

Orange and Black tourney brackets set

By Kayla Cornett
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Colby High School's 28th Annual Paul Wintz/Tom Bowen Orange and Black Basketball Classic is right around the corner and the tournament brackets have been set.

The tourney will run from Thursday to Saturday, Jan. 17 to 19, at the high school gym and the Community Building.

On Jan. 17, girls and boys games will begin at 3 p.m. and end with games at 8:15 p.m. The girls schedule:

3 p.m. – Liberal (3-5) vs. Scott City (1-3), Community Building.

4:45 p.m. – McCook (9-2) vs. Beloit (1-4), high school gym.

6:30 p.m. – Colby (3-2) vs. Burlington (0-6), Community Building.

8:15 p.m. – Palmer Ridge (6-1) vs. Hugoton (3-2), high school gym.

The boys schedule for Jan. 17:

3 p.m. – Hays (6-0) vs. Burlington (0-6), high school gym.

4:45 p.m. – Liberal (2-5) vs. Wichita West (1-4), Community Building.

6:30 p.m. – Palmer Ridge (4-3) vs. Hugoton (2-4), high school gym.

8:15 p.m. – Colby (0-5) vs. McCook (6-2), Community Building.

The next round will start at 3 p.m. Jan. 18. In the girls bracket, the winners of the Palmer Ridge-Hugoton and Liberal-Scott City

games will play at 3 p.m. at the Community Building. The losers will play in the consolation bracket at 8 p.m. at the high school gym.

The winners of the McCook-Beloit and Colby-Burlington games will face off at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Building. The losers will meet at 4:45 p.m. at the high school gym.

In the boys bracket on Jan. 18, the winners of Palmer Ridge-Hugoton and Liberal-Wichita West will be on the court at 4:45 p.m. at the Community Building. The losers will play at 6:30 p.m. at the high school gym.

The winners of Hays-Burlington and Colby-McCook will face each other at 8:15 p.m. at the Community Building. The losers will play at 3 p.m. at the high school gym.

The final games will be played Saturday, Jan. 19. The girls seventh-place game will be at noon at the high school gym; the fourth-place game at 2 p.m. at the Community Building; the third-place game will be at 4 p.m. at the high school gym; and the championship at 6 p.m. at the Community Building.

The boys seventh-place game will be at noon at the Community Building; the fourth-place game will be at 2 p.m. at the high school gym; the third-place game will be at 4 p.m. at the Community Building; and the championship at 8:15 p.m. at the Community Building.

For information, contact Athletic Director Larry Gabel at 460-5300 or lgabel@colbyea-gles.org.



The crowd cheered as the Colby High varsity girls basketball team was announced last year during the Orange and Black Classic at the Community Building. Senior Morgan Bell got high fives from the audience before the start of the game.

KAYLA CORNETT
Colby Free Press

Hockey lockout over; sides reach agreement

By Ira Podell and Ronald Blum
AP Sports Writers

NEW YORK – Now that a tentative deal is done, one big question remains: When is the puck finally going to drop on the long-delayed hockey season?

Few answers emerged Sunday after a wild finish to 16 hours of hard negotiating produced the agreement that will ultimately end the NHL lockout and get the players back to work.

There was no announcement regarding whether there will be a 48- or 50-game season and when it will begin. Those details are expected in the next few days along with a plan for team owners to vote on the deal. The board of governors could meet in person within a few days or hold a vote via conference call.

Both the league and the players' association are working on a memorandum of understanding, which could be completed by Tuesday. Once it is reviewed, the players' ratification process can also begin.

Knowing how long the wait was to get to this point, a few more days of anticipation shouldn't be too much to take. Regular-season hockey games could be played within the next 10 days.

When representatives from the NHL and the union walked into a Manhattan hotel on Saturday, they knew they were running out of time to save the season.

After hours and hours of tense

talks, the sides finally achieved their elusive deal early Sunday morning, finding a way to restart a sport desperate to regain momentum and boost its prominence.

Ending a bitter dispute that wiped out a large part of the hockey season for the third time in less than two decades, the league and its union agreed to the framework of a 10-year labor contract that will allow a delayed schedule to start later this month.

On the 113th day of a management lockout and five days before the league's deadline for a deal, the bleary-eyed sides held a 6 a.m. news conference to announce there will be a season, after all.

NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman and union head Donald Fehr both appeared drained, wearing sweaters and not neckties, when they stood side by side at the hotel and announced labor peace.

"We have reached an agreement on the framework of a new collective bargaining agreement, the details of which need to be put to paper," Bettman said. "We've got to dot a lot of I's, cross a lot of T's. There's still a lot of work to be done, but the basic framework of the deal has been agreed upon."

The stoppage led to the cancellation of at least 480 games – the exact length of the curtailed schedule hasn't been determined – bringing the total of lost regular-season games to a minimum 2,178 during three lockouts under Bettman.

The agreement, which replaces the deal that expired Sept. 15, must

be ratified by the 30 team owners and approximately 740 players.

"Hopefully, within just a very few days, the fans can get back to watching people who are skating, and not the two of us," Fehr said.

Fehr became executive director of the NHL Players' Association in December 2010 after leading baseball players through two strikes and a lockout.

Players conceded early on in talks, which began in June, that they would accept a smaller percentage of revenue, and the negotiations were about how much lower.

With much of the money from its \$2 billion, 10-year contract with NBC back loaded toward the Stanley Cup playoffs in the spring – and now perhaps early summer – the league preferred to time the dispute for the start of the season in the fall.

Management made its decision knowing average regular-season attendance rose from 16,534 in 2003-04 to 16,954 in 2005-06 and only seven teams experienced substantial drops.

Flyers chairman Ed Snider told the Associated Press he was glad a partial schedule had been salvaged.

Still, the lockout could wipe out perhaps \$1 billion in revenue this season, given about 40 percent of the regular-season schedule won't be played.

And while the stoppage was major news in Canada, it was an afterthought for many American sports fans.

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