

Seward Gives #1 Butler a Scare

There aren't many moral victories that college coaches will accept as satisfactory at the end of the day, but going up against the #1 team in the country on the back end of four games in two days, there is a slight chance that Seward Head Coach Andrea Gustafson took some positives out of her Lady Saints 7-1, 9-6 losses to top ranked Butler on Monday in El Dorado. Both games went the distance, which Seward can hang their hat on, because Butler has not been forced to play 7 innings in both halves of a double header since the opening weekend of the season when they beat 50-4 LSU-Eunice 6-4 in both sides of a twinbill. Game one was Butler's from the start as the Lady Grizzlies jumped out to a 3-0 lead after one inning and went on to win 7-1 as Seward managed just 1 hit in the game. In game two it was a different story though as outside of a 5 run Butler 3rd inning, the Lady Saints outscored the nation's top team 6-4. Unfortunately, they couldn't wipe clean that big Grizzly 3rd and a last ditch comeback attempt would come up short as Butler went on to win 9-6 to wrap up a perfect 16-0 Jayhawk West season.

Following a tough double header in sweltering heat on Sunday and the long drive to El Dorado on Monday morning, Seward expectedly got off to a rough start in the 1st inning of game one with the Lady Grizzlies. After a 1-2-3 top of the 1st for Seward, Butler jumped on the Lady Saints in their first at bats, getting three straight hits to start the game and a two out home run moments later to put the Lady Grizz on top 3-0 after 1. The Lady Saints didn't get their first baserunner of the game until the 3rd when Sierra Tadiarca walked to start the inning. However, Seward couldn't get anything going from the leadoff walk and remained behind 3-0 as Butler came to hit in the bottom of the 3rd. Once again the Grizzlies used the long ball to their advantage in the 3rd as catcher Kate James blasted her Jayhawk West leading 21st home run of the season over the left field wall for a three run shot to put Butler on top 6-0. Seward shot themselves in the foot in the 5th with a pair of errors as Butler used the miscues to add to their lead to make it 7-0. The Lady Saints finally broke through with a run in the top of the 6th when Rachel Shockley was hit by a pitch with two outs and Stephanie Mark drove her home with Seward's only hit of the game, but it was far too little too late as the Grizzlies went on to win 7-1.

It was all Butler from the start in this one as the Lady Grizzlies outhit Seward 11-1 in the contest. The Lady Saints only hit came from Mark who finished 1 for 2 with a double and an RBI. Brittney Sharkey went the whole way in the circle for Seward, allowing 11 hits and 7 runs, 6 earned while taking the loss.

SEWARD COUNTY/#1 BUTLER GAME ONE BOX SCORE

<http://www.scccsaints.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6808:42913-1-butler&catid=57:Softball&Itemid=199>

Seward showed more signs of life offensively early in game two of the double header as they got a pair of 1st inning singles from Marissa Chavez and Mark, but a double play shot down their scoring chance to keep them off the board. Butler scored first, using the home run for the third time on the day to take a 1-0 lead and a Seward error later in the inning gave the Grizzlies another tally to make it 2-0. Seward came out swinging in the top half of the 3rd, getting another RBI double from Mark to give them their first run of the game to make it 2-1 and after a walk to Michelle Duford, the Jayhawk West Player of the Week Becky Allen ripped a double to the gap to score both runners to give the Lady Saints their first lead of the day 3-2. Their lead was short-lived though. Seward gave Butler five outs in the bottom of the 3rd with a pair of errors and the Grizzlies took full advantage, turning a pair of doubles and a pair of singles into five runs to go back on top 7-3. The Lady Saints got a run back in the top of the 5th on an RBI groundout from Duford to get back to within striking distance at 7-4. Seward brought the tying run to the plate in the top of the 6th after Jenna Keen reached on an error and Ashley Kirkes singled with one out, but a double play on a sharply hit ground ball threw water on the fire to end the inning and keep the Grizzlies in front 7-4. Butler added two more insurance runs in the bottom of the 6th on a home run from Kaitlyn Wolken to make it 9-4 and the runs proved to be crucial as Seward put together a rally of their own in the top of the 7th. Chavez picked up her third hit of the game to start the Seward 7th and Shockley reached on an error to put two on with nobody out. The middle of the Seward order couldn't pick up the baserunners but with two outs Allen poked a single through a hole to score both runners to make it 9-6. With the tying run on deck and the Lady Saints down to their last out, a fly ball to left field would seal their fate as Butler came out on top 9-6.

The Lady Saints swung the bats right with the Grizzlies in the contest, picking up 9 hits to Butler's 10. Both teams were sloppy on defense as Seward committed 3 errors leading to 3 unearned runs while Butler kicked it 4 times for 3 unearned runs as well. Chavez had a big game at the top of the Seward order, going 3 for 4 with 3 runs scored. Mark also had 3 hits in 4 at bats while driving in and scoring a run. Allen continued put forth her best effort with the bat, collecting 2 hits and 3 RBI's, her third 3 RBI game in the past week. Seward starter Katelyn Craker took the loss. The lefty went all the way in the circle for the Lady Saints, giving up 10 hits and 9 runs, 6 earned while striking out 1.

SCCC/ATS Roy Allen