

Colby girls break away from Andale in first round

By Joey Falkoff

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The last time the Colby Lady Eagles took the Bicentennial Center floor they went on to capture their first state championship in school history.

A year later, it appears the magic never left.

Instead of the nervous stomachs and heart palpitations the Lady Eagles provided fans in their 63-53 double-overtime win over Columbus in last year's first round, Colby took control early in the second quarter and kept on rolling as they trounced #8 seed Andale 70-41 Wednesday in Salina.

"This was definitely a lot better than last year," said senior Paige Stephens, who was one of four Lady Eagles in double-figures with 11 points. "It's nice to get that first win out of the way."

All 11 of Stephens' points came in the first half which saw the Lady Eagles turn a 15-13 lead after the first quarter into a 37-23 lead at the break. Andale never got within nine points in the second half and Colby led by as many as 30.

"Paige got a lot of confidence going for us," said Colby coach Parker McKee. "She set the tone for everything."

Colby improved to 24-0 and advanced to the semifinals where they will take on Holton 3 p.m. Friday. Holton defeated Basehor-Linwood 55-51 Wednesday. Andale finished their season 15-9.

"It's fair to say the girls were focused and determined to get at least one win," said McKee, who was coaching in his first state tournament game.

It's one even he had to be impressed with.

After being taken to the brink Saturday in the substate finals by an underdog Ulysses team, Colby responded by playing one of their most complete games of the year.

The Lady Eagles shot 26-45 (57.8 percent) from the floor and added to it with a 17-19 (89.5 percent) effort from the free throw line, including hitting all 15 attempts in the second half. On the defensive end,

Colby held Andale to just over 30 percent shooting for the game, including 28 percent in the first half. The Lady Eagles also won the battle on the boards 33-18.

"The difference between today and Saturday was the focus of our girls," said McKee. "We played to win, instead of not to lose. It makes a big difference when we are the aggressive team."

That aggressiveness, Stephens said, was a byproduct of the confidence they had from playing in



JOE FALKOFF/Colby Free Press

Colby's April Gee goes up against Andale's Shelli Martin (#24) and Adrienne Fox (#32) during Colby's win Wednesday in the first-round of the state basketball tournament in Salina. Colby won 70-41 and play Holton in the semifinals 3 p.m. Friday.

this environment last year. "It felt a lot smaller than last year," said Stephens. "We were a little more used to it after playing here three times."

Andale head coach Mark Kerschen agreed the Lady Eagles looked pretty comfortable in what's becoming their home away from home.

"Their experience showed more than our inexperience," said Kerschen, whose team features just one senior. "They were calm, cool. You could tell they've played a few games here before."

No two Lady Eagles found the setting more inviting than April Gee and Lissa Mazanec.

Gee led the Lady Eagles with 21 points and 13 rebounds on just 7-9 shooting. She had 15 of her 21 points in the second half and was also 7-7 at the free throw line.

"We were just all pumped and ready to go," said Gee. "The opportunity led me to get those points and rebounds."

"She took over and they had no answer for her," said McKee.

Mazanec finished with 18 points on 8-13 shooting.

The Indians, who don't have

one player taller than 5-11, had no answer for either inside.

"We didn't want to give up that many inside, but I don't think we were totally focused," said Kerschen. "I think we got a little caught up in the day. Every little instance, they capitalized."

Colby started quick and led 15-7 late in the first quarter, but Andale closed the quarter with a 6-0 run and appeared to have the momentum.

Sensing that very thing, McKee switched to a 2-3 zone defense at the start of the second quarter, and it threw the Indians out of whack.

Colby was able to run off nine straight points and open up a 24-13 lead.

"We were probably a little more hesitant," said Kerschen.

Back came Andale with straight points, but Colby regained control at the end of the quarter with a 13-5 spurt.

"We played more zone than we have all year," said McKee. "We had some foul trouble early on, and we knew they had only hit 6-36 three-pointers. They had a hard time adjusting to our zone, because it was so unpredictable."

Andale finished 3-13 from the three-point line, which is over a third of what they had taken to this point. Melissa Easter, who led the Indians with 19 points, hit all three of their three-pointers.

"You can tell that's not our game," said Kerschen. "We shot too many tonight. We got behind and started shooting quickly. When you're shooting it against 6-1, 6-0 and 5-11, it's hard to get it in the hole."

Andale got as close as 37-28 early in the third quarter, but the Lady Eagles closed the quarter with a 17-5 spurt to lead 54-33. Gee had 11 of 21 points in the third period.

"This was very comparable to Hoxie (won by Colby 67-38) earlier this year," said McKee. "We were patient and able to work inside-out."

In a stacked field that includes two other undefeated teams in Andover Central and Abilene, the Lady Eagles sent an early message that someone still has to take the trophy away from them.

"We're just trying to get some

Box Score

	1	2	3	4
Andale (15-9)	13	10	10	8- 41
Colby (24-0)	15	22	17	16- 70

Andale (41)- Jessie Reichenberger 2, Kaitlin Martin 4, Shelli Martin 6, Jessica Jones 1, Melissa Easter 19, Adrienne Fox 9
Colby (70)- Rhett Martin 2, Tasha Wagoner 12, Aubrette Stephens 2, Paige Stephens 11, April Gee 21, Taylor Young 4, Lissa Mazanec 18
Team Stats

Assists: Colby 10 Andale 8

Rebounds: Colby 33 Andale 18

Turnovers: Colby 16 Andale 16

Points off Turnovers: Colby 20 Andale 9

Second Chance Points: Colby 13 Andale 5

Field Goal Percentage: Colby 26-45 (57.8 percent) Andale 14-46 (30.4 percent)

Three Point Percentage: Colby 1-7 (14.3 percent) Andale 3-13 (23.1 percent)

Free Throw Percentage: Colby 17-19 (89.5 percent) Andale 10-17 (58.8 percent)

Colby college softball team wins doubleheader

Colby started its conference play Tuesday with an 8-0 and 13-2 win over Brown Mackie in Colby.

In game one, Colby's Ninostka Amaro got the win on the mound giving up two hits and striking out five in five innings. Jill Schmidt led Colby at the plate with two hits, a home run and four RBIs. Colby had seven hits.

In game two, Brittani Kage got the win for Colby allowing six hits and two runs in five innings. Amaro was strong at the late with two hits including a double and home run and three RBIs. Colby had 10 hits total.

"We hit well and our pitchers threw very well. This should give us a boost going into the first region games on Thursday at Garden City," said coach Ryan Sturdy. "We had people get keys hits with runners in scoring position. Overall I was very pleased with the way the team performed today.."

Basketball team loses

The Lady Trojans lost 58-68, Wednesday against Labette in the first-round of the Jayhawk Conference and Region VI tournament. Colby finish the year 11-19 overall. Stats not available.

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