

By EARL WATT

• Leader & Times

Not only did Hayden Coker swat several Great Bend shots out of the air, he also knocked a few shots of his own down Friday in the Big House to lead the Redskins to a 49-36 win.



Hayden was not the only big man in the lane. The 6-foot, 7-inch junior had to contend with 6-foot, 4-inch Nick Warren who tried to defend Coker.

But the Redskins found a way to break the Panther zone by flipping the ball inside to the taller Coker who was able to get the ball up to the glass, and he showed some soft touch that helped get the shots to fall, something that has not been as apparent earlier in the season.

With no chance to challenge Coker in the paint, Great Bend used the three-point shot early to build a 15-10 lead.

Blake Stout and Cade Hinkle answered in the second quarter with threes of their own, and by

half the Redskins had tied the game, 24-24.

Liberal started to run away in the third quarter. Coker continued to disrupt shots in the lane, and he converted on the offensive side, scoring six of Liberal's 11 third quarter points while the Panthers only managed three points in the period, and the Redskins had a 35-27 lead.

Liberal spread the scoring around in the final quarter, and Colin Ware came off the bench to hit a three and score five in the final period.

Liberal built is biggest lead when Blake Stout hit a shot with 2:22 to play that gave the Redskins a 46-30 lead.

Until the final 1:19, the Redskins only allowed Great Bend to score six second-half points. The Panthers added a late three and was fouled on a three to finish with 12 points in the second half, and the Redskins cruised to the 49-36 win.

Coker led the Redskins with 14 points.

"They hit some big shots in the first half we didn't expect," Liberal coach Scott Hinkle said. "At half, we felt we could pick up the intensity on defense. The effort and execution was a lot better in the second half."

The Redskins had little time to enjoy the Friday night victory. The Redskins hosted Dodge City late Saturday in a make-up game.