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Lady Saints Rally Past Arizona Western

What may have seemed as a holiday vacation for many, it most certainly was not for the Seward County Lady Saints this weekend in MiraCosta's Holiday Festival Tournament in North San Diego. After trading punches with Eastern Arizona for 40 minutes on Saturday in their first loss of the 2013-2014 season, Seward backed it up with another slugfest on Sunday against #21 Arizona Western, outlasting the Matadors 60-56 in the tournament's third place game to improve to 13-1 on the year.

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For the second straight game, the Lady Saints got off to a dreadful start on Sunday, falling behind the 21st ranked Matadors 10-2 through five minutes of the game, putting themselves in another uphill battle against a good team to start things off. A 6-0 run for Seward got them to within two and a bucket by Alana Simon tied the game at 10 with 11:36 to to in the first half. Arizona Western broke a nearly five minute stretch without a field goal to retake the lead 13-10 one minute later, but Fabiana Monte answered for the Lady Saints, nailing a three to tie the game at 13. Seward used the momentum to go on a mini 8-0 spurt and with 8:59 to go in the first half they led 19-13. As time wound down in the half, Arizona Western cut the Lady Saints lead to just three, but a steal and score from Simon put Seward back up 31-26 with just over a minute remaining in the half. The teams traded free throws to close the period and Seward went to the half on top by the score of 32-27.

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Seward did a good job after a slow start in the game, outscoring Arizona Western 30-17 after the Matadors led 10-2 to open things up. The Lady Saints shot 46% from the field in the first half, led by Monte who scored a game high 13 first half points, while Arizona Western shot just 35% in the period. However, Seward led the Matadors hang around thanks in part to their lack of execution at the free throw line where they were just 5 for 13 in the first half while Arizona Western cashed in on 9 of their 13 chances.

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The Lady Saints started the second half much as they did the first, out of sorts on the offensive end and a little bit too soft on the defensive end. Arizona Western wasted no time in erasing the Seward lead and after a 6-0 run to start the half, took their first lead since their 10-2 start at 33-32 with 16:26 to go in the game. A big three pointer from Brianna Scott gave Seward the lead back and a Simon to Kyndal Davis connection kept the gals in green in front 37-35 moments later. The teams went back and forth, trading turns at holding the lead to set up a dramatic finish to the contest. Tied at 42 Stephanie Schmid nailed a big three for Arizona Western but Korina Chapman answered right back for the Lady Saints with a three of her own to tie the game at 45 with 8:27 left. Both teams got stops on their next possessions and a foul sent the Matadors to the line on their next trip down the floor. After making the first free throw, Arizona Western missed their second attempt, but the Lady Saints couldn't clear the glass and the Matadors got a second chance to extend upon their lead. Arizona Western missed their ensuing field goal attempt, but got another offensive rebound and after a third offensive rebound on the possession, the Matadors finally cashed in with another three from Schmid to go in front 49-45 with 6:55 to go. After getting back to within two, it was the least likely of offensive threats for Seward that tied the game up at 51 as Janel Tammen picked up an offensive rebound of her own and scored to deadlock the game with 3:15 left. Arizona Western took the lead back and looked like they would have a chance to push their lead past one possession, but a steal from Davis and a dish to Chapman who scored at the rim tie the game at 53 with 2:44 to go. A pair of Monte free throws gave Seward the lead back at 55-53 with 2:02 left and the Lady Saints never relinquished their lead. Monte hit two more free throws down the stretch and the gals in green would hold on, bringing home a 60-56 win to come away with a third place trophy from the

tournament.
Seward was far from fluid on the offensive end in the second half, shooting just 33% to finish the game at 40% overall, but they suffocated a usually solid Arizona Western offensive attack, holding the Matadors to just 26% shooting in the second half and under 30% in the game. The Lady Saints escape with the win thanks in large part to 26 Arizona Western turnovers and pick up the victory despite the Matadors collecting 23 offensive rebounds and taking 9 more shots than them in the ballgame.
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Monte led all scorers with 17 points and was named to the All-Tournament Team while Chapman added 11 points and 8 rebounds for Seward County. They were the only two Lady Saints to reach double figures, while Davis and Simon added 8 and Shanise Brooks finished with 7 points, 8 rebounds, and 5 blocked shots.
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The #7 Lady Saints bounce back from their first loss of the season with a big win over the #21 ranked Matadors, improving to 13-1 on the season while Arizona Western falls to 9-6 on the year after their second straight loss to end the tournament.
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Seward will fly home from San Diego on Monday and will hit the ground running as they prepare for their final two games of the non-conference season January 3rd and 4th as they host the Conestoga Classic in the Greenhouse. The Lady Saints will take on Connors State on Friday at 6:00 and will play Region VI foe Northwest Kansas Tech on Saturday in another 6:00 tip.
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#7 SEWARD COUNTY/#21 ARIZONA WESTERN BOX SCORE

SCCC/ATS Roy Allen