http://www.KSCBNews.net/news/index.cfm?nk=16036

Saints Blank Barton in Jayhawk Opener

After falling to the Barton Cougars in last year's Region VI Championship match, the Seward County freshman had 10 months of built up frustration when they took to the road Wednesday to take on the Cougars in the two teams Jayhawk West Conference opener. It didn't take long for the Lady Saints to release their tension on Barton as they took a 13-3 lead in game one to set the tone for the night as they knocked off the defending conference champions 3-0 by the scores of 25-19, 27-25, 26-24 to start the 2012 Jayhawk West campaign with a bang.

Things just didn't start well for the Cougars Wednesday night as their opening serve of the match was bombed into the net to give Seward a 1-0 lead. Seward was gifted two more points on balls out of bounds and the Lady Saints quickly took a 3-0 lead in game one. Back to back blocks from Lakeria Eatmon and Morgan Riley, followed by another rejection from Bailey McFerren and Thayna Silva put the gals in green on top 5-2 and they used the momentum to take a 13-3 advantage after a dump by Alyssa Olson later in the game. The Lady Saints held a big advantage until late when Barton began to creep back into things, but a kill from Aubree Young and an errant Barton attack sealed game one as the Lady Saints took the opening game 25-19 to take a 1-0 lead. Game two was tied at 2 early until a pair of kills from Silva and a block and kill from McFerren gave Seward an 8-4 lead. Barton fought back to score 6 of the next 7 points to erase the Seward lead and take a 10-9 advantage of their own and the two teams stayed neck and neck through the middle of the game and were tied at 13 halfway home. With the game tied at 13, McFerren continued her big night with a pair of kills to put the Lady Saints up 15-13 and Seward built on their lead later on with kills from Silva and Young to go on top 18-14. The Lady Saints looked to have things under control and went up 23-18 with Young's third kill of the game, but once again couldn't put the Cougars away. Barton scored the next two points to make it 23-20 and after trading points, the Cougars benefitted from three straight Lady Saint hitting errors as they looked to close the game and in the blink of an eye it was 24-24. The teams traded points again to 25-25 until a Barton ball handling error gave the gals in green their fifth game point of the second. For the second straight game, a Barton error was the final straw for the home team and the Lady Saints took the game 27-25 to take a 2-0 lead. With the wind out of Barton's sails, the Lady Saints started game three at a torrent pace. Three kills and three blocks from McFerren pushed Seward out to a 12-2 advantage and two more kills from the sophomore middle kept it a ten point game at 16-6 later on. The Lady Saints let up though and the Cougars walked through the open door, cutting the Seward lead to 19-12 as the Lady Saints went 12 points without a kill. As McFerren rotated back to the front row, the Lady Saints picked their steam back up and took a 24-15 lead to force match point upon the Cougars. With the

carrot dangling in front of their nose, Seward just couldn't close it out. Barton scored two in a row to make it 24-17 and that is when the muddle started for the Lady Saints. Seward committed an inexplicable six straight overpasses on serve receive and Barton took advantage of each, scoring on each Lady Saints mistake to tie the game at 24. Thankfully, the Cougars weren't able to get the next serve over the net and Seward sided out while taking a 25-24 lead. This time the Lady Saints weren't going to give the serve back to the Cougars and closed the match out with a point to take game three 26-24 to sweep Barton.

The win is the first on the season for the Lady Saints who improve to 1-4 overall on the year while Barton drops its fifth straight match and falls to 0-5 on the year after a conference and region championship in 2011. The conference opening win marks the sixth straight season dating back to 2006 that the Lady Saints have started the Jayhawk West Conference season 1-0. The match versus Barton started a six game in four day stretch for the Lady Saints as they will be back on the road Thursday as they head to Clarendon before continuing on to Vernon for the Vernon Labor Day Classic Friday and Saturday.

SCCC/ATS Roy Allen