



KAYLA CORNETT/Colby Free Press
Colby senior Todd Kane made the 4A all-state first team.

No sweat! Sluggers split debut

By R.B. Headley
Colby Free Press

Bright lights brought out a far better performance from the Colby Sluggers Sunday night along with one brilliant philosophy.

Stop thinking so much!
“We were a little too analytical in that first game,” coach Jarod Hamilton explained. “You can tell a team’s thinking too much when you see things out there that they never do in practice. We just needed to relax and play baseball.”

The Sluggers achieved this goal while salvaging a season-opening doubleheader split with Burlington, Colo.

Numerous errors and mental miscues helped Burlington score 12 runs before three innings were done in game one.

Yet the visitors would only touch home two more times again. While Burlington held on for a 14-11 opening win, the Sluggers dominated game two by a 7-0 final count.

Colby pitchers Luke Cox and Todd Kane teamed to throw the shutout. Cox struck out seven during his five frames with Kane needed only two innings to fan another five.

“I like it. I’m a pitching and defense kind of guy,” Hamilton said. “Obviously with 12 strikeouts, our defensive didn’t have to do a lot, but they made the plays when they were needed. Both our pitchers did a good job of getting ahead (in the count).”

A 3-run first put the Sluggers (1-1 record) ahead to stay. Mark Bremenkamp, Jake Thompson and Cox all drove home early runs.

The hitting was solid throughout both contests.

“That’s not something you often see in the first two games of the season,” Hamilton said.



R.B. HEADLEY/Colby Free Press

Colby pitcher Spencer Barnes threw three-plus innings of super relief during the Sluggers’ legion baseball season opener Sunday evening against Burlington, Colo., in Colby. Burlington still prevailed 14-11 in that first game, but the Sluggers recovered to take game two 7-0.

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Colby’s offense also started quickly during the first game.

Trailing 4-0 through just one half-inning, Cox launched a leadoff triple and Kane promptly doubled to start the Sluggers’ own 4-run opening frame.

Burlington rebuilt an even larger advantage of 12-5 as the Sluggers struggled with those early miscues. However, Colby began rallying again with Bremenkamp, Zack Stones and Caleb Manzanec all delivering key hits.

Perhaps most impressive was how “rookie” teammate Matthew Barnum performed at the plate.

Barnum smashed 2 singles in his Sluggers debut, the second scoring 2 runs and bringing Colby win 12-10.

“Matt Barnum amazed me. Here’s a guy with very little varsity time (this spring) coming up with some big RBIs,” Hamilton observed. “Just a young guy not being intimidated at all. I was really proud of how our younger guys played.”

Relief pitcher Spencer Barnes also earned high praise for slowing Burlington’s attack. The visitors didn’t score again during

innings four or five.

Yet Burlington’s last pitcher was also its best as he halted any late Colby comebacks.

Kane crushed a two-out torpedo over the center fielder’s head for his second double only to see the game with the next out.

“That guy is probably college material and is also left handed,” Hamilton said. “We won’t see many kids like that again, but it’s good experience for us.”

The Sluggers could face Burlington again this weekend.

Colby’s next scheduled action is a Burlington Wood Bat Tournament beginning Friday evening.

Eagles earn honors

The Colby High School baseball team has been awarded several post-season honors in the last two weeks.

Colby, who finished as Great West Athletic Conference runner-ups, had six players earn all-conference recognition.

Seniors Macen Shull and Todd Kane along with junior Luke Cox were all selected as first-team players.

Senior Zack Stones, junior Marc Bremenkamp and sophomore Josh Matchell all received honorable mention.

“It is nice to receive recognition on the all-GWAC team because the team is selected by the GWAC coaches. The guys who vote know baseball and we have all seen each other play,” Colby head coach Rick Williams said.

In addition to the all-conference honors, Colby had one player selected to the Kansas Association of Baseball Coaches 4A All-State team.

Outfielder Todd Kane, who batted .500 with 12 doubles, three triples, and 26 RBI, was a unanimous selection to the 4A All-State team.

Kane becomes the eighth player in Colby High history to be placed on the first team by the association.

In addition to being named All-State by the KABC, Kane was selected to play in the KABC All-Star Game that was played on Wednesday at Kansas State University.

“This is basically like baseball version of the Shrine Bowl,” Williams said.

Kane was 2 for 3 with an RBI and a run scored.

“Todd had a huge game and was definitely one of the best players on the field,” Williams concluded.

“He had the go ahead RBI in the top of the ninth, but his team was unable to hold the lead in the bottom of the ninth and the game actually ended in a 9-9 tie.”

Auto races roll again in Colby

Leading drivers from these five classes zoomed around the track as racing resumed at Thomas County Speedway Sunday night after a three-week break.

The complete main event results for racing divisions:

Econos: 1. Billy Turner, 2. Alex West, 3. Rocky Baalman, 4. Eric Clayville, 5. Ron Baalman, 6. Joey Foster, 7. Levi Jones. Ryan Baalman and Cody Berg did not finish.

Hobby Stocks: 1. Cody Graham, 2. Colton Pfeifer, 3. Mike Giesenhagen, 4. Brian Stich, 5. Richard Boon, 6. Eric Ross, 7. Curt Kennedy, 8. Tanner Moss, 9. Raymond Dechant, 10. Jason McIntyre, 11. Jake Eicher, 12. Joey Snethen. Daniel Irwin, Matt Gie-

senhagen and Tyrel Smith did not finish.

Sport Mods: 1. Dustin Daniels, 2. Daniel Gottschalk, 3. Ryan Wark, 4. Clay Money, 5. Andy Barton, 6. Cody Pancake, 7. Ryan Stevenson, 8. Colby Hagans, 9. Gage Coen, 10. Darren Crouch, 11. CJ Phannenstiel, 12. Warren Harkness. Clay Sellard, Austin Carter and Jasen Gray did not finish.

Stock Cars: 1. Nick Tubbs, 2. Bruce Plumisto, 3. BJ Wagoner, 4. Mike Meyer, 5. Angel Munoz, 6. Jason Rogers, 7. Tyler Tipton, 8. Keith Riley, 9. Wheal Lippelmann, 10. Jared Brooks, 11. Michael Pepper, 12. Jason Stevens, 13. Allen Snethen, 14. Austin Janousek, 15. Brett Oelke, 16. Cody

Williams, 17. Kurt Trusty. Kyle Clough, Rich Wadel, Perry Misner and Jeff Tubbs did not finish.

Modifieds: 1. Adam Morris, 2. Dylan Sherfick, 3. Darren DeLoach, 4. John Hansen, 5. Jeremy Frenier, 6. Nate Moore, 7. Michael Wadel, 8. Jason Schoenberger, 9. Brady Coen, 10. Dwayne Dechant, 11. Jason Haug, 12. Matt Morris, 13. Greg Sharpe, 14. Wheat Lippelmann, 15. Milo Lippelmann, 16. Andrew Granzella. Allen Kurth and Todd Schwarz did not finish.

Watch for photos and a story about Sunday’s races in the *Free Press* later this week.

The next Thomas County Speedway scheduled races are Sunday, June 23, at 7 p.m.

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