

Looking forward to '03



Darrel
Pattillo

•On the Ball

Well, here we are at the end of another year. Same as it ever was, eh?

By that I mean December comes to a close and we start a new year, just like we do every time December comes to a close.

So what can we expect from 2003? War in Iraq? Probably. War in Iraq might be one of the stupider things we can do right now, and it looks like King George has donned the Stupid Helmet once again. Did you see him trying to sing Jingle Bells? Holy Sheltered Politician, Batman! Does it run in his family? Dad didn't know about checkout scanners at the grocery store, and Junior doesn't know the words to Jingle Bells? Shouldn't that be one of the questions we ask when we elect someone?

Aaaalllll-righty then. I just wanted to get in a little politics before the year ended. Now that my brain hurts, we can move on to sports.

On the local front, Colby has six scholastic teams currently with winning records in their sports. The Trojan men's basketball team is the best I've seen in years, and that goes for the women, too. The Trojan wrestling team is the #1-ranked NJCAA team in the country. That's right! IN THE COUNTRY!!! There's what, like half-a-billion junior colleges in America? WE are Numero Uno! You'll have a chance to see the Trojan wrestlers for yourselves next Wednesday, Jan. 8.

Our Colby Eagle wrestlers are little banged up at the moment, but still have an impressive 10-1 dual record. They're back in action on Jan. 9 against

Goodland here, so we need you out at the high school.

If you haven't had a chance to see our Eagle basketball teams in action, well, tough noogies. You'll have to wait until Jan. 17 to see them at home again. They'll be on the road at Sainty, Hays (TMP), and Goodland before playing Hoxie here on the 17th.

The Eagle guys are 5-0 and the ladies are 4-1. Our ladies would be 5-0 if not for some terrible officiating against Hays. Yes, you could say that the Lady Eagles shouldn't have been in a position to let the refs affect the actual outcome of the game, but... oh, never mind. Them Eagles is playing their hearts out and I'm just glad I get to watch.

Now, there's a couple of people that need some acknowledgment for their efforts on the sports page.

Les Brown is doing a heck of a job covering wrestling for us. I cringe to think what coverage of a nationally-ranked #1 wrestling team what be like if Les wasn't on the ball. Keep up the great work! Chad Ostermann at the college has been a valuable resource for me. The stories you see on the Trojan basketball teams are as much his effort as mine. So even though you see my byline, Chad's got as much to do with those stories as I do.

Ralph Wolf is covering the Lady Eagles and doing a great job. Ralph has this little gizmo that he keeps track of stuff with, which is why his stories have statistical facts and mine have flowery words and phrases. Keep up the good work, Ralph. Your efforts are appreciated!

All in all, I'm looking forward to 2003, and I hope you all have a Happy New Year!

Darrel Pattillo is the sports editor for the Colby Free Press. His column appears on Mondays.

Jayhawks back on track

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)—Not every sports team with Kansas in its name got pummeled in rainy Oakland.

While the Chiefs were getting snuffed out by the Raiders 24-0 Saturday, ending their season on a down note, the Kansas Jayhawks of Roy Williams were playing one of their finest games of the young season.

So well did Kansas play in beating California 80-67 in the Pete Newell Classic, they drew rare praise from the host and namesake of the event himself.

"You really played the game the way it's supposed to be played," hall of fame coach Pete Newell told Williams' players.

"I said before the season that I thought you were going to be one of the Final Four teams, and now more than ever I think I'm going to see you in New Orleans."

It would be difficult to play the game in more of a textbook style.

Aaron Miles passed out 11 of the Jayhawks' 22 assists. He also scored in double figures along with the other four starters. As impressive as anything was the patience and ball distribution, something that may have been lacking during a halting getaway to the season that included three losses.

"That was the downfall early in the year," said Miles. "Now, everybody's sharing the rock."

Wayne Simien had 17 points, Miles and Nick Collison 16, Kirk Hinrich 14

and Keith Langford 12.

Altogether, Williams' crew shot 63.3 percent.

"There's a night-and-day difference in our offense from earlier in the season," Collison said.

"At the beginning of the year we weren't getting opportunities because we were taking such quick shots. Now we're playing together."

The Jayhawks (7-3) led 42-24 at halftime behind 9 points and 9 rebounds from Collison.

California (6-2) went on a 16-2 run in the second half to shave Kansas' 53-31 lead to 55-47.

But after a time out, Simien scored two straight baskets, then Langford and Miles added field goals and Cal never threatened again.

"Kansas played a fabulous game," Cal coach Ben Braun said. "They made runs in transition, their big guys came loose and they got a lot of points inside."

In one stretch, Kansas scored 19 of 21 points.

"They're a good basketball team," Williams said. "We expected them to go on a run and they did. The crowd got into it a little bit, but we weathered the storm."

Following the Jan. 1 holiday, the Jayhawks get back into action at home on Thursday against North Carolina-Ashville, then meet UMKC in a Saturday afternoon game at Kansas City's Kemper Arena.

Better than being there



DARREL PATTILLO/Colby Free Press

City Limits was the place to be Friday night for Kansas State's come-from-behind victory over Arizona State in the Holiday Bowl. Gina Jennings of Colby, and Brian Cramer of Salina had front row seats for the big-screen game, while Lennie Riedel (left) and Calvin Kistler of Colby enjoyed the game from a table.

Portis, Broncos finish season strong

DENVER (AP)—Denver's season was all but over before the Broncos even took the field. Rookie Clinton Portis proved he's just getting started.

Portis secured his spot as the latest in a long line of superb Denver rookie running backs, running for a career-high 228 yards and two touchdowns as the Broncos beat the Arizona Cardinals 37-7 on Sunday.

Following in the footsteps of Terrell Davis, Olandis Gary and Mike Anderson, Portis set team rookie records with 1,508 yards and 17 touchdowns.

He finished with seven 100-yard

games, had the fifth-highest rushing total by a rookie in league history and has a good chance to become Denver's second offensive rookie of the year in three seasons.

"He looked like Terrell Davis," Denver defensive end Trevor Pryce said. "That's the biggest compliment you can give a running back."

The Broncos (9-7) started the game knowing they were already out of the postseason, but it didn't stop Portis from getting his first 200-yard game on any level.

Portis had 120 yards on eight carries

by halftime and scored on a 4-yard run off left tackle to put the Broncos up 30-7 midway through the fourth.

He added a 12-yard touchdown run late, taking off around right end and dancing his way through the middle before working his way back to the left side of the end zone.

Not bad for someone who didn't become the starter until the fifth game of the season.

"You look back and think that things happen for a reason," Portis said. "What if I would have actually played in those games?"

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NFL playoff picture finally gains focus

NEW YORK (AP) — The NFL's playoff berths were finally filled when the New York Jets beat Green Bay to win the AFC East, knocking out defending Super Bowl champion New England.

The Jets' victory also pulled the Cleveland Browns into the postseason in only their fourth year. While those two 9-7 teams made it, three others with the same record — the Patriots, Dolphins and Broncos — were out.

In the NFC, the Atlanta Falcons backed in, losing to the Browns but getting the last wild-card berth when New Orleans, another 9-7 team, lost at home to Carolina to miss the playoffs.

The Jets' win also gave Philadelphia the top seeding in the NFC and home-field advantage in the conference playoffs.

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