By ROY ALLEN

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The Seward County Lady Saints found themselves on the wrong end of the first shocker of the Region VI Tournament on Wednesday as they were knocked off 61-56 by a Barton team that they had beat twice by a combined 33 points during the regular season in 2014.

It was a slow start for Seward and it was a sign of things to come for the gals in green. Barton scored the first five points of the game and extended their lead to 9-2 four minutes into the contest. Seward's defense held over the next few possessions and two straight buckets from Alana Simon had the Lady Saints within three at 9-6. Little would they know that that was as close as they would get in this one. A Barton three made it 14-9 later on and as Seward went ice cold shooting the ball, the Lady Cougars extended their lead to 24-15 with 7:14 to go in the half. Barton went up 10 before a Rebekah Hatchard three got Seward back to within seven with under four minutes to go in the half and the Lady Saints limped into the locker rooms down by eight, 35-27.

Seward couldn't take advantage of 10 Barton turnovers and 8 offensive rebounds in the half as they shot just 29% from the field and were 1 for 13 from the three point line, good for 8%. Simon led Seward with 8 first half points. Barton shot 48% in the half despite taking 15 less field goals than Seward.

The halftime break didn't make things better for either side as neither was able to get on the board in the first two minutes of the half. A key moment of the game came 90 seconds later as Seward missed two cracks in the paint to get it to within four and Barton responded on the other end with a three pointer to make it 38-31 with 17:14 to go. Seward got it back to a three point game, but just couldn't close the gap any further and a Barton bucket gave the Lady Cougars a five point lead 48-43 with 9:09 remaining. Fabiana Monte's only three of the game cut it to a two point game with 7:35 left, but Seward's momentum was short lives as Barton quickly moved their lead back to six, 57-51 with just under 4:00 to go in the game. The Lady Saints defense gave them a shot, holding Barton without a single point for a four minute stretch, but Seward's offense equally kept from giving themselves a shot. Seward closed the gap by just two points during the stretch, making it 57-53 at the 1:53 mark, but the Lady Saints continued to settle for the outside shot and in the end, it did them in. Barton made their free throws down the stretch and held on to knock off Seward 61-56 to the surprise of almost everyone in Wichita State's Koch Arena.

The Lady Saints shot just 28% in the loss while hitting on just 9%, 3 of 32 three point attempts in the game. Seward was uncharacteristically bad from the free throw line as well, making just 53% of their chances from the line. Barton didn't exactly light it up as they shot just 39% while taking 34 less field goals than Seward in the game. Barton turned it over 27 times in the win to Seward's 11. The Lady Cougars outrebounded Seward 52-43 in the game but the Lady Saints pulled down 19 offensive rebounds, turning them into 12 second chance points in the loss.

Shanise Brooks finished her Seward career with a 14 point, 13 rebound double-double while Alana Simon had 14 as well for Seward. No other Lady Saint had more than 8 in the defeat.

The Lady Saints season is ended at 26-6 and for the fourth straight season in the quarterfinal round of the tournament. Barton improves to 20-12 overall on the year and will advance to the semifinal round of the tournament where they will take on Butler for the right to play in the Region VI Championship on Saturday.