

# Headin' for the finish line



MICHELLE L. HAWKINS/Colby Free Press

Colby High School freshman, Andrea Barker, competed in the 100-meter dash on Friday's Colby Invitational Track Meet. The Eagle track team will compete again on Friday as they head to Oberlin for the Northwest Kansas League meet.

# Trojans finish successful season

The saga of Trojan baseball 2003 ended this week as we finished our season in El Dorado at the Region IV sub-region tournament. The week started fantastic and ended rough, but it was amazing nonetheless.

As you might remember we had to stop our game against Cloud County in the top of the fifth last Sunday due to thunderstorms. Well, we had to go back on Monday and finish the game. That's right, we had to drive all the way back to Concordia and play two and a half innings.

No one on the team, including myself, was particularly pleased with the league president's decision. We were hoping that he would just award us the game. I wanted our guys to be able to attend a full day of classes on Monday.

The decision turned out to be the best thing that could have happened to us. We started the game with two outs and freshman left fielder Dan McClure on third base, and sophomore shortstop Keith Wollis at bat. McClure had led the inning off Sunday with a triple to right.

Wollis eventually walked on four straight pitches and nothing became of the threat. We started sophomore Dan Ames on the mound in the bottom of the inning. We were forced to start a different pitcher because sophomore righty Brent Suing, who was the pitcher of record, could not start again after throwing four complete and having a night of rest.

Ames did a tremendous job and shut down a very good hitting T-bird team in the bottom of fifth. We went into the top of the sixth hoping to add to our lead. Well, we did more than that. We exploded for seven runs and put the game out of reach. Ames threw a scoreless sixth and freshman right-hander Roy Allen came in and dominated the bottom of the seventh to preserve the win.

At the plate in this great win we were led by freshman Joel Gould who went 3 for 5 with a double, a three run home run, and four RBI's. Dan McClure went 3 for 5 with a triple and three RBI's. Sophomore Justin Dickson also had three RBI's, including a double. Chris Lebeda, Brian Hassing, and Kyle Nordhues each added two hits to the effort.



**Ray Nolan**

• From the Dugout

I felt at the time that it was the biggest win of the season for us because we had several factors working against us and we came through. I could not have foreseen what was to happen later in the week.

Thursday we opened sub-region play in El Dorado against Seward County. The Saints went into the tournament ranked fifth in the country and held the number one seed in the tournament.

The Saints led 1-0 after the first inning and the game seemed quite similar to our previous four encounters. It turned out to be quite different.

In the top of the fourth with the score still 1-0 in favor of Seward, Dan McClure got plunked with the first pitch. Chris Lebeda then hit a single to center to move McClure to third. Joel Gould then stepped to the plate and changed the complexion of the tournament. He launched a fastball over the center field wall for a three-run home run to put us up 3-1.

Sophomore lefty Casey Wernke gave up one run in the bottom of the inning but the Saints did not get any closer as we went on to score three more runs in the top of the seventh to make the score 6-2.

Wernke finished the game, giving up just one earned run, and earning what the Hutchinson News called, "the biggest upset in tournament history."

Gould finished the game 3 for 4 with three RBI's. Chris Lebeda also went 3 for 4, which included a two-run single in the top of the seventh. Justin Dickson, who just signed a letter of intent to play for Landers University in South Carolina, went 2 for 4.

With the biggest win in tournament history out of the way, we advanced in the winners bracket to play Cloud. The T-birds came from behind to earn an impressive victory of their own against Butler in

the first round.

We were down 2-0 in the top of the fourth against the T-birds, when we erupted for five runs on a barrage of hits. The rally was highlight by a two-run single by Dan McClure.

We took our 5-2 lead into the seventh when, with the bases loaded and two outs, our fortunes changed. With two strikes the T-bird hitter lined a double down the right field line to plate all three runners and tie the game at five. We went down without incidence in the top of the eighth and Cloud again loaded the bases in the bottom of the ninth before they squeezed home the winning run.

We were one strike away from advancing to the championship game of the winners bracket. Our final game of the tournament came against Pratt. The Pratt pitcher gave up just two runs as we were shut out 4-0. It was a disappointing end to a fabulous week.

The end of baseball season is always sad for me because I have to say good-bye to our sophomores. The players leaving us are infielder Chris Lebeda from Laramie, Wyo., infielder Keith Wollis from Edmonton, Canada, infielder Justin Dickson from Edmonton, Canada, infielder Ian Mabb from Hays, pitcher Derek Daugherty from Watonga, Okla. (Derek is headed to Missouri Valley College next season to wrestle), outfielder Travis Glassman from Oakley, catcher Jerad McBride from Durango, Colo., pitcher Brandon Shiers from McCook, pitcher Casey Wernke from Alliance, Neb., pitcher Brent Suing from Omaha, Neb., and pitcher Dan Ames from Aurora, Colo.

If you know these young men please wish them luck with their future endeavors. In the coming weeks I will update you on where they are heading next season to finish their academic and baseball careers.

Nolan is an assistant coach for the Colby Community College baseball team. His column appears in Monday's edition. He plans to continue sharing his baseball knowledge with the readers each week, although the college's season is complete.

# Cormier wins championship; Blackmon places fifth

By LES BROWN

Colby Free Press

Two former Colby Community College wrestlers continue to excel on the mat while competing in the United States' most elite division. Daniel Cormier and Ramico Blackmon each earned honors this weekend while competing in the United States Senior National Freestyle Championships in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The Senior Nationals is the nation's premier open tournament and serves as a qualifying tournament for individuals hoping to earn a spot in the World Team or Olympic Trials.

Cormier earned the national championship in the 96-kilo (211.5 pounds) weight division after posting a 6-0 record. Cormier is currently the top ranked freestyle wrestler in the United States at his weight classification. He was expected to make a run at the title last season, but was unable to compete. He placed seventh in the event in 2001.

Cormier, a native of Louisiana, is the only two-time National Junior College Athletic Association national champion in the history of Colby Community College wrestling.

Following his success for Colby College he transferred to Oklahoma State University, where he earned runner-up honors in the 2001 National College Athletic Association national tournament.

Blackmon placed fifth in the 74-kilo (163 pounds) division after posting a 6-2 record. After earning the 2001 Senior National championship at 67 kilos and placing third in the 2002 Senior Nationals, Blackmon had been considered by many within the sport to be a likely candidate for the 2004 Olympic team.

But Blackmon was dealt some bad luck when International Olympic Committee decided to eliminate and consolidate weight classes within the freestyle wrestling ranks. This decision forced him to bump up a weight division, which is a difficult task. But the task is made all the more difficult when one of the nation's most successful wrestlers, Joe Williams, competes in the new weight division.

Blackmon met Williams in the quarterfinal round of this weekend's tournament. But it was Williams who barely escaped with a 3-2 overtime win in this match-up en route to his tournament championship. Blackmon won three out of his next four matches to place fifth in the meet.

Blackmon, who originally hales from Florida, was a two-time National Junior College Athletic Association All-American for Steve

Lampe's Colby Community College Trojans. After placing eighth and third for Colby, he transferred to Eastern Michigan University where he was a MAC conference champion and National College Athletic Association national tournament qualifier.

As a reward for this weekend's success, Cormier and Blackmon have each earned spots in the United States World Team Trials, which will be held at Indianapolis in June.

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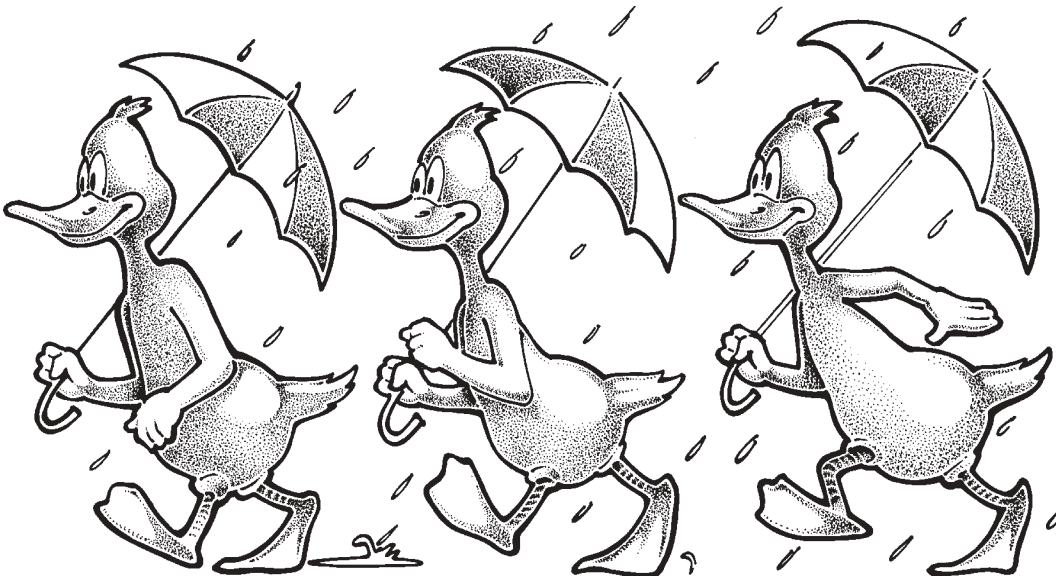
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