

Saints get back on track

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Marcus James has his jersey snagged by Barton's Joseph Reid while both players watch for a rebound Wednesday night at the Green House. James scored 19 points to help the Saints hold off the Cougars 89-82. Daily Leader photo/Rustin Watt

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By EARL WATT

- Daily Leader

There are no gimmes in the Jayhawk West.

Even though Barton County came to the Green House with a record of 3-6 in conference play, and despite the fact that the Saints built a 10-point first half lead, the Cougars were able to rally to a second half lead before the Saints were able to string together enough key baskets to earn an 89-82 win and stay alive in the Jayhawk West race.

Seward saw their 10-point lead evaporate in four minutes when the Cougars went on a three-point spree.

The Cougars opened the second half with two traditional buckets before raining in five straight threes.

During the same stretch, the Saints managed to score two buckets and a three, but the damage was done. Seward's 42-32 advantage became a 51-49 Cougar lead.

Seward went on a 9-2 run to reclaim the lead, but another three by Barton's Karon Burton coupled with baskets by Kevin Smith put the Cougars ahead, 62-61.

Robert Sigala put the Saints back on top with a three-pointer, and the Saints kept the Cougars on their heels the rest of the way to hold on for the win. In all, Barton hit eight three pointers in the second half while the Saints made six.

Tony Smith led the way with 20 points, including a monster dunk on a breakaway in the second half. Marcus James scored 19, Jon Tassin had 17, and Latiq Agard scored 16.

"Barton made some shots in the second half," Seward assistant Ryan Stock said. "You have to give credit to them. We made a switch to a triangle and two and locked up those guys that were hurting us."

Seward struggled during a tough three-game road stretch against Dodge, Butler and Hutchinson, but Stock said the schedule now favors the Saints.

"We get five of the last seven at home," he said. "If we take care of home court, we'll be in good shape."