

Eagles eye Panthers

By Andy Heintz
Colby Free Press
aheintz@nwkansas.com

After last week's loss to Smith Center, the Colby High Eagles' will be trying to get back on the right track when the football team goes on the road to take on Concordia (2-4) at 7 p.m. tonight.

The Eagles have to win at least two of their next three games to have a chance at qualifying for the state playoffs. Coach Chris Gardner said he would rather his team win all three.

"Our goal is to play one play-off game at home," he said. "To do that, we must win our next three games."

"We can't worry about the playoffs until the next three games are through."

He talked about the positive affects that would come from winning tonight's game.

"We can set a tone for the next two games," said Gardner.

To do that, he said, Eagles' must re-establish themselves as a physical team.

The Eagles have completed two-thirds of their regular season. They are tied with Oakley for second place in the Northwest Kansas League. Other than last week's game against the Redmen, the Eagles' defense has played well.

Senior middle linebackers Tanner Kriss and Corey Sager both average over 14 tackles per game. Junior outside linebacker Ethan Stickel averages 13. Senior defensive ends Breck Arnberger and Treat Bugbee average 13.4 and 11.8 respectively, and junior defensive linemen Adam Weber averages 11.4.

The team is giving up an average of 15.3 points per game, but if you don't include Smith Center, which beat Colby 40-0, make that just 10.3.

The Eagles' offense is averaging 23.2 per game this year. Senior quarterback Heath Stephens is averaging 10 points per game. Stickel has had a solid year, averaging 4.5 yards per carry.

Sophomore Adam Flanagan has been playing well recently and leads the team in receptions with 28 this year.

Gardner said he wants his offense to be able to pose both a running and passing threat during these last three games.

"We want to be clicking on all cylinders on offense," he said.

The Eagles have yet to lose a game this year to a team with a losing record. This bodes well for them, since in two of their last three games they will be facing teams with losing records — including Concordia.

Senior golfer qualifies for state

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Senior Jessica Leiker will be ending her high school golf career on a high note after qualifying for the state tournament at regional competition Monday at Ulysses.

Leiker shot a 114 for 18 holes to take 12th place.

The team had to deal with some troublesome weather on the golf course.

"The conditions were really tough," Williams said. "It rained a ton the day before and the course was soaked. The winds blew over 30 mph and the high was 50 degrees."

"It took a combination of toughness and skill to get through this regional with these conditions," Coach Rick Williams said. "Jessica didn't shoot her best round, but nobody was out there setting personal bests. Jessica was able

to grind it out and get back to the clubhouse with a score that earned her a trip to the state tournament."

The team finished fifth out of seven at the regional. The other six teams at regionals were Ulysses, Nickerson, Russell, Pratt, Hugoton and Kingman. Only the top three teams qualify for state as a team.

Freshman Kaylee Keck came within a heartbeat of qualifying for state, shooting a 115 for 13th place.

"Kaylee has a ton of potential and is going to do some great things on the golf course for Colby High School in the next three years," Williams said. "It would have been neat for her to cap off her impressive freshman season with a trip to the state tourney, but she will learn and grow from this experience."



Leiker

Kaylee was one stroke away from being in the next best five that go to state as individuals, said Williams.

Senior Kayla Sloan played her final round of her high school career, shooting a 147.

"She was a little disappointed in her regional score," Williams said, "but her improvement was amazing, as her regional score from last year was 53 strokes higher That is some amazing improvement."

Sophomore Audra Fleming shot a 127, which was 23 strokes lower than her regional score last year, Williams said.

Junior Michelle Schroeder shot 143 and junior Heather Griggs shot a 173.

"Michelle and Heather didn't even go to regionals last year because they were not ready for this level of golf," Williams said.

"This year, they were there and they competed well."

Leiker will compete at state on Monday at the Cherry Oaks Golf Course in Cheney. Her tee time has yet to be established.

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