

By ROY ALLEN

Seward assistant athletic director

The Lady Saints bounced back from a pair of season-opening losses, Saturday, looking sharp in wins over Trinidad State and Laramie County. The pair of victories gave head coach Bert Luallen his 400th career win.

Seward swept Trinidad in their first match of the day before bouncing Laramie in the second of their two matches Saturday.

A slow start to their opening match forced Seward to regroup early. Following Carolina Gasparini's third kill of the set the Lady Saints finished strong to win 25-20 to take a 1-0 lead.

Seward hammered out 15 kills in the set, a far cry from the 9+ that they averaged in their losses on Friday.

The Lady Saints once again had a slow start to the second set. They were able to grab the momentum late, and Annelise Sanchez took things into her own hands with a kill to finish the set, and give the Lady Saints a 25-23 win.

Smelling the chance of victory for the first time in the early season, the Lady Saints finished the third set with a flurry, scoring six of the final eight points of the set to come away with a 25-22 third set win to sweep the match 3-0.

Gasparini and Riley led Seward with eight kills each while Miller paced the club with 21 assists,

and Sanchez led the back row with 10 digs. The Lady Saints did have eight aces in the game including four from Kelci Bedingfield, two from Gasparini and one each from Miller and Sanchez.

The Lady Saints faced their largest task of the weekend in their final match as they squared off against Laramie County in the Lamar Community Building.

It was a dreadfully slow start for Seward in the first as they fell behind immediately 6-0 to continue their trend of delayed reactions at the start of a set. However, Seward turned to Sanchez late, and Sanchez answered the call, getting a kill to give Seward set point. She followed that up with another to clinch the 25-21 win for the Lady Saints a give them a 1-0 lead.

The second set was a nip and tuck affair early with neither team able to get any footing for an early run.

With a 24-22 lead, the Lady Saints went to another sophomore in Riley with the set on the line. Riley delivered a thunderous swing for a kill to give the Lady Saints the second set 25-22.

It was yet another crawl for Seward at the start of the third set as right away the Lady Saints found themselves down 8-2. Seward battled back to take the lead, but with their backs to the wall, the Eagles scored the final three points of the set for a 25-22 win.

The even play continued into the fourth set. The Lady Saints proved to strong though as they took a 20-14 lead, and finished with authority, downing Laramie County 25-18 to take the set, and the match 3-1.

Seward finished the match hitting .254, far and away their best team hitting percentage of the weekend.

Gasparini and Sanchez did the bulk of the damage for the Lady Saints offense as Gasparini

finished the match with 19 kills and a .359 hitting percentage. Sanchez connected on 13 kills and ended the win hitting .333.

Sanchez had a big match overall, adding 12 digs, four aces, and three blocks to her 13 kills.

Miller posted an early career high of 38 assists in the win while Bedingfield once again paced Seward with 21 digs.

The win over Laramie was career win number 400 for head coach Luallen. "I am so happy that it was this group of young ladies that I get to share this moment with," Luallen said.

The team then signed a golden ball for Luallen and gave their congratulations to the ninth year head man.

The two wins Saturday brought the Lady Saints record to 2-2 after opening weekend.

Seward will now return to the friendly confines of the Greenhouse where they will take on Cloud County at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday night for both their home opener and Jayhawk West Conference opener.