

R.B. HEADLEY/Colby Free Press

Colby High alum and Colby Community College sophomore wrestler Konnor Kriss scored a pin during Thursday's home dual victory over defending co-national champion Labette.

# Trojans take down champions

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

All these coaches want for Christmas are full and healthy lineups.

"We haven't had one yet," Colby Community College coach David Ortiz said about his national 20th-ranked Trojan wrestlers. "I'm anxious to see it."

Though neither team brought anything close to a complete lineup Thursday night, Nordhues and Colby fans saw plenty during the Trojans' 36-20 dual win over defending co-national champion Labette Junior College.

The Trojans suffered some tough early defeats while falling behind 13-0.

"I'm disappointed how we handled certain situations. We

put our heads on the mat, let them (Labette) circle around and score points," Nordhues observed. "That's unacceptable, especially from our lightweights. It was hard for me to swallow."

Nordhues happily accepted how his Trojans responded with five wins in the final six matches.

A trio were by forfeits as Labette didn't enter wrestlers to challenge Calvin Ochs (157 pounds), James Johnson (197) or heavyweight DeVante Ragland.

Yet the Trojans also delivered two impressive pins from Colby High alum Konnor Kriss (149) and freshman Brian Wood of Manhattan in his season debut.

Kriss attacked quickly and took down Cody Rader just seconds into their match. His three-point nearfall quickly made it a 5-0 advantage, and Kriss pinned Rader

before the first period was finished.

Kriss' pin followed a dominant 11-2 decision over Pratt College Saturday evening at the Colby Community Building.

"Konnor's really been wrestling well. He went through kind of a slump early in the year," Nordhues said. "But the last couple of weeks, he's been leading this team. He's got his head on right and he's focused."

Meanwhile, Wood made quite an impression during his third-period pin of Labette's Derrick Gates.

Like Kriss, Wood went wild early and built a 4-0 first-period lead.

He struggled during the next two minutes as Gates closed with in 5-4. In fact, only the second-period buzzer stopped Gates from likely adding three cradle points.

However, Wood regained control and never lost it again. He wasn't content with just a win and finally — with just six seconds remaining — the referee slapped down to signal pin.

"Brian is a battler, things don't come easily for him," Nordhues explained. "I'm glad to see him come out and get a big win in a

match they were probably favored."

Labette's not near where the Cardinals finished last season, when they tied North Idaho College for that 2013 National Junior College Athletic Association national wrestling championship.

The Cardinals are a few votes short from joining this season's Top 20 teams, though, so it was a solid dual victory for Colby to close 2013.

Colby's next home dual will be against Western Wyoming College on Friday, Jan. 3.

The Trojans hope to have several other wrestlers healthy, including Eagle alum Quade Woofter.

Woofter started a 184-pound match against Labette's Tyler White.

Yet after White took Woofter down for some early points, the match was called due to injury default.

Woofter's still recovering from some shoulder and neck injuries, according to reports.

"Quade's a tough kid. He's mad at me because I wouldn't let him keep wrestling," Nordhues said. "I wasn't going to throw him out here at this point. Maybe I threw him out there too soon."

# Dynamic Chief returns from odd injury

The Kansas City Star

When Dexter McCluster finished practice last Wednesday, he noticed that something was wrong with his ankle.

He knew he'd gotten a small cut there a few days earlier, in the Chiefs' 45-10 win over Washington, and he also knew it was way more swollen than it should have been.

But when he went to the Chiefs' medical staff and later found out the cut had been infected and needed to be cleaned out and treated with antibiotics, well, he hadn't expected to hear that.

"I'm like 'Mom, I don't know what that is,'" McCluster said with a laugh.

McCluster's tests came up negative for the infection, and though he missed the Chiefs' 56-31 rout over Oakland on Sunday, that set the stage for him to return this

week. The Chiefs (11-3 record) play a huge home game on Sunday against AFC South leader Indianapolis (9-5). Kickoff is noon.

Free Press scribbler R.B. Headley's quick NFL picks:

Chiefs over Colts, Broncos over Texans, Redskins upset the Cowboys, Saints over Panthers, Packers over Steelers, Ravens over Patriots and Eagles over Bears.

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