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By Andy Heintz
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The famous Goodland and Colby sports rivalry lived up to its billing on Tuesday at the Community Building.

The Eagles' basketball team beat rival Goodland 52-51 in a game that went down to the final buzzer. Colby had to mount a fourth quarter rally to get the victory.

"We realized we might lose to a rival," said senior Ryley Haas.

The Eagles were really in a rhythm offensively in the second half, hitting almost 55 percent of their shots.

"We got a lot of good inside looks," said Haas. "Your confidence goes up once you hit a couple of inside shots. When your confidence is way up," you can make anything."

Coach Jon McKee said he was happy with how the boys ran their offense.

"We were getting the ball inside and kicking the ball out," he said.

Junior Corbin Stephens scored the winning bucket when he knifed through the lane past a couple Cowboy defenders and made a layup to give the Eagles a 52-51 lead with 29.5 seconds left.

Stephens had a team-high 29 on seven of 17 shooting. He was two of three from beyond the arc and nine of 10 from the free-throw line.

Senior Brock Wagoner knocked down a three-pointer early in the game to give his team a 5-2 lead in the first quarter.

Coach McKee said Wagoner was floor leader for his team, especially on defense.

"He is constantly talking out there," he said.

Later in the quarter the Cowboys' Ryan Hillmen nailed a three-pointer of his own to put his team up 11-10. Goodland scored the games next seven points and led 18-11 at the end of the first quarter.

The Cowboys extended their lead to 21-11 early in the second quarter before Stephens banked in a three-pointer cut their lead to seven. Haas made an acrobatic layup to narrow the gap to 21-16. Goodland led 26-19 at the half.

Stephens buried a pretty jumper from the left baseline to cut the Cowboy's lead to 33-28 about three minutes into the third. Hillmen scored on a reverse layup to give Goodland a seven point advantage. Senior Braden McKee found a cutting Winger for a layup to make it 35-30. The Cowboys' Robert Cowan hit a midrange jumper to reclaim a seven point lead for his team.

Goodland led 39-32 early in the fourth before junior Andrew Ketchum scored a nice drive down the lane. Later in the quarter, Stephens buried a three-pointer to narrow the gap to 44-41. The Cowboys still clung to their narrow lead with less than two minutes left. Haas hit a huge three-pointer to cut Goodland's lead to 46-45 with 1:35 remaining.

Several seconds later Stephens was fouled on a drive down the lane. The referee ruled he was fouled before he tried to score so he was faced with a one-and-one free-throw situation. He sank both his free throws to give his team a 50-49 lead.

Unfortunately for the Eagles, Stephens fouled the Cowboy's Hillman on an inbounds pass in backcourt. Hillman hit both his free throws to make it 51-50 Goodland. But Stephens quickly recovered from his mental error by slicing through the Cowboys' defense and making a layup to put Colby up 52-51 with 29.5 seconds left.

Winger was whistled for a foul down low on the Eagles' next defensive stand. Goodland's player missed both his free throws and junior Spencer Tubbs got the rebound and passed to Winger who was fouled while taking the ball up the court. He missed the front end of a one-and-one free throw giving the Cowboys one more chance to win the game. They got won good look at the basket, but it clanked off the front of the rim and Colby came away with a 52-51 victory.

Coach McKee called the win a complete team effort. He also said he was happy with the way his team handled Goodland's press during the game.

"We were breaking the press with a pass instead of a dribble," he said.

Colby only committed 13 turnovers.

Stephens had 29 and Haas scored 10, including two three pointers. Braden McKee scored six and grabbed nine rebounds, Wagoner, five. Ketchum, two points, four assists, Tubbs, two points, three blocks and Winger, two points.

With the win, Colby improved to 6-12. They will play Rawlins County at 8 p.m. Friday at the Community Building.

ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press
Colby High junior Spencer Tubbs took a jump shot during the Eagles' game against rival Goodland Tuesday at the Community Building.

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The Lady Eagles avenged their 38-27 loss to Goodland earlier this season by thumping the Cowgirls 45-30 on Tuesday at the Community Building. Colby dominated the game from the opening tip to the final buzzer.

The Eagles' defense gave Goodland fits in the first quarter. The Lady Eagles, especially junior Kayla Hockersmith, got several steals from the triangle 2 defense they applied during the quarter. Coach Parker McKee said he had three girls play zone and had two of his players guard the Cowgirls' Ashley Archer and Jade Herl, two of Goodland's top scorers, man to man.

The Lady Eagles' suffocating defense held the Cowgirls to only one point in the first quarter and 20 percent for the game. Goodland's only point in the quarter was a free throw by Paige Phillips with 20 seconds left.

Sophomore Morgan Bell had a tremendous game scoring a team-high 19 points on eight of 10 shooting. She made all three of her three-point attempts.

McKee said it was the best offensive game she's had all year.

Hockersmith ripped the ball away from her opponent and sped down court for a layup to give her team an early 2-0 lead in the first quarter. She got another steal and layup on the Cowgirls' next offensive possession to make it 4-0. The two plays set the tone for the rest of the game.

Later in the quarter, Bell nailed a three-pointer to extend Colby's lead to 9-0. The Lady Eagles extended their lead to 13-0 with a half a minute left in the quarter. Goodland managed to get one point on the scoreboard before the quarter came to an end.

Sophomore Katherine Kaus made a left-handed layup early in the second quarter. Then sophomore Katrina Kaus, Katherine's twin sister, hit a mid-range jumper from above the free-throw line that hit the rim and the backboard before falling through the net. Freshman Alexa Haas nailed a three-pointer from the left corner and Colby led 27-8 at the half. The Lady Eagles forced the Cowgirls to shoot fourteen percent in the half on two of 14 shooting.

Later in the second half, Bell nailed a three-pointer from the top of the key to give her team a 41-17 lead. Moments later, she scored a bucket to make it 43-17.

McKee cleared his bench in the fourth so all the girls could get some playing time. The Lady Eagles cruised to a 45-30 victory.

Morgan Bell had 19, Katherine Kaus added eight and Katrina Kaus and Kayla Hockersmith both had six. Hockersmith had an impressive nine steals. Haas had five points and junior Kelsey Shields chipped in one.

With the win, the girls improved to 12-6.

Royals pitcher looking to improve

SURPRISE, Ariz. (AP) — Brian Bannister considers his up-and-down 2009 season to be incomplete.

He opened 3-0 with a 1.48 ERA in his first four starts, then went 1-3 with an 8.20 ERA in his next five starts.

Bannister improved to 3-4 with a 2.61 ERA in 11 starts from June 9-Aug. 12, but then lost his final five decisions. He didn't pitch due to shoulder fatigue after a Sept. 2 start at Oakland, when he lasted just 1 1-3 innings.

"I was battling some stuff," Bannister said Tuesday after throwing off a mound at the Royals volunteer minicamp. "I really just didn't get a chance to finish the season."

Bannister had a 9.29 ERA in his final six starts.

"I was still battling, but the numbers I was putting up that month were unacceptable," he said. "I was disappointed. It wasn't fair to the guys."

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By Judy Rogers
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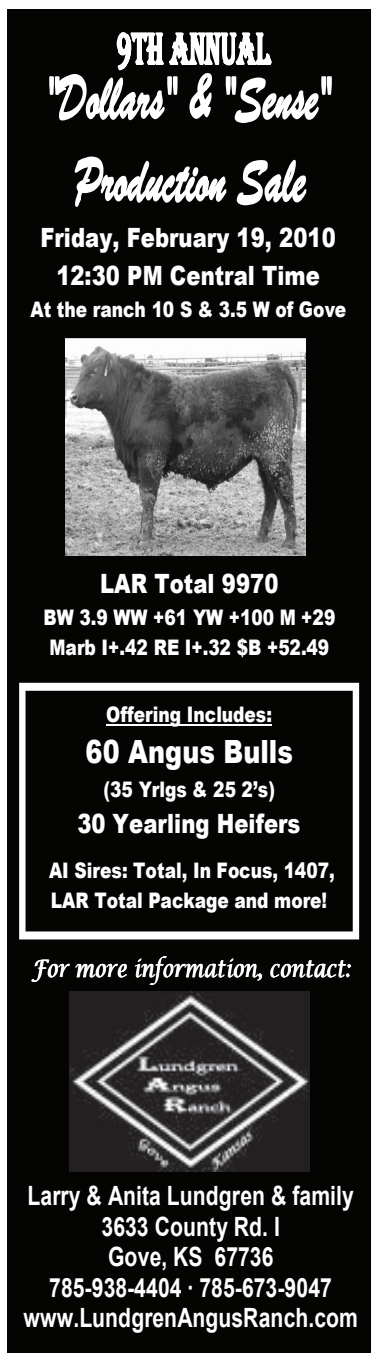
The Golden Plains High School boys played a tight game against the Hill City Ringnecks on Feb. 9 before the Ringnecks took over for a 69-43 win.

The Bulldogs had a tough first quarter, scoring eight points to the Ringnecks 19. Golden Plains found the bucket in the second quarter, however, scoring 15 points, but Hill City added 16 and led 35-23 at halftime.

Golden Plains regrouped in the locker room and came out in the second half with determination and some sharp shooting. The boys brought the game to within two before Hill City shut them down.

The Bulldogs trailed 50-35 when their offense went cold. They only managed to score another eight as Hill City finished the quarter with an additional 19 points and won the game 69-43.

Dylan Moss led the Bulldogs' offense with 12 points, all from three pointers.

"We had a good third quarter," said Moss.

Jordan Spresser and Jarrett Marker had six, Corey Shaw five, Issac Brockelman four, Jonathan Broeckelman and Tate Preston three, and Aaron Emigh and Cole Christensen two.