



SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

Fourth grader Ryan Myers ran the ball for the Colby Eagles third and fourth grade football team Saturday morning down Dennen Field against the Phillipsburg Cowboys. The Colby team lost 20-28 after a touchdown near the end of the game, making them 1-2 in the West Kansas Football League. Their next game is Saturday against Oakley.

## Colby third, fourth graders lose close game to Phillipsburg

By Sam Dieter

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Colby came close to a win when the boys got the ball back on their own 47-yard line with 15 seconds left in the game, but instead Phillipsburg intercepted a pass and ran it in for a touchdown, followed by a two-point conversion that put an end to the game, with the score 20-28.

It wasn't the high school team, but third and fourth graders who showed up at 10:30 a.m. Saturday at Dennen Field, where the older boys played the night before. Two other peeewe football teams played after them.

"I just kind of help out," said coach Lance Krannawitter, whose son, Jason, almost caught an 8-year-old's version of a Hail Mary — about 15 yards — in the last

five seconds of the game.

Krannawitter, the principal at Colby Grade School, said the West Kansas Football League has teams for kids in different grades, but is not attached to any school.

Depending on the grade, the league has as many as 19 teams, depending on the kids' age, spread throughout western Kansas.

Colby has fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade teams in the league. On Saturday, those teams played their third game in a six-game season, not including playoffs.

The fourth graders are now 1-2 for the season, Krannawitter said. Their next game will be at home against Oakley, followed by away games against Burlington, Colo., and Goodland.

They lost to Victoria last week, but beat Norton in their first game.

"Just being with the kids, teach-

ing them how to play football, learn the fundamentals, teach them teamwork, that kind of thing" was his favorite part of coaching. He said most of the coaches have kids on the team.

Another player was Collin Geishler, who played as both a wide receiver and a cornerback. Despite the loss, Collin made a couple of catches, gaining plenty of yards for his team.

"There was one from the 40 to like the 20," he said, adding that on the same drive, "I ran into like the two."

He nodded in agreement as his dad Ed listed some of the things he likes about the game: being outside, playing with his team, being around his friends.

"But I don't like getting hit by those chubby guys that weigh five thousand pounds," he said.

## Volleyball squad wins one at tourney

The Colby High varsity volleyball team played in the Topeka-Seaman Invitational on Saturday, winning one match and losing three.

The Lady Eagles played in Pool B, facing teams from Topeka-Hayden, Manhattan, Silver Lake and Shawnee Mission North.

Other teams at the tourney were Lawrence Free State, Junction City, Topeka-Seaman, Holton and Kansas City Summer.

Colby's first match was with Shawnee, where the Lady Eagles got their only win of the day. The

girls won in two sets, 25-11 and 25-7.

Next up for the varsity was Topeka-Hayden, which defeated the Lady Eagles in two, 25-10 and 25-18.

Colby met Manhattan at the net after that, but the girls were shut down in two sets 25-14 and 25-19.

The Lady Eagles' final match was against Silver Lake. Colby fell in two sets, 25-16 and 25-11.

The Colby varsity will head to Oakley for another tournament at 9 a.m. Saturday.

## Heartland wins two for week

By Kayla Cornett

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The Heartland Christian football team won two games last week, defeating Grinnell-Wheatland's junior varsity on Sept. 17 and Wichita's varsity on Friday.

"Heartland is playing a mixed schedule this year of varsity and JV," Coach Steve Ziegelmeier said.

The Crusaders (2-0) traveled to Grainfield to face Grinnell-Wheatland's junior varsity, shutting them out 46-0.

Blaine Wertz had three rushing touchdowns, Brent Wilson had two rushing and Caleb Morris ran in one, as well as a rushing two-point conversion.

Matt Wertz grabbed one pass for a touchdown and Brook Ziegelmeier caught one for a two-point conversion. He also had an interception.

Ziegelmeier said the team had excellent defense, but needs to improve its kick-off coverage. He said center Gabriel Schriener had a great game.

"We run a lot of shotgun formation," he said, "and his snaps were perfect."

The Crusaders then played the varsity Wichita Warriors at St. John's Military Academy in Salina.

"This game was played at Salina to make it more convenient for both teams to travel," the coach said.

Heartland stomped the Warriors 34-6, with Blaine Wertz scoring four rushing touchdowns, including a 70-yard run in the third quarter.

Brook Ziegelmeier caught an eight-yard pass for a touchdown and had two interceptions on defense, giving him a total of three this season. He broke up three passes.

Caleb Morris and Brennan Ziegelmeier each ran for a two-point conversion.

Ziegelmeier said the team's defense was excellent once again, with defensive coach Brad Wertz having the kids play "an aggressive, swarming defense."

Ziegelmeier said the kick-off coverage was good against Wichita and helped them win the field-position battle.

He said the Crusaders were up 28-0 at the end of the first half, but the boys went into a slower mode the next half.

"It was our team's first real test of a full game," Coach Ziegelmeier said, "and with only 10 players, we found how difficult it is to maintain intensity the whole duration of a game with most players not getting much of a breather."

"The offensive line — especially guards Matt Wertz and Cody Schmeiser — did a fantastic job of opening holes for the running backs. They read the defense well and allowed us to establish a rushing game."

The coach said the team had a good number of fans at the away game.

"We had great fan support for an away game," he said. "Every player's parents were in attendance besides many other supporters."

The Crusaders' next game will be a varsity 6-man football game at 1 p.m. Saturday in Bethune, Colo.

"Six-man football rules are a bit different, so much preparation will be needed for that game," Coach Ziegelmeier said. "The biggest difference is that the person receiving the snap of the ball cannot advance the ball, but must hand off or pass. Also, a first down is 15 yards instead of 10."

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