

<http://www.KSCBNews.net/news/index.cfm?nk=34046>

### Olson Helps Seward Split Conference Opener

The reigning Jayhawk West Conference Champion Seward County Saints didn't quite get off to the start to conference play they were looking for on Friday afternoon at Brent Gould Field in Liberal. Taking on a Barton team who was the lone West team to miss the playoffs last season, the Saints managed only a split on the first day of the series, getting a pitching gem from freshman JB Olson in the opener to win 2-1 before seeing a late rally come up short in game two as they fell 11-7.

Game one opened as a pitcher's duel between Seward's JB Olson and Barton's Brandon Mercer. The two went back and forth through the first three innings of the game with Barton picking up a pair of singles and Mercer keeping the Saints without a baserunner as the game remained scoreless into the 4th.

Olson dealt another 1-2-3 inning in the top of the 4th and Seward finally got their first baserunner of the game as Brandon Uriquizo legged out an infield single to start the Saints half of the 4th to get them going. Brent Williams walked with one out and Kevin Connolly bounced a ball up the middle to bring Uriquizo home to put the Saints on top 1-0. One batter later Connor Smith launched a deep fly ball to right field to bring home Williams to put Seward in front 2-0.

Olson and Mercer both dealt zeroes in the 5th and Olson worked a quick 6th on just six pitches to keep Seward in front 2-0.

The Saints put a runner on in the 6th as they looked to add an insurance run, but a double play killed the threat and quickly the game went to the 7th with the Saints still on top 2-0.

Olson set down Barton's first two hitters of the 7th quickly and it looked like he was going to pick up his first career shutout, but a solid single from Jace Bowman brought the tying run to the plate for the Cougars. On the second pitch he saw, Garrett Watkins split the gap with a double to bring Bowman around and to put himself in scoring position as the tying run. The Saints had a chance to close it out with a ground ball to third, but an error extended the game and moved the tying run 90 feet closer to home. After a mound visit by Head Coach Galen McSpadden, Olson went to work on pinch hitter Travis Hughes. Olson quickly got ahead until Hughes worked the count to 3-2. On the payoff pitch Olson went to his slider which worked its way under Hughes' bat for strike three to end the game, giving the Saints a 2-1 win.

The game featured just 8 total hits, 5 from Barton and 3 from the Saints. Seward's knocks came from Uriquizo, Williams, and Connolly, with the Saints RBI's going to Connolly and Smith. Olson pitched a gem, going all 7 innings on just 80 pitches. He allowed just 5 hits and 1 run while striking out 8 and not walking a single batter to pick up the win.

### SEWARD COUNTY/BARTON GAME ONE BOX

SCORE<<http://www.sewardsaints.com/sports/bsb/2013-14/files/SewardBarton1.pdf>>

Game two of the twinbill was a completely different story from the start.

Seward pitching had trouble finding the strike zone early on and a 2nd inning walk helped contribute to a run for the Cougars to give them a 1-0 lead.

A leadoff error and a two out free pass by the Saints again set the Cougars up for a scoring opportunity and for the second straight inning, they took advantage with two outs, getting a single to score both runners to go in front 3-0.

Barton gave Seward a run back in the bottom of the 3rd with an error and a wild pitch to cut their lead to 3-1, but even as Seward went to the bullpen early on, they couldn't find the strike zone with consistency.

A leadoff walk and another free pass with one out loaded the bases for Barton in the top of the 4th. A sacrifice fly scored one run and after the third walk of the inning, a single scored two more to make it 6-1. Another single greeted the Saints third pitcher of the afternoon to make it 7-1 Barton at innings end.

The Saints offense didn't help the pitching out either early on as Seward went down in order in the bottom of the 4th as they remained behind 7-1.

Saints reliever Nolan McCutcheon gave Seward a chance with a zero in the Barton 5th, but for the second straight frame, Seward was retired 1-2-3 in their half of the inning to keep it a 7-1 game.

McCutcheon continued to battle, keeping Barton from extending on their lead again in the 6th, but a double play in front of a double in the bottom of the inning killed the Saints chances of getting things going on their half of the frame and kept the score 7-1 in favor of Barton.

Barton added on four insurance runs in the top half of the 7th inning as they capitalized on two more Seward pitching walks as well as three hits to go on top 11-1.

It looked like the Saints were in danger of falling victim to the run rule after stretch time but the first three hitters of Seward's half of the 7th reached to give them hope. A single from Brandon Rix made it an 11-2 game and a Barton error allowed another Saints run to score to make it 11-3. A single through the infield by Jake Fuller put two more on the board for Seward and with two outs, back to back singles from Reed Thompson and Connolly capped a six run inning for the Saints to put them back in the game at 11-7.

Derrick Valenzuela kept the momentum on Seward's side as he put up a goose egg in Barton's half of the 8th, but the Saints couldn't capitalize on a bases loaded situation in the bottom half of the frame and remained down 11-7 into the 9th.

The Saints fifth pitcher of the game, Blake Etep worked around a two out walk to keep it an 11-7 game, but despite a leadoff double from Thompson in the bottom of the 9th, the Saints couldn't manage to complete the comeback and fell 11-7.

Seward outhit Barton 13-11 in the game, but 5 Saints errors and 10 walks from Seward pitching did the guys in green in in the loss. Fuller finished 2 for 4 with 2 RBI's for Seward while Uriquizo, Thompson, Connolly, and Alex White all had 2 hits apiece for the Saints as well in the loss. Keenan Hall took the loss on the mound for Seward, falling to 0-3 on the year as he lasted just 3 innings and gave up 3 hits and 3 runs, 1 earned.

SEWARD COUNTY/BARTON GAME TWO BOX

SCORE<<http://www.sewardsaints.com/sports/bsb/2013-14/files/SewardBarton2.pdf>>

The split takes the Saints to 10-8 overall on the season while Barton moves to 7-5-1 on the year. The

two teams will try to hook up on Saturday at 1:00 at Brent Gould Field, if weather permits, to wrap up the series with two more games. Game 1 airs on 1270 and kscbnews.net.

Roy Allen

SCCC/ATS Roy Allen