By EARL WATT

• Leader & Times

When the Saints lost their first game away from the Green House Friday to an aggressive Odessa defense, Saturday's game could have been a letdown or a rebound.

Seward chose the latter in the second half and rallied from a seven-point halftime deficit to earn a 63-54 win over New Mexico Junior College at the Holiday Classic in Odessa, Texas.

New Mexico was on fire in the first half. New Mexico shot 58 percent from the field, hit seven of 10 free throws, and brought the train with four three pointers on five attempts.

Seward shot 40 percent in the first half, made four of six free throws, and only hit two three pointers on seven attempts.

New Mexico enjoyed a 33-26 halftime lead on the No. 18 Saints before the defense stepped up in the second half.

Seward held New Mexico to 33 percent shooting in the second half, and after a blistering barrage of threes in the first half, New Mexico only made one of seven attempts in the second half.

Seward’s offense heated up, and the Saints shot 48 percent.

Seward outscored New Mexico 37-21 in the second half for the 63-54 win.

Irvin Hollinger led the Saints with 26 points.

Seward will host the Conestoga Classic this weekend and will play The Colorado Kings Friday and McCook Saturday.