-7 (14.3 percent) TMP 0-7 (0.0 percent)
Free Throw Percentage: Colby 20-26 (76.9 percent) TMP 9-13 (69.2 percent)

Golden Plains shut down at Sharon Springs Friday

By Jackie Fringer

Golden Plains High School

The Golden Plains varsity boys played a hard defensive game against Sharon Springs, but fell to the Wildcats 49-31 Friday in Sharon Springs.

Golden Plains started the game slowly and found themselves trailing 14-2 after the first quarter. In the second quarter, Golden Plains rebounded, but still trailed 23-12 at intermission.

The Bulldogs got as close as eight in the third quarter, but an-

other slow final period sealed their fate.

"We played them hard and kept them under 50 points" said guard Devin Spreser.

The leading scorer was Andrew Broeckelman with eight points. Dan Rogers, Tate Bruggeman, and Corey Shaw each added six points. Jordan Spreser had three points and Tanner Moss added two.

Golden Plains, 8-8, is home 8 p.m. Friday to take on Weskan. Their game with Hill City Tuesday was rescheduled for 8 p.m. Monday in Rexford.

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