

# Second time's the charm

## Colby wins first state tourney game; finishes fourth

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SALINA- One bad Saturday wasn't going to overshadow a history-making Friday that clinched the most successful season in Colby softball history.

Not a chance. Although the Lady Eagles concluded the 4A state tournament Saturday in Salina with a 7-0 loss to #1 seed Girard in the semifinals and a 9-0 defeat to #7 seed Andover Central in the third place game, just getting to that point was icing on the cake to a weekend which began in a most unforgettable fashion.

The 2008 Lady Eagles etched their names into the record books by recording the first state tournament win in school history—a 3-2 extra-inning, comeback victory over #4 seed Perry-LeCompton in the first round.

Junior catcher Tara Powell delivered the game-tying hit with two outs in the sixth and followed that up with a two-out, game-winning hit in the eighth.

"I felt good for her and I felt good for all of the kids," said Lady Eagle head coach Jack Elliott after Friday's dramatic victory. "They stayed in the game and didn't give up. I'm really, really satisfied for the girls."

Colby also set a school record for victories in a season with 19 and received the first medals in the nine-year history of the program.

The magic may have run out Saturday, but Elliott says it won't take away from what was an otherwise magical season.

"They (Girard and Andover Central) were better today," said Elliott, who has been the coach since the inception of the program in 2000.

"But we don't have anything to hang our heads about. They've accomplished stuff this program has never seen. They should be proud of themselves."

For senior Logan Wark, who worked all eight innings to pick up the win Friday, the fourth place finish was even sweeter considering where the program was when she came in as a freshman.

"We've come from not even being able to get to the regional finals to placing at state," said Wark.

The Lady Eagles had reached the state tournament only one other time (2004) and lost in the first round.

After breaking through to the semifinals Friday, destiny looked to be on Colby's side as they went into the bottom of the fifth locked in a scoreless tie with undefeated Girard.

Then, things began to come apart.

Girard scored seven runs in the final two innings off a suddenly, ineffective Wark, and Colby couldn't catch up.

With their dreams of a state title having gone by the wayside, the Lady Eagles were then forced to endure an episode of the Nikki Armagost show.

The Andover Central junior struck out 16 Colby batters and went 4-4 with three home runs, which were the first three over-the-fence homers the Eagles allowed all season.

While it was surely painful to watch, Elliott couldn't help but express his amazement after Armagost's incredible day.

"That's the best single game performance I've seen by a hitter for sure," said Elliott. "I called for a fastball inside, a fastball outside and a changeup. I guess the next thing we should have done is hit her I guess."

Elliott was joking of course, but after seeing the program reach new heights over the weekend, he couldn't help but be in a good mood.

Now, the challenge for the Lady Eagle head coach becomes doing this on an annual basis.

Colby has to replace four seniors, including their ace Wark, Brena Jones, and Lindsey Frahm, meaning a return to Salina will be no easy task.

"This group of seniors has gotten better every year," said Elliott. "I know they wanted to do better today (Saturday), because they are so competitive."

Returning are six starters including Logan's sister Caitlyn Wark and their #2 starting pitcher,



From left, Logan Wark, Laura Dougherty, Chanelle Staats and Rhett Martin celebrated Colby's 3-2 victory over Perry-LeCompton Friday in the first round of the 4A state tournament in Salina. It was the first state tournament game Colby won in school history.

Skyler Mengel. Caitlyn was the only Lady Eagle to record a hit in all three games.

"We know we can at least get past the first game and do something at state" said Caitlyn. "I think that will help."

"We want to be experienced getting here instead of doing it once every four years," said Elliott. "We've got kids that like to play ball and play in the summer, so we'll fill the spots and see how we do."

Logan, a Colby Community College signee who has been the main cog in this recent renaissance of Lady Eagle softball, says she's confident the program is only going to continue to flourish.

"All the younger girls have played summer ball, and they know what they're doing so they should be good the next couple of years," said Logan.

One thing's for sure, Logan and her classmates have set the bar pretty high.

State tournament game recaps are listed below:

### First Round: Colby 3 Perry-LeCompton 2 (8 innings)

The New York Yankees have Mr. October. Colby's Tara Powell may have just earned the nickname "Mrs. May."

With Colby and Perry-LeCompton nipped at 2 in the top of the eighth, Powell delivered a game-winning single through the hole between first and second that scored Brena Jones from second base.

Jones, who finished 2-3, jumped-started what looked to be another fruitless inning with a two-out, bases empty single. She reached second after Perry-LeCompton's centerfielder bobbled the ball.

Powell made sure her efforts weren't in vain.

"It feels really good just knowing I helped get the last score in," said Powell, who finished 2-3 with two RBIs. "I felt really confident in myself when we got in scoring position I could get her in."

It was Jones and Powell who also combined to tie the game in the sixth.

Four outs from elimination, Jones got on with a single and later stole second. Powell then bounced a single into centerfield, and Jones scored standing up. Those were the first two hits for Colby since the second inning off Lady Kaw starter Courtney Kasson.

"I think it definitely put the pressure on them for maybe the first time in the game," said Elliott. "When we got it tied, you could see it. I think that was a big turning point in the game for sure."

Once the Lady Eagles got the momentum back, Logan Wark didn't let it slip away. Wark (10-3) retired the last nine Perry-LeCompton hitters to pick up the victory. In her eight innings of work, she allowed one earned run and seven hits.

"Logan was just tough as always," said Elliott. "She always

**“We’ve come from not even making the regional finals to placing at state**

Logan Wark,  
Lady Eagle senior

bares down and does the job every time you ask her to. We couldn't have asked for more out of her."

Wark worked her way out of trouble in the early going and surrendered just one run through the first three innings.

In the fifth, the Lady Kaws took a 2-1 lead on an RBI bloop single by LeAnne Pringle.

Staked to that lead, Kasson, who entered with a 19-0 record, couldn't make it hold up.

Kasson lost her first game of the year despite allowing only one earned run and six hits. She struck out eight and walked none.

Colby topped the scoring in the top of the first on a sacrifice fly by Jones. The Lady Eagles wouldn't score again until the sixth, but it was well worth the wait.

### Semifinals: Girard 7 Colby 0

Girard was fine giving Colby outs to score one run.

The Lady Eagles didn't take them, and the Trojans went on to score a whole lot more.

A scoreless game got away from the Lady Eagles in the fifth inning thanks in large part to two bunt hits that were intended to be sacrifices.

After Girard's Starr McLeod led off the inning with a single, Kaela Chevero laid down a bunt that Logan didn't react to fast enough and Chevero reached safely.

Taylor Stewart laid down another bunt that was fielded by Logan. She pump faked, but didn't throw to first base. That loaded the bases with no one out.

"I think we just didn't execute as well as we should of," said Logan. "I probably should have been getting the outs, but I didn't want to have them score so I tried to pump fake. It didn't work, so I should have done something different."

The Lady Eagles got a force out at the plate on Chevero, but BryAnna Burks got Girard on the board with a line drive single to center. A sacrifice fly from Alysha Poteat made it 2-0.

"That's how we've always played it," said Elliott. "We always leave our first baseman home. They're the first team that's ever capitalized on that. We didn't make adjustments, but the kids need to do that on their own. That definitely hurt us."

Colby's pain only increased in the sixth as Girard added five more runs to put the game out of reach.

An error by Chanelle Staats got things started. The Lady Trojans then strung four-straight hits together off Wark. Stewart and

Burks each had two-RBI doubles. "My arm was feeling good," said Wark. "I just wasn't pitching as well as I had earlier."

Colby had just one legitimate scoring chance in the game, but failed to capitalize.

Caitlyn Wark led off the fourth inning with a double to right-center. Jordan Krzycki popped out to center, and Logan popped to right advancing her sister to third.

Unlike she had the night before, Brena Jones was unable to deliver the big hit and struck out, leaving Caitlyn stranded.

"You'd like to think if you execute and get a run on the board, maybe the other team has a little pressure on them," said Elliott.

Instead, it was Girard applying the pressure the rest of the way.

Colby finished with three hits off McLeod; the other two coming courtesy of Kiri Kendrick. McLeod struck out eight Colby batters and allowed only one runner past second base.

Logan (10-3) took the loss. She worked six innings and allowed five earned runs and nine hits. She struck out four and walked none.

### 3rd Place Game: Andover Central 9 Colby 0

Armagost meant armageddon for the Lady Eagles in their season finale.

In a performance that surely ranks among the best in state tournament history, Andover Central junior Nikki Armagost went 4-4 with three home runs and four RBIs, struck out 16 Colby hitters and allowed just one hit.

Armagost's first home run came off Wark in the third to make it 5-0. She added a two-run blast off



JOEY FALKOFF/Colby Free Press  
Lady Eagle junior Tara Powell connected on this pitch Saturday against Girard. Powell had the game-winning and game-tying hits for Colby in their win Friday.

Wark to center in the fifth and another solo shot off Skyler Mengel in the seventh.

"I was seeing it like a beach ball," said Armagost. "It was coming in huge, and I just crushed it." In the circle, Armagost blew Colby hitters away all day, especially early on as she punched out eight of the first nine she faced.

"They just kept going up in the zone on us," said Elliott.

"You can't do that against good pitchers. I saw us do things at the plate today we hadn't done all year."

Pitching her third game in less than 18 hours, Wark wasn't her usual self either.

Wark was pulled in the fifth after giving up her second homer to Armagost. In four plus innings, she allowed eight runs, six earned

and seven hits. "I know after she gave up that first run she was ticked and tried to throw harder," said Elliott. "I don't think she ran out of gas."

Andover Central (21-5) plated four runs in the second to take a 4-0 lead. They added another in the third on an RBI triple by Victoria Wilson.

"I haven't faced a team that hits it that good," said Wark.

Despite the rough outing, Logan finished with a 10-4 record. After four years in the orange and black, her next start will be in a white and blue Colby Lady Trojan uniform.

"You can't replace someone like Logan," said Elliott. "I'll probably never have a competitor like her again."

Colby finished the season 19-4.



JOEY FALKOFF/Colby Free Press  
Senior pitcher Logan Wark got ready to fire to first base during Colby's 7-0 loss to Girard Saturday. Wark took the loss, but finished the season 10-4.

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