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<http://www.hpleader.com/images/stories/2013/February/11shot.jpg>



By EARL WATT

• Leader & Times

Quentin Purtue's buzzer-beating three pointer at half broke a tie, and Seward ran away from the Garden City Broncbusters in the second half in a 79-56 victory.

The win sets up a championship game with Hutchinson tonight.

Seward shot 57 percent in the second half including five of 10 from the free throw line.

Kaheem Ransom dominated the second half. After scoring seven in the first half, Ransom reeled off 20 in the second including three three-point shots.

Leslee Smith had one of his strongest games, scoring 18 points and dominating the lane.

Edson Avila continued to be one of Seward's most efficient shooters if not one of the most prolific. Avila made three of four and added five from the free throw line to score 11 points.

The pounding included a string of three straight jams by the Saints midway through the second half.

Liberal's Jade Cathey scored 13 points and grabbed 10 rebounds for Garden City.

"I thought we played pretty well," Seward coach Bryan Zollinger said. "Our intensity level was good. We struggled to find a rhythm early on and made some defensive mistake in the first half, missed some assignments."

Garden City may have been very familiar with the rivalry between the two school only separated by 60 miles of Highway 83.

"Garden didn't play like a ninth place team," Zollinger said. "They played with a lot of intensity."

The game with Garden was originally scheduled for Feb. 20, but snow delayed the game twice and forced the Saints into a back-to-back battle for the league championship. Seward needed to be Garden City to move to 13-2 in the Jayhawk West, the exact same record as Hutchinson who will be in the Green House tonight in the final regular season game.

"We play back to back the entire first semester," Zollinger said. "You have to win four or five games to win the national tournament. It is a part of basketball."

Seward had an early lead against Hutch in their first match-up of the season, but Seward wilted

down the stretch and lost 87-74.

“It boils down to playing defense and keeping them off the offensive glass,” Zollinger said. “If we do that, we will have a great chance to win, if we don’t it will be the same result.”

Tonight’s championship will tip off at 8 p.m., and tickets are free courtesy Sharp McQueen, P.A. Ticket locations include Pizza Hut and Express Lane.

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