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Saints Shrug Off Slow Start at Barton

Two sets into their Wednesday night battle against rival Barton, the Seward County Lady Saints looked dead in the water, down 2-0 and being outscored 50-25 in the match. Things didn't get much better early on in the third set as Seward trailed 13-11 before a timeout seemed to have turned the light switch on. The Lady Saints came back to win the third set 25-21 and pulled out a close fourth set 25-22 to force a deciding fifth set with the Cougars. In the fifth it was all Seward as they completed the improbable comeback with a 15-8 win to take the match 3-2.

The long bus ride to Great Bend seemed to have affected the Lady Saints legs early on in the match with Barton. The Cougars jumped out to a 5-0 and then 10-1 lead to quickly put Seward behind the eight ball. The Cougars continued to pile it on the Lady Saints, going up by double digits at 13-3 and then stretching their lead to 20-6 later on before mercifully putting Seward out of their misery 25-10 in the first. Seward's offense was dismal in the first as they recorded just 4 kills as a team, 3 of those coming from Annelise Sanchez who was just starting her big night.

Seward started the second set much better, holding their first lead of the match at 4-1, but it didn't last long as Barton stormed back a short time later to tie the set at 7 and then take an 11-9 lead of their own. Once the Cougars seized momentum they were hard to stop. Barton pushed their lead to 15-11 midway through the set and continued to balloon their advantage to 20-13 before putting Seward away 25-15 to go ahead 2-0. After their quick start, the Lady Saints were outscored 21-9 to fall in the 2-0 hole. Again, the Lady Saints could get nothing going on the offensive side of the net. Seward hit a season worst -.132 in the set, committing 11 errors to just 6 kills in the period.

Barton looked well on their way to closing out the match in quick fashion in the third, taking the early lead 5-4 and holding that advantage to 13-11 midway through the set. A Bert Luallen timeout seemed to have flipped a switch in the Lady Saints head as Seward came out of the break with a 6-2 run to take their first lead of the set at 17-15 and never trailed in the set again. The Lady Saints pushed their lead to the largest of the match at 22-18 and would hang on to win by the same margin 25-21. It took all Seward had to force a fourth set as the Lady Saints were nearly unstoppable on offense after their dreadful start in the first two sets. Seward hit .389 as a team in the set, hammering 15 kills to the Kirkman Center floor while committing just 1 error in 36 total swings.

The fourth set was a tight one early on as the teams

were tied at 4 until a mini 3-0 run by the Cougars gave them the first lead 7-4. The Lady Saints came back to knot the set at 9 and trailed by one 12-11 before a 4-1 Barton run put Seward in a 16-12 hole as it looked like the gals in green might be running out of gas. The Lady Saints made one last push to come back and tie the set at 19 and the scored remained deadlocked at 22 six points later. With their backs to the wall, the young Lady Saints weren't ready to go home just yet as Seward scored the final three points of the set to win 25-22 and send the match to a winner take all fifth. Once again the Lady Saints managed 15 kills in the set, this time cooling down slightly to a .250 hitting percentage. Sanchez led the charge with 6 more put aways while Sheree Ryan and Morgan Riley each had 3.

With the fifth set only played to 15, the Lady Saints knew that they could not have a slow start in this much important Jayhawk West battle. Seward got out to a good start, taking a 5-3 lead to begin things and were up 8-4 at the changeover. The teams traded points to 10-6 before the Lady Saints stepped on the gas. Seward went on a quick 4-2 spurt to put the victory within grasp at 14-8 and finished things off on the next point to come all the way back from down 2-0 to win the set 15-8 and take the match 3-2.

The Lady Saints come from behind 2-0 to win a match for the first time since the 2011 season when they did it three times. Sanchez led the Lady Saints with 16 kills, just one off her career high of 17 set last season against Hutchinson. Riley added 9 kills for the Lady Saints while Ryan finished with a career high 7. The Seward block was a big part of their success Wednesday as the Lady Saints finished the match with 13 total blocks as a team including 9 from freshman Carolina Freitas and 6 from Ryan. Impromptu setter Kristen Anderson led the Lady Saints with 32 assists in the win while high school teammate Kelci Bedingfield finished with a team best 29 digs.

Seward improves to 6-4 overall on the season while Barton falls to 1-6. The Lady Saints pick up their second Jayhawk West win in as many chances while the Cougars drop to 0-2. Next up for the gals in green is a weekend off before a big matchup Wednesday night in the Greenhouse when they welcome the 2-0 Colby Lady Trojans to town. Seward and Colby are set for a 6:30 first serve.

SEWARD COUNTY/BARTON BOX SCORE
<http://www.scccsaints.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6979:vb-sc-3-barton-2&catid=221:Scoreboard>

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