

Eagles, Bulldogs start year in Top 5

By R.B. Headley
Colby Free Press
rbheadley@nwkansas.com

The Colby High wrestling and Golden Plains girls basketball teams have earned top five state rankings to start this winter sports season.

Catchitkansas.com lists the Colby Eagles No. 2 among all 4A wrestling squads as coach Matt Sims' boys prepare for their season debut Thursday evening.

The Eagles are home for a dual against Dodge City beginning at 6 p.m.

Colby begins second behind only No. 1 Bonner Springs while El Dorado, Andale and Tonganoxie complete 4A's opening top five. League and area foe Norton holds the No. 1 ranking among 3A wrestling teams with Hoxie listed fourth.

Meanwhile, the Golden Plains Bulldogs bring a 1A Division 2 No. 5 state ranking into their basketball season opener at Western Plains Friday night.

The spot might seem a little low



Golden Plains High School
Golden Plains' Jordan Christensen (25) established rebounding position during a varsity basketball game last season.

considering Golden Plains took third in last year's state tournament. After a 2-2 start, Golden Plains reeled off 19 consecutive wins en route to the state semifinals.

Seniors Jordan Christensen, Kylie Jones and Hailee Spreser are all returning for a team that finished 22-3 overall.

Golden Plains completes a top five that also features No. 1 Ingalls, No. 2 Norwich, No. 3 Wil-

son and No. 4 Baileyville B&B. Hoxie holds the 1A Division 1 No. 2 position to begin this basketball season.

Christensen and Triplains-Brewster junior Shayna Rogge are also listed as players "to keep an eye on" by *The Hays Daily News*. Rogge helped a talented young Titans team finished 14-8 last season.

The Titans open against Logan Friday night in Winona.

Trojans win shootout with Texas Baptist foe

Even an occasional post-holiday "nap" on the basketball court couldn't stop Colby Community College from topping 200 points in two Garden City Thanksgiving Classic games last weekend.

"There are times I think they are a little too patient," coach Rusty Grafel after his Trojan men had just won a 117-92 shootout with Wayland (Tex.) Baptist's junior varsity team Saturday afternoon. "We're too stagnant at times. We have a few guys who can play around the rim, and there are times we stand around too much to see what happens."

In other words, scorekeepers better not doze off when these Trojans (8-3 record) really start rolling.

Colby shot 61 percent in the second half of Friday's first Classic contest — yet still somehow lost 89-85 to Seminole (Okla.) State.

Branden Williams' 21 points paced four Trojan double-digit scorers. Seminole State countered with Delvonte Pierre's 28 and 25 from Jabril Durham.

"It was definitely a game of runs. We did a good job of withstanding their runs and going on ours, but the last one we just couldn't quite answer," Grafel observed. "We made a few too many



R.B. HEADLEY/Colby Free Press
Guard Terry Starks (1) drove to the hoop during Colby Community College's Ambassador Classic earlier this month.

mistakes down the stretch. The nice thing is we get to come right back and get a chance for redemption tomorrow (Saturday)."

Wayland Baptist's sharpshooters did their best to ruin the Tro-

jan plans. In fact, Shawn Taylor (41 points) and Brady Lester (33) put up numbers that any dynamic NBA duo would envy.

Yet all the other Wayland players could only produce 18 points, and it wasn't nearly enough to keep pace with Colby.

Jeremiah Ingram returned from a foul-plagued Friday to tally 26 while Gage Deis (19 points), Justin Talley (16) and Joey Meyer (14) teamed for another 49 points.

"Justin gives us a lot of energy. He's athletic enough to play above the rim or put it on the floor," Grafel observed. "Joey is a great example that any time you work hard, you're athletic enough and you know how to play the game, you can do anything. He can light up a stat sheet pretty quick, and that's what I love about Joey."

Several other Trojans hit shots including Terry Starks (seven points), Williams (seven), Kyle Summers (six points on two threes), Ramon Johnson (six), David Tait (four) and Jamal Jones (four).

Together, they helped the Trojans regain momentum before an even tougher road trip to Iowa Western Community College next weekend.

Iowa Western's currently ranked No. 8 in the National Junior College Association latest poll.

"We'll have to play 10 or 15 points better just to be in the game," Grafel concluded.

Broncos rally to finish sweep of Chiefs

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — In the words of Kansas City Chiefs safety Eric Berry, Peyton Manning does not discriminate.

If you're playing wide receiver for the Denver Broncos, and you manage to get yourself open, you can bet that Manning is going to find a way to get you the ball.

On Sunday, he rewarded Eric Decker all afternoon.

Manning passed for 403 yards and five touchdowns, four of them off a rally to beat the Chiefs 35-28 and seize control of the AFC West.

"I think he showed people why he's so great," Decker said. "How we run our offense, we're very versatile as far as going inside, outside, left, right, whatever it may be. Fortunately I had some play calls and took advantage of the opportunities I got."

Decker had eight catches for a career-high 174 yards for the Broncos (10-2), who moved a

game clear of the Chiefs (9-3) in the division.

With four games left, Denver also holds the tiebreaker by virtue of two victories against Kansas City in the past three weeks. The Broncos have the AFC's best record.

"It was a great, gritty effort on the road," said interim coach Jack Del Rio, who led Denver to a 3-1 mark while John Fox was recovering from heart surgery. Fox is due back Monday.

"We figured they would have some type of surge early and I loved the way our guys responded," Del Rio said. "It puts us in first place and now we'll go welcome Coach Fox back."

The Chiefs jumped out to a 21-7 lead, but the Broncos answered with 28 points. Jamaal Charles scored from a yard out with 6:32 left to get Kansas City within a touchdown, and then the Chiefs forced a punt with 3:32 remaining

to get the ball back. Three long passes moved the Chiefs downfield, but Alex



denverbroncos.com
Denver Broncos wide receiver Eric Decker focused on one of his four touchdown catches at Kansas City on Sunday as Chiefs defensive back Marcus Cooper did not stop him.

Smith's pass to Dwayne Bowe in the end zone on fourth-and-4 with 1:45 left fell incomplete.

Jayhawks struggle

After a 63-59 upset loss to Villanova, the No. 2-ranked Kansas basketball men edged Texas El Paso 67-63 on Sunday.

Leftovers from a huge holiday weekend

By R.B. Headley
Colby Free Press
rbheadley@nwkansas.com

Nothing loosens up the old brain matter like three or four sharp passes off the forehead during a Thanksgiving Day backyard football game.

So without further fumbling, here are three quick revelations from a great holiday football

weekend.

1. Where did the Chiefs' warriors go?

The NFL's No. 1-ranked defense has surrendered 76 points in its last two home games. I really didn't want to see the Kansas City Chiefs do a "Marty" and fall apart like those Schottenheimer-coached 1990s teams.

Yet the Chiefs are now looking at three playoff road games as a

No. 1 wildcard. If their defense doesn't revive soon, they may not win one.

2. How about a Kansas State-Nebraska Buffalo Wild Wings bowl? It could happen.

3. Alabama coach Nick Saban did drop the ball. An All-American quarterback throwing a last Hail Mary or a freshman with two field goal tries on his resume? Sorry, Saban, you blew it this time.

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