Controversial late foul call prevents Eagle comeback win

By Joey Falkoff

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It took nearly all 32 minutes, but McCook, Neb., finally figured it out; don't let a red-hot Stephen Dinkel even get off a shot.

With 2.5 seconds left, Dinkel, who finished with a season-high 29 points on 12-14 shooting, had the ball in his hands with an open path to the basket to tie the game, but McCook's Zach Weiser made a potential game-saving play by grabbing Dinkel without letting him get up a shot.

Instead of a layup or two free throws, Colby inbounded the ball with 0.5 seconds left and had to settle for Ethan's Stover fading three-pointer that bounced off the back iron, allowing the Bison to escape with a 66-64 win Tuesday at the community building.

The immediate questions after the game centered on whether the foul on Dinkel was intentional or whether he was in the act of shooting. Colby Eagle head coach Beau Sheets and Dinkel believed one or the other was true.

"It was either intentional or he was shooting the ball," said Sheets whose team fell to 6-3 despite shooting 60.3 percent. "He wasn't going for the ball if the guy was behind him."

"I maybe should've gotten two shots," said Dinkel who had nine rebounds and four assists to go along with his 29 points. "I don't know if it was intentional. I mean the guy was obviously trying to foul me, but it's not like he was hugging me to keep me from shooting.

Regardless, the play was the key moment of a whirlwind final five seconds of action.

After Cory Gaston's jumper gave the Bison a 66-64 lead with 3.8 seconds left, Sheets called timeout to draw up a final play.

The Eagles executed the play to perfection as Levi Schlick caught the ball 30 feet from his basket and while still in the air shoveled it off to Dinkel who had the option of pulling up for three and the win or going to the basket for the tie.



JOEY FALKOFF/Colby Free Press

Eagle junior Stephen Dinkel, left, scored two of his game-high 29 points on this floater in the first quarter of Colby's 66-64 loss to McCook Tuesday at the community building.

"I caught ball and looked up and saw there was 2.5 seconds left, so I figured I'd go for a layup which would have been easier than pulling up for three as fast as I was running," said Dinkel

Dinkel looked like he made the right choice, but a heads up play by Wieser, who had to help from the other side of the court, saved the day.

game plan with 3.1 "The seconds left was to force the ball in the backcourt and foul before they could get up a shot attempt," said McCook head coach Tim Garcia whose team improved to 6-7. "They ran a phenomenal play and got it a whole lot further than we wanted. Wieser made a heady play and set us up for a nice win."

"We're really disappointed at how it ended, because we executed exactly he we drew it up," said

The play drew a strong reaction from the crowd and both benches, but after a lengthy huddle the on 8-16 shooting. referees decided to give Colby the

ball under their own basket with 0.5 seconds left.

Sheets used another timeout to set up a final shot, and couldn't have asked for more, as his best shooter, Stover, caught the ball in the left corner and had a pretty good look at a shot that would have counted.

"They were protecting the paint and we had three options on that play," said Sheets. "Ethan came open. He'll hit that shot more times than not."

Despite his 5-15 shooting night, Stover was about the last person McCook wanted to see with the

"That's the last shot I wanted to see next to Levi Schlick in the paint," said Garcia. "Once again, they did a great of job executing. When it was half-way there, I thought it was in."

"That last half second seemed like it took an hour," said Gaston who led the Bison with 19 points

It was Gaston, and not Dinkel or

Stover, who would turn out to be the hero in this one.

A spinning shot by Dinkel tied the game at 64 with 33 seconds to play. Garcia set up a play designed for Gaston to come off a staggered screen, but once that broke down he was on his own.

Gaston ball-faked his defender to get separation and pulled up for a 12-footer that splashed home.

"Coach always talks about making a ball fake before you make a move," said Gaston. "I just did what coach said, set up my man and had an opportunity to make a shot. It felt pretty good."

The Eagles may have suffered their first home loss of the year, but it could've been much worse after the way they started.

Just 56 seconds in, Schlick, their leading scorer, was on the bench with two fouls.

By the time he returned, the Eagles found themselves down 37-25 and had been down by as many as 17 only moments earlier. "It changed a lot of what we

Box Score

McCook (66)- Berry 4, Gaston 19, Rippen 14, Wieser 12,

Colby (64)- Stephens 4, Stover 11, Winger 6, Dinkel 29, Sager

2 3 4

McCook (6-7) 25 16 13 12-66

Colby (6-3) 16 15 19 14- 64

Rebounds: Colby 26 McCook 21

Assists: Colby 14 McCook 11

Larson 2, Unger 4, Schaeffer 4

6, Schlick 8

Team Stats:

Turnovers: Colby 12 McCook 13 **Points off Turnovers:** Colby 4 McCook 16 **Points in the Paint:** Colby 30 McCook 16

Field Goal Percentage: Colby 29-48 (60.4%) McCook 27-52

Three-Point Percentage: Colby 3-12 (25.0%) McCook 7-13

Free Throw Percentage: Colby 3-4 (75.0 %) McCook 5-10

wanted to do," said Sheets. "We enter the final period with a 54-50 had to go to Plan B. But we advantage. shouldn't have gotten behind by 17 points. That's why it's tough to complain about one call at the

end.' With Schlick back in the game, the Eagles chipped the deficit to eight before Wieser's layup just before the buzzer gave McCook a 41-31 halftime lead. The Eagles trailed by 10 despite shooting 58.3 percent. McCook wasn't much worse, shooting 54 percent from the field and 5-9 from three-point

But were it not for the 18 point first half of Dinkel on 7-7 shooting, it's no telling where the Eagles would have been.

"I figured it was up to me and Ethan to do the scoring," said Dinkel. "It was fun to have all my shots falling tonight, but it doesn't seem that great when you end up loosing.'

'We would have lost by a lot more than two," said Sheets. "Stephen is doing a better job of being more aggressive and letting the game come to him."

The Eagles turned up the good series," said Sheets. defensive intensity in the third close as one, 47-46, but McCook was able to hold on to the lead and

A Dinkel jumper tied it at 54-54 early in the fourth and the Eagles grabbed just their second lead on a jumper by Chaz Winger that made it 62-61 with 2:32 to play.

"What I think enabled them to come back was their aggressiveness," said Garcia. "They probably had 90 percent of their points in the paint and 75 percent on putbacks. We had bad help defense and gave up a lot of points in the paint."

The close win was a relief for

Garcia whose team had lost seven games by a combined 21 points, including a 50-48 loss to Colby at the Topside Tip-Off. "We didn't care who, what,

when, where or how. We knew Colby would be tough and we needed to beat a quality opponent," said Garcia.

A rubber match may be just around the corner as McCook is one of the eight teams scheduled to be a part of the Orange & Black Classic Jan.17-19.

"This is turning into a pretty

Thus far, a two-point margin of quarter and were able to get as victory has proven to be the only sure thing when these two teams take the court.

Dinkel chose the latter. Brewster boys win big, girls fall by 15

basketball team advanced to the halftime lead. semifinals of the Western Kansas in Sharon Springs.

were sent to the loser's bracket Collett with 22 points. after a 59-44 defeat at the hands of

Wheatland/Grinnell. Brewster was all over Cheylin from the word go. jumping out to a 20-2 lead after the first quarter. each had 10 points. Brewster continued the onslaught in the second quarter, outscoring

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The Bulldogs ended the game half. Liberty League tournament with a 20-31 from the free throw line 73-42 win over Cheylin Tuesday compared to just 4-8 for Cheylin.

Brewster had four players in The Lady Bulldogs, however, double-figures led by Michael Collett was also 9-12 from the

free throw line. Corey Siruta had 18 points; 16 came in the first half. Devon Selby and T. J. Preston

On the opposite end of the

The Brewster Bulldog boys Cheylin 18-9 to take a 38-11 off to a slow start and trailed 20-9 Brewster was led by Melissa

outscored Thunderhawks 18-13 in the third quarter to cut the deficit to 45-25 entering the fourth.

It was too little too late as the Bulldogs had no answer for the Weaver sisters who combined for 37 points and 11 of the Thunderhawks 14 in the fourth

Meagan Weaver finished with spectrum, the Lady Bulldogs got 23 while sister Tessa had 14.

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after one quarter and 32-17 at Baird who had 10 of her 15 points in the third quarter.

Nichelle Erskine was also in double-figures with 13 points. The win improved the boys record to

The girls fell to 4-3.

Each team will be back in action Friday. The Brewster boys will take on Greeley County 6 p.m. at the Colby Community Building.

The Lady Bulldogs will face Cheylin 3 p.m. at Colby High School.

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In Friday's Free Press, it stated Gabe Smull had quit the Colby College wrestling team. It was Andrew Williams who has quit the squad.

Correction:

STRIKE ZONE

~ League Bowling Results ~

Minds in the Gutter	3	1	1	Orschelns
Cal Williams	2	2	2	T.J. Tire
Colby Ag Center	2	2	3	Balls Deep
Farm Credit	2	2	4	City Limits
Colby Bowl	1	3	5	5 Pony Men
First high Individual game: Deb Norman, 189				First high Individu
First high Individual series:				First high Individu
Jan. 2nd - Ladies Nite Oເ	.+			Dec. 9th - King &
		Loot	Dlago	Team
Team	Won	Lost	Place	Renner - Schwar
Service Oil	20	12	1	Pancake - Heartr
Golden Harvest Seeds	20	12	2	Swartz-Barnett
Twisters	19.5	12.5	3	Norman-Gaede
Strike-Outs	17	15	4	Barton-Kreutzer
Margaret's Day Care	13.5	18.5	5	Schissler - Koehr
Don's Electric	13	19	6	Waddington - Mo
Camouflage Lawn Care	13	19	7	Schmidtberger - I
Straightline	12	20	8	Phillips - Carmen
First high Individual game: Mary Hurtt, 201				Nelson - Williams
First high Individual series: Kelly Horinek, 520				Nelson-Williams
	-			Huttles Venters

lual game: Vern Schwanke, 270 dual series: Vern Schwanke, 695 Place nke 20 17 17 15 15 14 13 10 oslev 10

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Colby Bowl and Fun Center

Women's First high Individual game: Jennifer Phillips, 211 Women's First high Individual series: Deb Norman, 530 Brought to you each week by:

Men's First high Individual game: Charles Schwanke, 268

Men's First high Individual series: Kipp Nelson, 698



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