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By Rustin Watt

•Daily Leader

Seward did everything they should have in the final nine seconds and trailing by one after being down by as many as 16 points against Labette in the Pizza Hut Classic.

They inbounded the ball to their point guard Megan Lassley just like they should have.

Lassley brought the ball up and dished it to Shelia Washington, who attracted the defense just like she should have.

Washington passed to future All American Rachel Barnes who drove to the basket to take the final shot, just like she should have.

But when Barnes and Kellindra Zachery collided at the base line, the ball sailed out of bounds, Barnes hit the floor, and no whistle sounded.

“It came to the end I got real frustrated and went to the basket,” Barnes said. “I thought it was a foul but they didn’t call it. I got frustrated, the team was frustrated, coach was frustrated, it was real hard for us to take a loss like that.”

No foul was called, possession was given to Labette, and Seward coach Toby Wynn came unglued, as every Saint fan on their feet did. He received a technical foul. With 0.4 seconds on the clock, no damage was done, the only damage came via the no-call.

The Lady Saints, despite a miraculous comeback, fell for the first time this season, 69-67.

Already receiving National Player of the Week and KJCCC Player of the Week honors hasn't slowed down Barnes who led the Lady Saints with 23 points and was six-of-six from the free throw line. Lassley added 15 points and Kendra Spresser contributed 11.

The loss moves Seward to 11-1 and will probably drop Seward from the No. 12 spot.

Despite that, the loss may have fueled Seward's fire, and come time for the Region 6 tournament, the stage is set, and the Lady Saints look forward to another meeting with the ladies from Labette.

"Region 6, I'm waiting for it. I want it bad," Barnes said. "Because we know they're not a better team than we are, and we know we're better than them. I'm just waiting to go to the Region 6 and meet up with them again, and beat them."

When a game comes down to the wire, a team gets the ball to its playmaker. For the Bulls, it was Jordan, for the Broncos it was Elway, Saturday night at the Green House it was Rachel Barnes. The Lady Saints took on Labette Saturday night and found themselves between a rock and a hard place as they went into half down, 37-26.

"When we were down at half I got really angry," Barnes said. "Because I knew we were a better team than this and when we started coming back, I was like 'We can do this, we can do this.'"

Seward trailed at half Friday night and found themselves in a familiar place as Friday night's battle with Northeastern Colorado, except, the Labette ladies were very much unlike any team Seward has played this season.

Rutgers University transfer to Labette, Kellindra Zachery, did not fit the typical female basketball player profile, she matched more of a cage fighter physique and mentality, and much of Labette's ladies did.

It wasn't David versus Goliath, more Brock Lesnar versus Georges St-Pierre — the heavyweight versus the lightweight as Seward has scrapped with larger opponents and came out on top already this season, such as Western Nebraska with the 6-foot, 7-inch Thais Pinto.

"It was very physical out there, they were pushing us around a little bit," Lassley said.

This game came down to Seward trailing by one with nine seconds remaining.

It felt much like a championship game type atmosphere in the Green House.

After Seward took a two-point lead and Labette tied things up, they were able to draw a foul in the lane and sunk one of two free throws to leave Seward down one, 68-67 with nine seconds on the clock.

The inbounds pass went to point-guard Megan Lassley who sprinted up the court and found guard Sheila Washington at the top of the key who went straight to the Saints savior Rachel Barnes.

Barnes had the hot hand, as she does most nights for the ladies, nearly every fan in attendance held their breath as she drove the lane and went up in traffic.

But the no-call ended the game after Labette made one of two technical free throws in a 69-67 Seward County loss.

The sour taste may not leave the Lady Saints mouths until they get another shot at Labette.

“I would love to meet up with them at the Region 6,” Lassley said. “I would love it.”

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