

Purtue Leads Saints to Third Straight Win

To say that Seward County sophomore forward Quentin Purtue likes playing against God's Academy may be a bit of an understatement. Last season Purtue scored a career high 15 against the Ambassadors and after entering Friday's game against God's Academy with a 2013-2014 season high of just 11 points, he went off again on Tim Miller's bunch, scoring a career high 22 in an 86-47 thrashing to lead the Saints to their third straight win.

Seward came out with an intensity rarely seen so far this season in their matinee affair against the Ambassadors. The Saints defense was swarming all over the floor as they jumped out to a 7-0 lead and kept God's Academy without a point for the first three minutes of the contest. The Ambassadors had no answer for the Saints defensive attack, racking up turnovers at an alarming rate. Seward however, did not have the same problem. The Saints quickly built a comfortable lead, extending that advantage to 30-10 by the midway point of the first half. Even while shuffling in 12 different players in the half, the Saints did not let up on the Ambassadors. They went into the half on a 10-2 run and blew the game open to 45-17 as the teams hit the locker rooms at the break.

The Seward defense suffocated God's Academy in the first half, holding them to just 29% shooting and forcing 17 first half Ambassador turnovers. On the other side of the court, the Saints charge went quite smoothly. Seward shot 57% and were uncharacteristically good from the free throw line, hitting on 10 of 11 chances at the charity stripe.

To the dismay of Saints Head Coach Bryan Zollinger, the Seward defense softened as the second half began. The teams traded baskets early on and then took turns giving the ball back and forth to each other as the game turned into the look of more of a recreation center contest than a high level college basketball contest. Seward remained in control on the scoreboard, leading 56-31 as the clock ticked under 13:00. Following a timeout, the Saints seemed to wake up, causing havoc for the Ambassadors as they had trouble handling the Seward pressure. The Saints pushed their lead to 30 for the first time as Tyreke Sharp slashed to the bucket and scored to make it 68-37 as the midway point of the second half hit. From there it was just a matter of formalities. The Saints took advantage of a less than stout defensive effort from God's Academy as they stretched their lead to the largest of the game as 86-45 with under two minutes to go. Seward didn't score again and the Ambassadors got a late bucket to make the final score 86-47 in favor of the Saints.

The Saints shot 69% in the second half and finished the game shooting a season high 63%. Seward was led by Quentin Purtue who shattered his career high in points with 22 after setting a career high last season against the Ambassadors with 15. Niem Stevenson ended the afternoon with 12 points and 7 rebounds for Seward while Kevin Smith added 11 off the bench and Brian Bridgeforth just missed a double-double with 10 points and 9 rebounds.

Seward improves to 7-6 on the year with their third straight victory while God's Academy fell to 0-9 as they continued to play their rigorous early season schedule. The Saints will finish first half play on Saturday in the Perryman Center in Garden City when they take on Raleigh's Finest Prep for the second time this season with tip set for 3:30. In their first meeting, the Saints ran the prepsters out of the gym with a 104-69 victory in Dodge City.