# Colby Free Press Monday, June 2, 2008 Colby High's Top 10 games of the year

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For Colby Eagle fans, these last nine months have been nothing short of a long joy ride.

Nine teams had at least one athstate meet and several individuals showed themselves well on the state's biggest stage.

In the midst of seeing Colby's

athletic programs rise to an unprecedented level of success, we've been treated to some unforgettable games and performances.

Not all of the year's most amazing games went Colby's way, but the one's we have chosen as the top 10 this season will be talked lete reach a state tournament or about around town for years to

> Here's our list of the top 10 games at Colby High this season. Hope you enjoy.



**FILE PHOTO** 

From left, Aubrette Stephens, April Gee and Lissa Mazanec sat in disbelief following Colby's tough finish at the state tournament in Salina March 9.

## 1. Colby vs. Holton girls basketball

March 8, 2008- State Semifinals (Salina)

**Result:** Holton 47-44

**Highlights:** Leading 31-19 on their way to reaching the state finals and defending their state championship.

But somebody forgot to tell Holton they were supposed to just pack up their bags and head

The Wildcats went on a 14-0 game was deadlocked entering the fourth quarter.

It was back and forth into the final minute of play, and Lissa Mazanec's free throw tied it at 41 with 49.4 seconds left.

Colby appeared to have forced and count the officials overturned

The Lady Eagles wouldn't get settle for fourth place.

another chance.

Holton held the ball until the minutes early in third quarter, last five seconds before Melissa the Lady Eagles appeared well Nelson found some daylight from beyond NBA range and swished home a three-pointer with 2.5 seconds left that sent the BiCentennial Center into a frenzy.

It was Nelson's only successful three-pointer in five attempts, and she was just 2-11 for the game.

Colby's downcourt pass was run to take a 33-31 lead and the intercepted, and in a most stunning fashion, the champs had been knocked off their throne.

"Words can't describe how devastated the girls are right now," Lady Eagle head coach Parker McKee said after the game.

Significance: The loss prevent-Holton into a 10-second violation ed Colby from repeating as state on the ensuing inbound play, but champs and ended their state-best after initially signaling a 10-sec- winning streak at 32 games. The effects were noticeable the next the call and gave Holton the ball day as they lost to Abilene 66-54 in the third place game and had to



**FILE PHOTO** 

Senior Spencer Young, right, protected quarterback Heath Stephens on a pass play during Colby's 41-33 loss to Goodland Oct. 25 at Dennen Field.

#### 2. Colby vs. Goodland football

Oct. 25, 2008, Dennen Field

**Result:** Goodland 41-33

**Highlights:** You had to be there to believe it. And even those who were standing right on sidelines, like Goodland head coach Jonathan Dansel, were still in shock after what took place.

Colby led 33-14 with less than seven minutes against a 2-7 Cowboy team that looked to be on the ropes at best.

The first playoff berth in 10 years was right for the taking, but the Eagles fumbled it away. Liter-

After an unbelievable, diving catch by Forrest Trachsel made it 33-21 with 6:51 left, the Eagles proceeded to fumble the ball twice inside their own three-yard line.

Goodland's T.J. Hawkins cashed in on both for touchdowns as the Cowboys went ahead 34-33 with 3:07 left.

their own 38-yard line on the in 2006.

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next possession, but Hawkins intercepted a pass from Heath Stephens and returned it to the 5-yard line. Hawkins then scored his third touchdown in the last 2:58 to make it 41-33 with 1:50 left.

A desperation heave by Stephen Dinkel was intercepted on Colby's last drive, completing one of the most stunning comebacks in the history of the Colby/Goodland rivalry.

"I'm not sure of a lot of things right now," Eagle head football coach Chris Gardner said after the

"This hurts for our whole community.

Significance: Instead of securing a playoff berth, the Eagles were sitting at home in November for the 10th consecutive year.

It also left a bad taste on a 3-6 season that was markedly im-Colby moved the ball out to proved from their 1-8 campaign



The Lady Eagles celebrated following their nailbiting 36-35 victory over underdog Ulysses in the Substate finals March 1 in

# 3. Colby vs. Ulysses girls basketball

March 1, 2008- Substate finals (Russell)

Result: Colby 36-35

Highlights: Strange things happen sometimes in the post-season. Luckily for the Colby Lady Eagles, they lived to tell about it.

On the verge of losing to a Ulysses team they had beaten earlier this year by 30 points, Tasha Wagoner knocked down two free throws with 31.1 seconds left to give the Lady Eagles a one point Colby then forced Ulysses into

a turnover with under 10 seconds left to secure the win and a berth at the state tournament to defend A relieved Lady Eagle team cel-

collective sigh of relief.

We were very determined this wasn't going to be the end," said Mazanec. It was the end of the line for Ul-

ysses, but they certainly didn't go down without a fight against the undefeated Lady Eagles.

Significance: Besides clinching a spot at the state tournament, the Lady Eagles also avoided one of the most stunning losses in school history, if not in the history of Kansas high school girls' basketball. This was a Ulysses team they beat handily at the Orange and Black and beat again a week later without three starters. The ebrated at mid-court and the large phrase "anything can happen in contingent of Colby fans let out a the post-season" never rang truer.



Junior third baseman Jordan Krzycki fired a throw to first during Colby's 3-2 extra-inning victory over Perry-LeCompton in the first round of the state tournament May 23 in Salina.

#### 4. Colby vs. Perry-Lecompton softball

May 23, 2008- State tournament first round (Salina)

**Result:** Colby 3-2 8 innings Highlights: Four outs from

elimination and facing one of the toughest pitchers in the state, Colby's chances of winning their first state tournament game in school history didn't look to promising.

Apparently, Brena Jones and Tara Powell weren't sweating it

Jones got Colby's rally started with a single and stolen base, and Powell drove her home with a single in the sixth to tie it at 2.

Again with two outs and no one on in the eighth, Jones singled and reached second on an error

and Powell got her home with a bouncing ball up the middle.

Pitcher Logan Wark retired Perry-LeCompton 1-2-3 in the bottom of the inning, and the Lady Eagles stormed the diamond in celebration.

Significance: It was the first state tournament win in school history for the Lady Eagles, and it also put a nice, finishing touch on the athletic calender year.

Even though Colby was shut out by Girard and Andover Central the next day and finished fourth, it was Friday's game that meant the

## 5. Colby vs. Concordia football

Sept. 7, 2007, Dennen Field

Result: Concordia 12-6 2 OT **Highlights:** So much for the housewarming party. Colby's opener at the new Dennen Field was certainly unforgettable, but it's probably a night the Eagles wish they could've forgotten as quickly as possible.

It all looked good for Colby in the earlygoing as they knocked Concordia's starting quarterback out of the game and took a quick 6-0 lead on a 66-yard touchdown run by Mitchell Tuma.

The score remained 6-0 and Colby let Concordia keep hanging around until the Panthers finally made them pay. An 8-yard touchdown pass from Kaden Buer to Rico McCall tied it at 6 with 4:48

In the overtime, the Eagles kept Concordia from scoring on the first possession and had a 22-yard field goal from Stephen Dinkel to win it, but he missed it badly to the right.

Colby got the ball first in the second overtime and moved to the one-inch line on third down, but two sneaks by Heath Stephens were ruled short of the goal line.

Concordia took the ball back and scored two plays later, pulling out a game they had no business winning. An angry Chris Gardner vented his frustrations at the officials after the game and many of the players sat in the end zone in disbelief. The first win at Dennen Field

would have to wait a couple

Significance: You always want to win a game on a night your new stadium gets unveiled, and to lose in that fashion was simply heartbreaking.

That loss combined with the Goodland loss kept Colby's season from being one of the most successful in over a decade. Instead, it was a lot of woulda, coulda, shouldas.

## 6. Colby vs. Wichita South girls basketball Jan. 19, 2008, Orange and Black Semis

Result: Colby 71-46

Highlights: Fans packed the Community Building to see if the Lady Eagles could hang with the mighty 6A Wichita South Titans.

Turns out, their was no compe-

Colby turned a four-point halftime lead into a 20 point lead by the end of the third quarter and never looked back.

Things came fairly easy all night for Colby against a Wichita South team that was never able to adjust to the officiating. Three of their starters fouled out, including SMU signee Christine Elliott.

After the game, their head coach regular season.

Mike Helmer, who recently took the women's job at Butler County, pronounced his team would never win here because of the difference in officiating.

**Significance:** This win was for all the nay-sayers who balked at Colby' success because of their weak schedule out west. Wichita South was a decent 6A team with a division I signee and Colby took it to them. The balance of power may reside in the east in girls basketball, but that night was certainly a victory for western Kansas. It also was the crown jewel for Colby on their way to an undefeated



Stephen Dinkel went up in traffic during Colby's 41-36 comeback win over Pratt in the first round of Substate Feb. 26.

## 7. Colby vs. Pratt boys basketball

Feb. 26, 2008- Substate first round (Colby)

**Result:** Colby 41-36

Highlights: Only a night before, the #1 seed Lady Eagles had beaten #8 seed Russell 97-25.

It wasn't quite as easy for the #1 seed Colby boys against #8 seed Palms were getting sweaty and

Pratt took a 31-21 lead early in the fourth quarter. There was no way the Eagles could've justified what was about to happen. Fortunately, they

wouldn't have to. time and closed the game with a

Ethan Stover's only three-point- time since 2004.

er of the game gave Colby the lead for good, 35-33, with 2:31 left and the Eagles made their free throws down the stretch to seal it.

After having little to cheer about for the first three quarters, a raucous Eagle contingent could be heard louder than ever in the first spirits were starting to drop as game played at the high school all

Significance: The Eagles prevented what would have been a devastating way to end a turnaround year for the program. Instead of falling woefully short of Colby got it together just in expectations, the Eagles relaxed after that game and won their next two to advance to state for the first

#### 8. Colby vs. Liberal baseball

May 6, 2008, City Fields

Result: Liberal 9-8 (9 innings) the top of the eighth to go ahead **Highlights:** This game featured more momentum swings then the stock market. In the end, it crashed on the Eagles.

Colby led 2-0 until the fifth when Liberal plated a pair to tie it. The Eagles went back ahead 3-2 in the sixth only to have the Redskins tie it again in the seventh on a passed ball.

In the bottom of the inning, the Eagles loaded the bases with one out. With the infield in, Brandon Rasmussen lined one right at Liberal's second basemen who made a diving catch and flipped to first for the double play.

Liberal built off that great defensive play by scoring three in

But the Eagles weren't dead yet,

Down to their last out, the Eagles responded with a three-run homer by Stephen Dinkel to tie it back up at 6. Back came the Redskins in the

seventh as they regained a 7-6 lead on a wild pitch with two outs. This time the Eagles couldn't answer, and the three-hour marathon game ended with the Eagles on the wrong end of the spectrum.

**Significance:** None really. The win wouldn't have improved Colby's seeding at regionals. It was just a flat-out, great baseball

#### 9. Colby vs. Smoky Valley volleyball

Oct. 20, 2007- Substate semifinals (Colby)

**Result:** Colby 28-26, 25-20 Highlights: The Colby Lady Eagles knew they would be tested at Substate. Just not before the fi-

Smoky Valley, the #5 seed who came in with a 19-18 record, rallied from a 24-22 deficit to take leads of 25-24 and 26-25 in the first game. Colby was able to stave off both match points and regained a 27-26 lead on an incredible point that had to be saved from the

it with kill. She added a kill on the next point to give the Eagles a hard-earned first game win.

They went on to win the second game 25-20.

**Significance:** Like the boys basketball win over Pratt, the comeback, first-game victory over Smoky Valley took the pressure off the Lady Eagles. They played much better in the second game and handled Ulysses with ease in the finals to advance to their bench area before Mazanec ended fourth-straight state tournament.

### 10. Colby vs. Liberal boys basketball

Jan. 18, 2008, Orange and Black semifinals three with under two minutes left

**Result:** Liberal 69-62 Highlights: In front of the larg-

est crowd of the year, the Colby Eagles showed they were for real against the #5 ranked team in class 5A. Colby hung with Liberal the whole game thanks in large part to six three-pointers by Ethan Stover, who went on to set a tournament

to seal the victory.

Significance: Colby found out exactly how good they were that night, and it showed in their play the next day against Ulysses and for much of the rest of the season. Some doubted whether the Eagles could play with an athletic team record. Ahead by three, Liberal's like Liberal, but those doubters Marquez Patterson banked in a were proved wrong.