

Saints rally past Cowley advanced to Region 6 Final 4

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By RUSTIN WATT Daily Leader For the third straight game, the Saints fell behind early and had to rally for an improbable 79-75 win over Cowley County in the quarterfinals of the Region 6 tournament at Koch Arena. Seward won the tip but

Seward's first pass as they set up the offense, Cowley's Canon Fields took coast-to-coast for the first points of the game. The tone was set for the first half as Cowley stretched their lead to as much as a 10-points before Seward battled to go into the half down 40-34.

The second half mirrored the first half, this time in favor of Seward. On Cowley's first three second half possessions, Seward forced a steal and went coast-to-coast. The 6-0 run tied it up, 40 all. From there it was a battle, but the tone was set, as Seward battled to continue on in the Region VI tourney with a 79-75 win. "It was a tough first half," Saints guard Marky Nolen said. "But we pulled through and got the win, a crazy win."

The second half was not a breeze following the steals, as Cowley came back and took a lead. With eight minutes and five seconds on the clock Nolen pulled down a rebound in a crowd of Tigers, went up strong and sunk the basket while getting fouled. Nolen cashed in and completed the and-one play to tie things up at 63.

Seward was then able to hold Cowley and got the ball in the corner to Jon Tassin who drove and hit a baseline jumper to give Seward the lead, 65-63 with less than eight minutes to play.

Latiq Agard sunk both shots on a one-and-one opportunity and Seward was up four, 67-73, but not for long, as the Tigers clawed back to tie the game up once again with under five minutes to play, 67-67.

Both traded a basket before Marky Nolen got the ball in the paint for Seward faked inside and went baseline to tie with Cowley again, 71-71, with a little over three minutes to play.

Cowley sunk a free-throw before Agard once again converted on a three-point play, the old fashioned way to give the Saints a 74-72 lead.

Donte McCarter then came up big for Seward. McCarter got the ball on a breakaway with one man between him and the basket. McCarter took it in, jump stopped, and went up before getting

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fouled, spinning in mid-air, and sunk the circus shot backwards, underhanded. McCarter didn't convert the free throw, but he did put Seward up four, 76-72 with 48 seconds to play.

"I thought to myself I have to make this to go up two, and I couldn't see us losing," McCarter said. "So I was trying to do everything I could to make that basket."

"You'll have people look at it and say that was luck," Saints head coach Bryan Zollinger said. "But they banked a three off the glass. Things happen both ways, I believe luck follows intensity."

From there the Saints were able to hold Cowley to only one three from Cowley's Fields, which he banked off the glass with a hand in face.

Marky Nolen was then fouled at mid-court and went to the line with 1.1 left on the clock. Nolen sunk them both to take away Cowley's hope make it a two-possession game to seal the deal and live to fight another day with a 79-75 win.

Nolen led Seward with 23 points along with nine rebounds. Agard also reached 20 points and fought for six rebounds. McCarter reached double figures with 15 and dished out four assists.

With the win Seward will play the winner of Butler and Cloud at 7 p.m. Sunday night in the Region VI semi-final.

"At this point in the season you can't try to make a lot of adjustments," Zollinger said. "We have to take the handle, flush the toilet, move on and focus forward on tomorrow."