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Seward Clobbers Cowley in Region 6 Tournament

While we have come accustom to watching classic Seward County vs. Cowley matchups late in Region VI Tournament's over the past few years, we certainly haven't seen the two teams go head to head early in any of the March tournaments. But, with the Saints winning the Jayhawk West for a record fourth straight season and the Tigers coming out on the wrong end of a four way tie in the Jayhawk East standings, the date was set as Cowley game knocking on the Greenhouse doors Saturday in the Region VI First Round. The Saints were less than welcoming to their familiar foes, taking a 40-16 lead into the half before blowing the Tigers out of the water in the second half, coming away with a 82-39 laugher of a win to once again advance to the quarterfinal round of the tournament.

Shock number one of the night came when active rosters were entered into the book pregame without the names of Cowley's two leading scorers NaQuavious King and Earl Bryant. It was a bad sign of things to come for the Tigers who came to Liberal looking for an upset win over the Saints. After Cowley scored the first two points of the game, Seward went on a 10-0 run, thanks in part to three's from Niem Stevenson and Malcolm Hill-Bey to take an early 10-2 lead. The Tigers didn't get their first field goal of the game until the 6:30 mark, but by then the Saints were already cruising. Two more three's from Stevenson and Secean Johnson put the Saints up 16-5 and back to back dunks ignited the Greenhouse and had Seward on top 23-5 with 8:16 to go in the first half. Cowley continued to sputter on offense, taking until the 12 minute mark to get their second field goal of the half against a suffocating Saints defensive attack. Another three from Stevenson opened Seward's lead to 32-12 with 3:51 to go in the half and a three point play by big man Raoul Mentor put Seward up 40-14 in the closing moments of the half. Seward went to the break on top 40-16 after a late tip in by the Tigers as time expired in the half.

Seward shot 55% in the half while holding Cowley to just 19% shooting in the first 20 minutes. Stevenson led the Saints with 17 points at the break, outscoring the Tigers by himself in the half. Cowley had just three different players score in the half while Seward saw six different players on the board.

The Tigers showed their only life of the night early in the second half, but that was short lived however. Seward continued to hold their 24 point lead five minutes into the half and extended upon it as Hill-Bey heated up with an elbow jumper to make it a 53-28 game. Seward found their groove once again and after a floater from Bridgeforth and another silky smooth finish from Hill-Bey, the Saints were on top 66-30 with 8:20 remaining. The Saints took a 40 point lead as Quentin Purtue connected with a cutting Hill-Bey with 4:30 remaining and Seward would put it in cruise control to the finish line, hammering the Cowley Tigers 82-39 to knock them out of the Region VI Tournament for the 5th time in the past 6 season.

The Saints blistered the nets for 71% shooting in the second half to finish the night at 62% from the floor. Cowley shot just 28% in the game and were only 1 for 11 from three point land in the loss. Stevenson led all scorers with 26 points in the Seward victory while Hill-Bey pitched in 19, 15 of those coming in the second half.

Seward improves to 22-9 on the year while Cowley ends a disappointing 2014 at 15-16. The Saints will now turn their attention to Neosho County, their second round opponent. The Saints and Panthers will lock up at 7:00 Thursday night at Koch Arena in Wichita with a trip to the Region VI

Final Four on the line.

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SCORE<http://www.sewardsaints.com/sports/mbkb/2013-14/files/SewardCowleyM.htm>

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