By ROY ALLEN

Seward assistant athletic director

When you top the 1,000 win mark as a Head Coach it is hard to know what the next actual milestone win number is. Is it 1,250? Is it 1,500? Monday at Brent Gould Field in Liberal, Saints head coach Galen McSpadden picked up win No. 1,100 in his career. Seward downed McCook 7-3 on opening day of the 2014 season.

The game started off well for the Saints as sophomore lefthander Austin King got the nod in Game 1 of 56 and promptly took the mound and struck out a pair in a quick first inning for Seward.

King struck out two more in the second, and the Saints gave him a lead in the bottom half of the inning as an RBI groundout from Jordan Leinweber put Seward in front 1-0.

King continued to baffle the McCook hitters in the top of the third, striking out the side, and the firepower on the mound translated into firepower at the plate as the Saints came to the plate in the bottom of the 3rd frame.

A sacrifice fly from the reigning Jayhawk West Freshman of the Year Bryson Allen gave the Saints their first run of the third, but they weren’t done. Connor Smith ripped an RBI single to put Seward up 3-0 and late in the inning Leinweber squared up on a ball to score two more to stake the Saints to a 6-0 lead.

The Saints ace remained in control after the long inning, setting down the Indians in order in the top of the fourth and a two-out RBI single from Oklahoma State transfer Brent Williams gave the Saints a 7-0 lead after four.

Even with a nice cushion, King didn't let up, picking up strikeout Nos. 8 and 9 in the fifth as he put up another zero on the McCook side of the scoreboard.

The Indians finally scratched something across in the sixth as King began to tire, scoring a pair of runs to make it a 7-2 game.

Neither team scored in the seventh or eighth innings and they swiftly went to the ninth with the score remaining 7-2 in favor of Seward.

McCook tried putting something together in the ninth, scoring a run and loading the bases before bringing the tying run to the plate with two outs, but the Saints worked out of the jam and hung on for a 7-3 win.

Seward hammered out 13 hits in the win while McCook managed 11 hits.

Reed Thompson led the Saints with a career-high four-hit game while Jake Fuller had three hits at the top of the line-up and Williams and Leinweber each finished with a pair of hits.

King earned the win on the mound for Seward, going 5-2/3 innings, allowing seven hits and two runs while striking out a career high 11. Three Saints pitchers finished the game off for Seward without allowing an earned run. Seward pitching finished the game striking out 13 McCook hitters and only walking one. The game was played in a swift 1:58 with weather conditions less than ideal at 38 degrees and 13-miles-per-hour wind.

The win is No. 1,100 for McSpadden who currently ranks fifth among active coaches in the NJCAA in that category.

The Saints win their season opener for the third consecutive year and the sixth time in the past seven seasons.

Seward is 1-0 and will turn their attention to this weekend where they will meet Galveston in a four-game series in Arlington, Texas. The Saints and Whitecaps will play under the lights at the University of Texas-Arlington on Friday at 6 p.m. with a Saturday double-header slated for 1 p.m. and the series finale scheduled for 11 a.m. Sunday.