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By ROY ALLEN

Seward assistant athletic director

Seward fans that made the short trip to Dodge City on Saturday night for the Saints game with the Conquistadors might have noticed Boot Hill Casino next to United Wireless Arena. In their game with Dodge City the Saints certainly had the lucky hand, drilling the Conqs 88-59 on their home floor to win their seventh straight game against their Jayhawk West rivals.

The Saints opened up the scoring early on, getting a layup from Quentin Purtue and a score in traffic from Niem Stevenson to take a 6-2 lead.



After a 5-0 run by Dodge City, Stevenson canned a three for the Saints from the wing to give them the lead back 9-7 with 15:44 to go in the half. Secean Johnson helped the Saints build on their lead later on with a three to make it 16-11 and Brian Bridgeforth got an offensive rebound and scored to make it 18-11 Seward with 13:11 remaining in the first. Just before the first half media timeout Bridgeforth scored again and was fouled where he completed a three point play to make it 24-15 Saints midway through the period. Dodge cut the Saints lead to six with a three point play minutes later, but the Saints finished the half on an 11-4 run and carried a 40-27 lead into the break at half.

The Saints didn't miss much in the first half, shooting 57 percent from the field and 50 percent from the three point line. Dodge City on the other hand had their struggles, shooting just 39 percent from the field and 13 percent from beyond the arc. Purtue scored 10 to lead the way for Seward while Johnson added 8 first half points.

Saints win 7th straight over Dodge, 88-59

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The Saints defense held Dodge City without a single point for the first 3:30 of the second half, building their lead to 44-27 during that stretch. Another three point play from Bridgeforth put them in front 51-33 and they continued to hold the 18 point lead past the 11:00 mark with the score 55-37. After a quiet first half by his standards, Stevenson got going midway through the second half. The Saints freshman and reigning NJCAA National Player of the Week scored his 14th and 15th points of the game with 7:17 to go as he pushed the Saints lead to 63-43 with a hoop. After a pair of Dodge City buckets, Malcolm Hill-Bey decided it was his turn to shine and he knifed through the Conquistador defense on two straight trips down the floor, setting up teammates for easy buckets to push the Saints lead back to 20 at 67-47 with 6:33 left. Two minutes later a three from Evan Allen stretched the Saints lead to 77-52 and a flurry of Stevenson points down the stretch helped Seward blow the game wide open before they went on to win by a final score of 88-59.

Seward shot 63 percent in the second half and finished the game shooting 60 percent from the field. Dodge struggled to just 33 percent in the second half and 36 percent in the game. Stevenson scored 18 of his 23 points in the second half to lead the way for Seward while Purtue chalked up a double-double with 14 points and 11 rebounds in the win. In just his second career start, Raoul Mentor chipped in 10 points and had 6 rebounds in 17 minutes of work.

The Saints remain in the top spot in the Jayhawk West at 9-2 with the victory and improve to 19-8 overall on the season. Dodge's slide continues as they fall to 14-13 overall and 3-8 in West action.

Seward returns home on Wednesday when they will take on Barton in a big Jayhawk West matchup in the Greenhouse at 8 p.m. Free tickets are available courtesy of buyout sponsor Sunflower Bank at their Liberal location as well as at Pizza Hut and Hutch's.

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