

# Stars define year in area sports

By Andy Heintz

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Thomas County had an intriguing year in sports, from individual and group accomplishments by area athletes and the hiring of new coaches.

The Colby Free Press' choices as the top 10 sporting events in 2010:

**1** The Colby High softball team makes it to the state tournament for the third time in 14 years by winning the Class 4A regional tournament in Ulysses. The Lady Eagles crushed Russell 7-1 in the quarterfinals, and beat Pratt 5-3 in the finals. The one-two pitching combination of freshman Kenzie Curry and sophomore Skyler Mengel helped the girls finish with a 16-8 record. Mengel threw a no-hitter against Scott City earlier in the season, allowing only one runner on base the entire game.

**2** Colby High freshman Alexa Haas took first in the 400-meter run with a time of 58.69 seconds at the Class 4A state championship meet at Wichita State University's Cessna Stadium last spring. The Lady Eagles track and field squad finished sixth out of 41 teams at state.

Golden Plains junior Cole Christensen finished eighth at the Class 1A state meet in the high jump with a leap of 5 feet, 10 inches. Brewster sophomore Kasey Hoyt and senior Spencer Holm qualified for Class 1A track and field in the 1,600 meter-run and hurdles.

**3** Colby High junior Emilea Finley dominated the competition in her rookie cross country season. Finley placed first in the first race of her career at the Hill City Invitational and she went on to win the majority of the races she was in. Finley took second out of 99 runners at the Class 4A state cross country meet with a time of 15 minutes and 32 seconds.

**4** Former Colby High pitcher Levi Schlick was one of the 1,525 players selected for the 2010 Major League Baseball Draft when he was chosen by the Chicago White Sox. Schlick had already signed to pitch for Kansas State University on May 25. He decided to honor his agreement with K-State and turned down an offer made by the White Sox.

"I grew up loving Kansas State," Schlick said, adding that the Wildcats will have a young but talented team this spring.

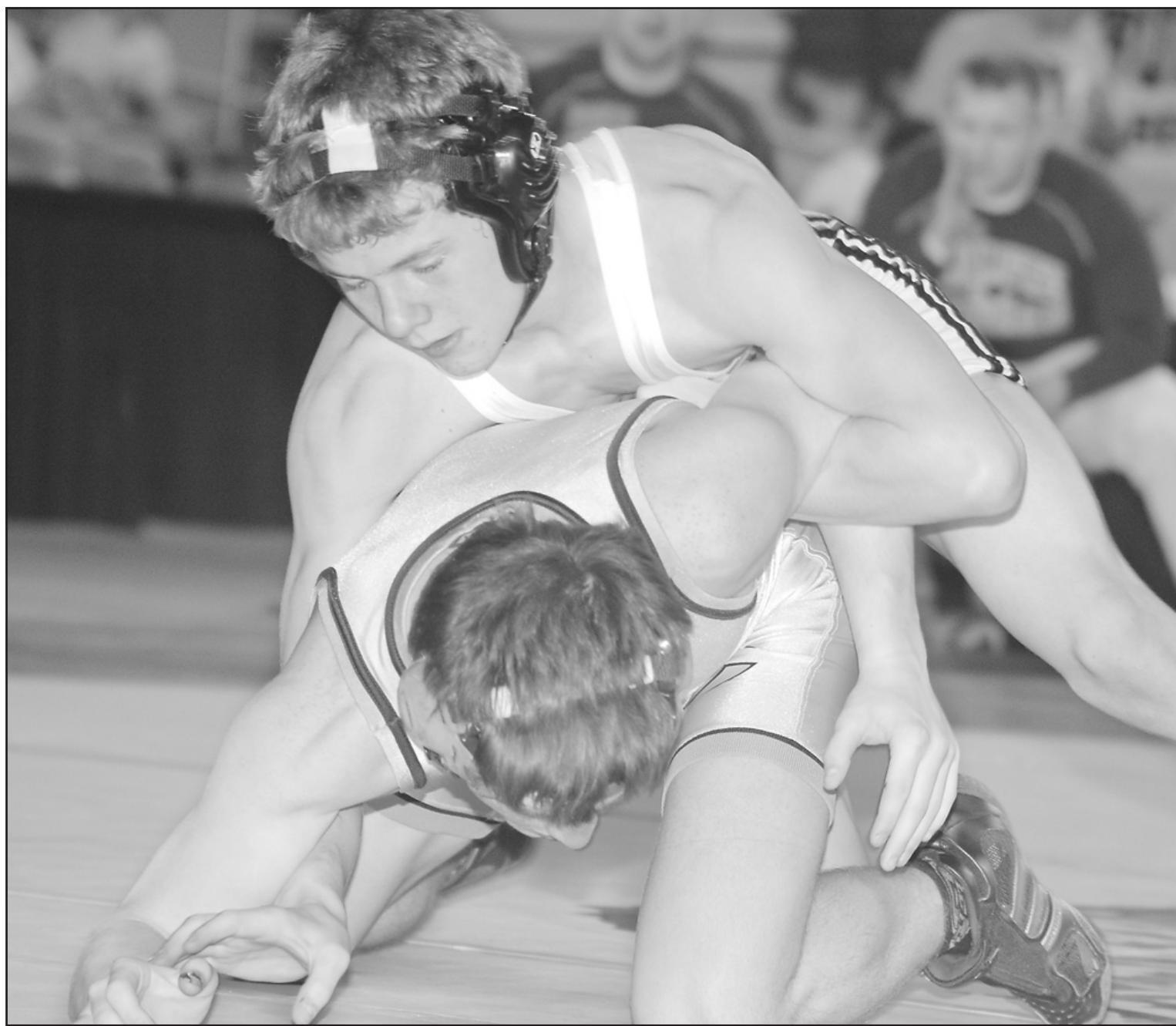
**5** Colby College freshman runner Edward Limo took first in the Kansas Jayhawk Community College Western Division and second in the region at the 2010 Regional Cross Country Championships in Arkansas City. Limo finished first out of 43 runners in his conference and second out of 93 in the region with a time of 25 minutes, 1 second.

The freshman sensation was named one of the Kansas Jayhawks Conference Verizon Wireless Runners of the Week in weeks 3 and 5 of the season for taking first in his first two races, including placing first out of 207 runners at the Oklahoma State Jamboree.

**6** First-year Colby College wrestling coach David Nordhues made his debut at the third annual Daniel Cormier Open in late October. The event marked the first appearance here by former Colby wrestling coach Steve Lampe's new Northwest Tech wrestling team.

Lampe coached at Colby for 35 years before retiring and accepting job at the technical college. Lampe is also the Mavericks' athletic director. During his time at the college, the Trojans won the National Junior College wrestling championship in 1999 and were runners up in 2003.

**7** Lady Trojans sophomore runner Scarla Nero won the 10,000 meters at the National Junior College Athletic



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

Colby High junior Konnor Kriss took third place at the Class 4A state wrestling tournament last season in the 119-pound class.

Association Outdoor Track and Field Championships with a time of 37 minutes, 17.66 seconds in May. Nero graduated from Colby and joined her older sister Tonya, also a former runner for the Lady Trojans, at Wichita State University this fall.

**8** Colby High senior Caitlyn Wark was named female tennis player of the year by the website CatchItKansas.com. The site, a production of KWCH TV in Wichita and Hutchinson, covers high school sports. Wark got 35 percent of the vote.

The senior received the award for finishing 36-0 and winning the Class 4A state championship in her junior season. Wark finished third at state this season and has signed to play tennis at Fort Hays State next season.

**9** Colby High senior graduate Kalen Rasmussen finished his storied career with the Colby Swim Club this summer. He went undefeated in nine of his 12 seasons in the Northwest Kansas Swim League and he qualified for the division I Missouri Valley Championships in four competitions his junior year. The events were 50- and 100-meter freestyle and 100- and 200-meter breaststroke. Rasmussen was the only boy 15 to 18 to qualify for Division 1 in the Western Kansas Swim League that year.

The Western Kansas League has more and bigger teams than the Northwest League, his dad, Gordon Rasmussen said. He said the teams in the league have more swimming at their high schools, making it more competitive than the northwest.

**10** The Colby High wrestling team finished fifth out of 72 teams at the state tournament

last season. Freshman Dustin Reed took second place in the 103-pound class and his brother, senior Nathan Reed, placed third at 112. Sophomore Konnor Kriss came in third at 119.

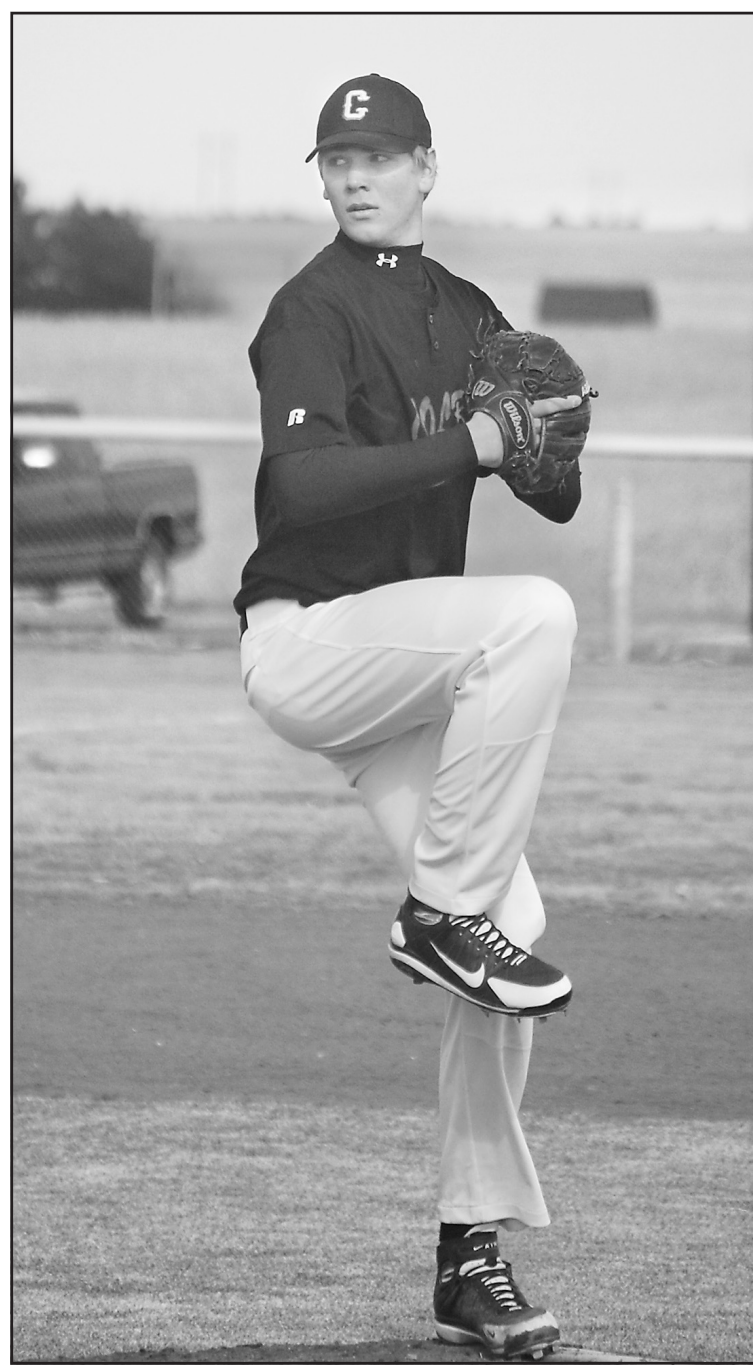
Other notable sporting events in 2010 include six members of the Colby Community College baseball team being arrested for being in possession of what is alleged to be marijuana, along with drug paraphernalia (baggies, pipes) and cash in late October. Daniel Bolte, Joseph Briceno, Josh Jurado, Terry Steiner, Christopher McIntosh and David Bauer were the players arrested. Two people not on the team, Skyler Craft and Matthew Stevens, were also arrested. All eight were charged with conspiracy to commit a level 3 nonperson felony and for having no drug tax stamps.

Coach Ryan Carter said the players have been kicked off the team.

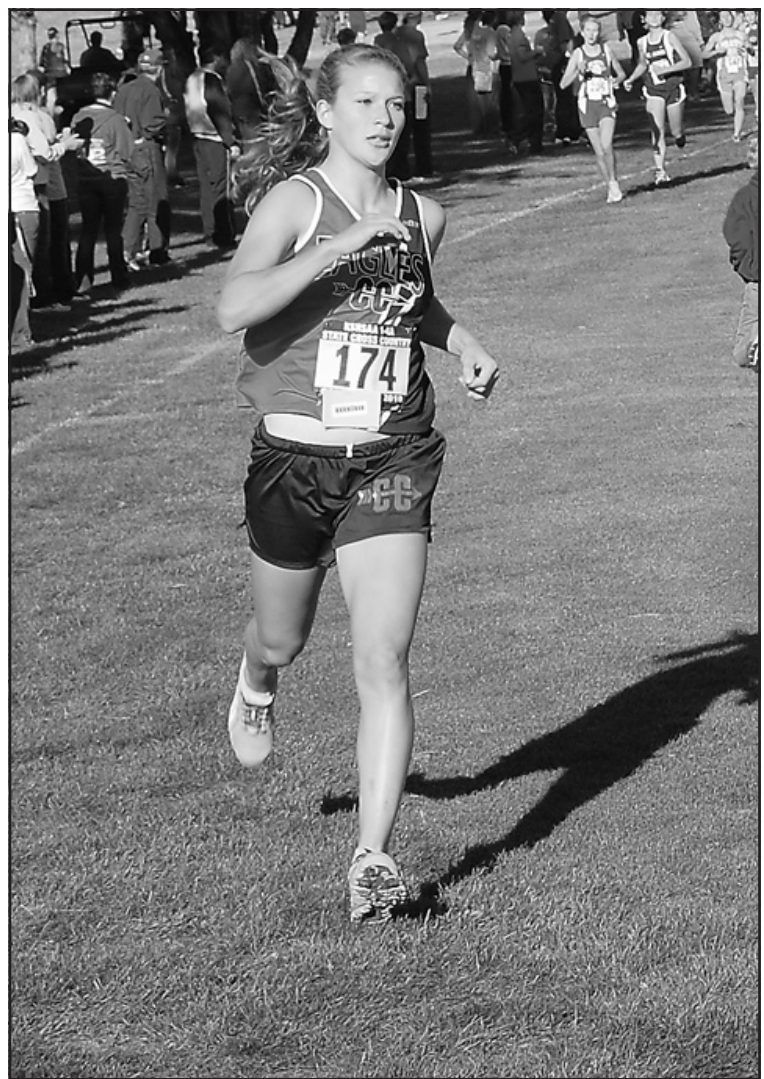
Colby College star freshman pitcher Holly Denny's softball career ended abruptly after she got upset and left the Lady Trojans' dugout before the second half of a doubleheader against Garden City Community College. Apparently, Denny had gotten in an argument with coaches between games.

Denny played a vital role in helping Colby finish 26-23, a 16-game improvement from the previous year. On the mound, she went 16-8 with a 1.21 earned run average.

Colby High junior Kaylee Keck finished 15th in the Class 4A state golf tournament in Topeka and the Lady Eagles became the second girls' golf team in school history to qualify for state. The 1998 team was the first.



Former Colby High pitcher Levi Schlick, shown here pitching for the Eagles, was drafted by the Chicago White Sox in the Major League draft this year, but opted to pitch at Kansas State University instead.



Colby High junior Emilea Finley finished second out of 99 runners at the Class 4A state cross country meet in Wamego this fall in late October with a time of 15 minutes, 32 seconds.

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