

# Almost there! Sluggers one win from state

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Welcome home from Kentucky, coach, and how about a 10-2 play-off trouncing of the zone's No. 1 team to finish your journey-filled day?

"That was as close to flawless game as you can have in tournament play," Colby coach Jared Hamilton said after his Sluggers knocked off Zone 7 top seed Ellis Thursday night. "Any time you can have shorter games end with mercy-rule wins, those are gifts."

The gifts were everywhere beginning with a 4-0 lead before Ellis even took its first swing. Colby's combination of Matt Barnum and Spencer Barnes teamed to rip four hits while driving in four runs.

"Our No. 7 hitters go four-for-four with four RBIs? You know your lineup is really clicking when you get that," Hamilton said.

Starting pitcher Luke Cox also threw four strong innings despite some shoulder soreness.

Another fine gift was coach's four children all under age nine greeting him after the triumph. Dad had been gone to Kentucky on business, only departing Thursday morning to catch a flight into Denver.

Hamilton then drove the three-plus hours to Goodland which finished a journey worth every mile. He saw the Sluggers erase all memories of last year's 0-2 zone performance.

"The biggest key is these guys are older. I believe we have seven guys in the lineup from last year,"



R.B. HEADLEY/Colby Free Press  
Colby's Matt Barnum moves from second to third during his three-for-three hitting performance Thursday night.

he said. "They're seasoned players who are not going to get scored because it's zone. Tonight was just another game for them."

Now the Sluggers (13-9 record overall) can clinch a zone championship tonight at 8 p.m. CDT by beating either Ellis again or Ulysses. Those two teams play a 6 p.m. contest to decide who will be Colby's finals foe.

Ellis clobbered Colby, 12-2, at Goodland last month during the Levi Hayden Memorial Tournament. The Sluggers quickly delivered some payback with a 9-6

championship game victory just two days later.

Game three was really no contest Thursday night after Colby's four-run first inning.

Leadoff batter Josh Matchell reached base and scored on Todd Kane's single faster than grilling a hamburger. After Marc Bremen-kamp walked, Barnum blasted another sharp hit that bounced past Ellis' right fielder.

Both Kane and Bremen-kamp hustled home to create the quick 4-0 Colby advantage.

The Sluggers did offer some early not-so-good gifts. A pair of two-out walks and one dropped fly ball directly led to Ellis' only two runs.

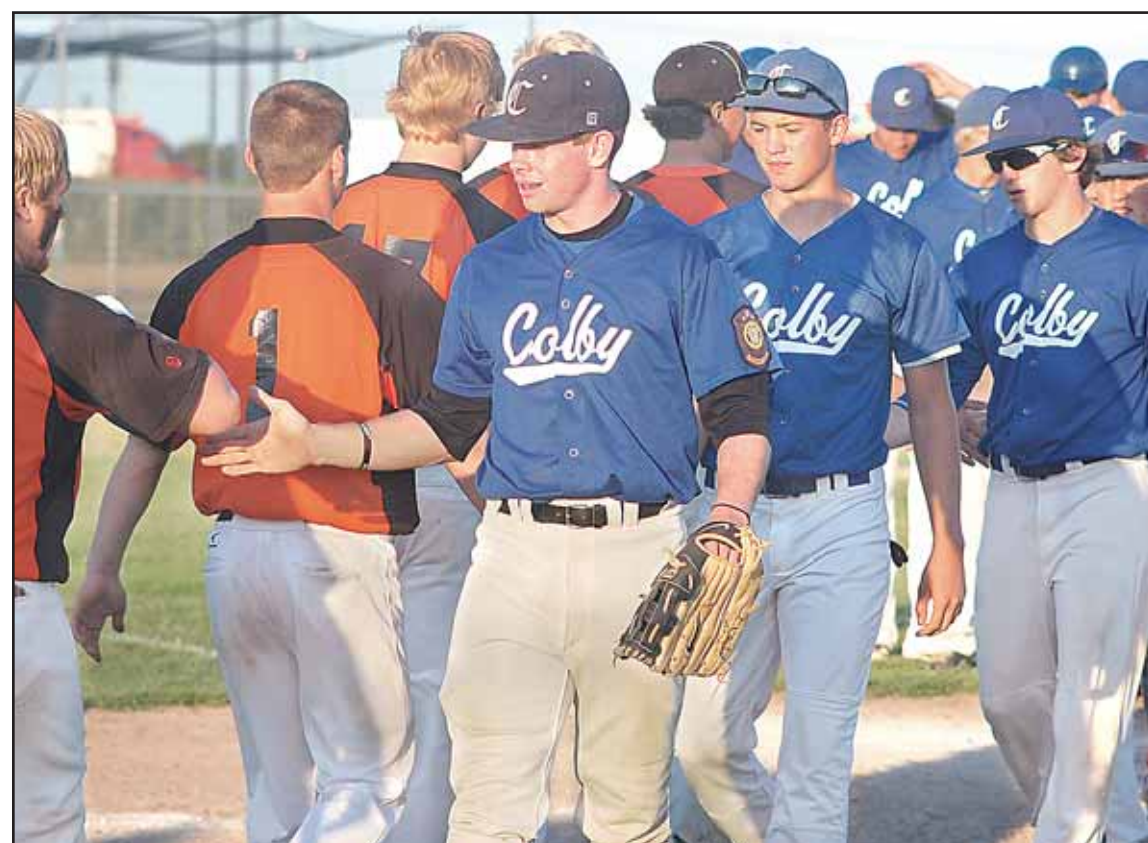
Yet when a hit was required, Ellis almost always went hitless against Cox or reliever Spencer Barnes.

"Luke got ahead and threw strikes. That's big against Ellis because they don't have a lot of (extra-base) bangers," Hamilton explained. "They will get some hits and they are pretty athletic. But if you don't give them many walks or errors, it's a lot tougher for them to move guys around."

The Sluggers efficiently moved runners around all game. Matchell singled to start the second inning, stole second, reached third on Cox's grounder and scored again when Kane singled.

"Josh always seems to be on base, which is what we want," Hamilton confirmed.

Matchell later drilled a double off the fence, though Ellis fans howled that drive went foul. Cox's next grounder went under the third baseman, and an ensuing



R.B. HEADLEY/Colby Free Press  
Colby's lineup is definitely stepping up as Todd Kane and other Sluggers shake hands with Ellis after a 10-2 Colby victory Thursday night in Goodland. The Sluggers play for a zone title tonight.

errant throw sent him all the way to third.

Another Ellis miscue moved the Colby margin to 7-2.

Now it was Barnum's time to start some more Slugger fun. He singled into center and eventually took third on Keegan Morgan's grounder ball.

Perfect execution followed with Macen Shull putting down a squeeze bunt.

So good that Ellis' catcher had to retrieve the ball, spin and des-

perately lunge to tag Barnum.

He missed as Barnum barely dashed past him for an 8-2 Sluggers advantage.

Additional runs became imminent after Bremen-kamp and Caleb Mazanec singled to start Colby's sixth. A Jake Thompson RBI-grounder made it 9-2, followed by Barnes' plummeting-like-Ryan-Braun's reputation single into center that sent Mazanec motor-ing home.

Barnes then pitched his second

scoreless inning of relief. Cox had moved over to shortstop, where made a good running catch on one potential Ellis looping hit.

The next out also ignited Legion baseball's eight-run "mercy rule" after six frames. Colby could celebrate taking the driver's seat in this Zone 7 tournament.

Ellis or Ulysses now must beat the Sluggers twice to steal their title. If Colby did lose tonight, a second title game would be played on Saturday.

## Colby Trojans set Duck Soup softball tournament for August

The Colby Community College Lady Trojans softball team has scheduled its 11th Annual Duck Soup Tournament for Saturday, Aug. 24 and Sunday, Aug. 25 at the City of Colby softball fields.

Games will begin at 5 p.m. on

Saturday, Aug. 24, and at 1 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 25.

The Duck Soup Tournament is a fun event with special rules for each inning.

Each team includes a minimum of 10 players (five men, five wom-

en) and maximum of 12 (six men, six women). Games will consist of six innings with the visiting team awarded a point to avoid extra-inning games.

"If you are not on a team, we will assist in forming a team with

other players," Trojans coach Steve Kinnett said.

Cost for the tournament is \$100 per team. The entry fee for individuals is \$10.

All proceeds will be used for the Lady Trojan Softball Program.

"The community support of the program is greatly appreciated," Kinnett commented. "Your dollars help support the program and the exemplary student athletes who become better members of the community. They assist with trav-

el expenses, field maintenance, player and practice equipment."

To register, receive a flyer, or for more information, contact Kinnett at 460-5507 or (785) 513-1700.

The deadline for registrations is Wednesday, Aug. 21.

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