Page 12 Colby Free Press Friday, June 6, 2008

Eagles dominate 2007-2008

By Joey Falkoff

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And the award for 4A school of the year in athletics goes to the Colby Eagles.

Okay, that didn't really happen, but only because that award doesn't exist.

If it did, you can bet Colby High School would have been right there in contention for it in 2007-2008.

This high school athletic season, the Colby Eagles had six team different teams take their whole squad to state and a total of 10 teams that took at least one individual. The volleyball team made it for the fourth year in a row, girls basketball made it for a second straight year, wrestling qualified 10, girls tennis had their best finish (5th) in a number of years and softball won its first state tournament game in school history.

Though no team or individual was able to win a state championship, several came pretty close.

The Colby Eagle wrestling team finished third at the state tournament, which was their best finish since 2001. The Lady Eagle basketball team came within a possession of reaching the state title game for a second consecutive year and ended up fourth.

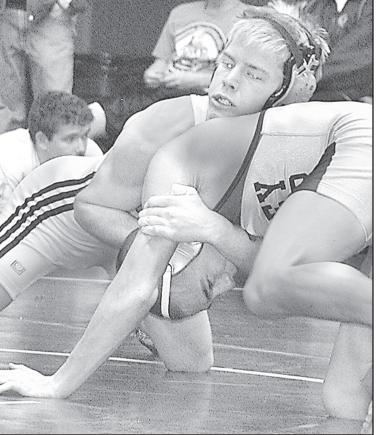
Individually, Josh Baden finished second at the state crosscountry meet and had three topthree finishes at the state track meet in Wichita.

Nick Kriss was the runner-up at 215 pounds at state wrestling, and Logan Wark finished third in singles at the girls state tennis tournament.

Put it all together and it adds up to one of the best athletic years in

*Head Coach: Barry Lucas

Boys Golf:



FILE PHOTO

Senior Brent Luedke helped the Colby Eagle wrestling team win their first Eagle Invitational in school history and finish third at the 4A State Tournament in February.

school history. In Kansas Class 4A hungry." this year, only Andale would be able to put up resume that matches best of Colby this year, but Gabel or exceeds Colby's.

Andale won the state championship in football and softball, tied for the state championship in boys track and finished second in wrestling and baseball. They also qualified their entire girls team in cross-country.

"It gives us a little extra motivation," said Colby athletic director Larry Gabel. "I hope that keeps us

Spring Sports Box

*Overview: Won the Atwood Tournament, Eagle Invitational and the League Tournament. Ryley

Andale may have gotten the says Colby can do even better next year and for years to come.

"Everybody did a good job this year," said Gabel. "If we can improve just a little, that would be good. There's definitely room for improvement. I was pleased with this year, but you always want to win that extra league title or qualify that extra kid."

Winter Sports Box

Boys Basketball:

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*Head Coach: Beau Sheets.

*Overview: Final Record: 18-6 (6-1 NWKL). Third Place at the Orange and Black. NWKL champions. Substate champions. Made first state appearance since 2004. Lost to Holton 68-47 in first round at state. Ethan Stover, Levi Schlick and Stephen Dinkel named to all-league team.

*Falkoff's Grade: A

*Looking Ahead: With four senior starters, including Schlick and Dinkel returning, the Eagles should have another dominate regular season and make their second straight appearance at state. Ethan Stover's loss will hurt, and the Eagles are going to need greater contributions from younger guys like Brandon Rasmussen and Chaz Winger. Winning the league is no guarantee, though, as Atwood and Quinter have alot of talent coming back as well.

Wrestling:

*Head Coach: Matt Sims.

*Overview: Went 8-0 duels. Won the Eagle Invitational for the first time ever. First place at the Southwest Shootout. Third place at the Newton Tournament. Northwest Kansas League champions. Clearwater Regional champions. Qualified 10 of 14 wrestlers for state including Taylor Moeder, Bryan Brewer, Brent Luedke, Hunter Olsen, Heath Stephens, Breck Arnberger, Tanner Kriss, Treat Bugbee, Nick Kriss and Taylor Brown. Eight wrestlers placed including Moeder (fourth), Brewer (sixth), Luedke (fifth), Olsen (sixth), Arnberger (fourth), Tanner (fourth), Nick (second) and Brown (fourth). Finished third as a team behind Clay Center and Andale.

*Falkoff's Grade: A

*Looking Ahead: The Eagles will still be good, but a repeat of this year's success seems very unlikely. Colby will have to replace five seniors who placed at state and arguably one of the best senior classes in school history. Moeder, Nick and Arnberger could all make a run at a state title. If the Eagles are going to finish third or higher as a team, they are going to have to do it with a lot of new faces.

Girls Basketball:

*Head Coach: Derek Bissitt

*Overview: Final Record: 24-2 (7-0 NWKL). Topside Tip-Off champions. Northwest Kansas League champions. Orange and Black Champions. Posted first undefeated regular season in school history. Substate champions. Entered state as #1 seed, but finished fourth after a 47-44 loss to Holton in the semfinals and a 66-54 loss to Abilene in the third place game.

*Falkoff's Grade: A-

*Looking Ahead: No matter how good some of Colby's younger players are, the expectations should and will be much lower next year. You don't lose that good of a senior class and just keep on ticking. Expect Colby to struggle at the beginning, but get better throughout the season. I would guess 13 or 14 wins is possible.

Fall Sports Box

Football:

*Head Coach: Chris Gardner.

*Overview: Final Record: 3-6 (2-4 NWKL). Most wins since 2004. Played first home again at new Dennen Field Sept.7 (L 12-6 to Concordia). Won first road game (at Oberlin 41-0) for first time since 2004. Missed playoffs for 10th consecutive year after 41-33 loss to Goodland.

*Falkoff's Grade: C+

*Looking ahead: Finally, the Eagles have some stability. For the first time since 2005, the Eagles will open the season with the same coach as the year before. That should do wonders. Plus, the Eagles return a number of juniors who played significant minutes last year. The big question is will Gardner go with the running ability of Heath Stephens at quarterback or the big arm of Stephen Dinkel. A five or six win season is realistic, but the Eagles have to get at least one win on the road district's to go to the playoffs.

Girls Tennis:

*Head Coach: Jordan Sharp.

*Overview: Won six of eight regular season tournaments. Finished 1st at Regionals. Finished 1st at Sub-State. Had four state qualifiers: Logan Wark (3rd in singles), Barbara Bickner (11th in singles), Caitlyn Wark and Lindsey Wilson (7th in doubles). Overall finished 5th at state.

*Falkoff's Grade: A

*Looking Ahead: Logan will be very hard to replace. She was easily the best player in 4A in western Kansas. The Eagles do return four state qualifiers and a number of junior varsity players to fill Logan and Dougherty's spots. If some of the younger girls can step up, there's no reason why the Lady Eagles can't have similar-type success next year.

Cross-Country:

*Head Coach: Bob Mannebach.

*Overview: Won Lakin combined meet. Finished 1st at League. Finished 3rd at Regionals. Senior Josh Baden won both league and regional meets. Qualified seven for state: Boys-Josh Baden (2nd)

Boys Tennis:

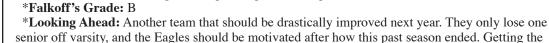
whole team to state is a legitimate possibility.

Haas won the individual league championship. No state qualifiers.

*Head Coach: Jordan Sharp

*Overview: Won the Goodland Tournament. First tournament win since 2005 at Goodland. Tied for first place at regionals. Jeremy Harter became team's first state qualifier since 2005. *Falkoff's Grade: B+

*Looking Ahead: This program's best days are still ahead of them. The Eagles lose only one varsity senior (Tim Howard) and should be primed to get four or five guys to state next year. It could be a turnaround similar to that of the girls this past fall.



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Girls Track & Field:

*Head Coach: Lesley Wagoner

*Overview: Finished 2nd at league, tenth at regionals. Qualified two for state (Katrina Kaus and April Gee). Kaus finished 10th in the 3200M and Gee finished fifth in the high jump.

*Falkoff's Grade: C-

*Looking Ahead: The two Kaus girls, Gee and Kayla Hockersmith give the Lady Eagles four girls who should compete for a state berth the next several years. They've got to find an answer for their relay teams and people to replace Mazanec and Paige Stephens in the field. Overall, the team should be improved next year.

Boys Track & Field:

*Head Coach: Gordon Rasmussen

*Overview: Won the Norton, Quinter and league meets. Finished seventh at regionals. State qualifiers were Josh Baden (800M, 1600M, 3200M) and the 4 x 800 relay team of Breck Arnberger, Kalen Rasmussen, Chase Moore and Ryan Baalman. Baden finished third in the 800 and 1600 and second in the mile. Finished 10th at state as a team.

*Falkoff's Grade: B

*Looking ahead: Losing Baden will be tough enough, but the Eagles have some other major holes to fill with the loss of Mitchell Tuma, Ryan Baalman and Ethan Stover. The influx of eighth-graders should help. It will be interested to see how the Eagles do next year with what is expected to be a very, young team.

Softball:

*Head Coach: Jack Elliott

*Overview: Final Record: 18-4. Most wins in school history. Regional champions. Made second state tournament appearance in school history. Won first state tournament gave ever with 3-2 win over Perry-LeCompton in the first round. Finished fourth at state.

*Falkoff's Grade: A

*Looking Ahead: Colby will lose some punch in the middle of the order and their best starting pitcher in Logan Wark, but they've got a ton of talent coming back. As just a freshman, Skyler Mengel showed the potential to dominate. If she can develop even more next year, this team will have more than enough offense to get back to state.

Baseball:

*Head Coach: Kevin Cox

*Overview: Final Record: 10-8. Beat Concordia in the first round of Substate before losing to #1 seed Russell in the second round.

*Falkoff's Grade: C+

*Looking Ahead: There's no excuses next year. The Eagles should and have to get to state for it to be a success. All the pieces are there and Russell is losing a lot of talent. The ball is in their court.



Technique Wrestling Camp



Tuesday, June 10

10 a.m. - Noon & 1 - 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 11 10 a.m. - Noon & 1 - 3:30 p.m. St. Francis Community High School Wrestling Room All ages are welcome. Techniques for all levels will be taught.

The fee is \$20 per day per wrestler.

Coaches: Derek Ross (2008 All American, placed 8th at Nationals) and Jordan Gienger, University of Nebraska Kearney wrestling team members and 2008 National Team Champions.

Hosted by the St. Francis Little Kids Wrestling Club. For more information contact: Shawna Blanka or email sblanka@carrollsweb.com

Girls-Katrina Kaus (16th), Katherine Kaus (46th), Amy Schroeder (59th), Paige Stephens (60th), Aubrette Stephens (69th), Kelly Gerstner (81st), Rhett Martin (98th). Overall girls finished 9th at state. *Falkoff's Grade: B+

*Looking ahead: For the girls, the possibilities are excited. With the two Kaus sisters and Schroeder, they return their top three runners who are all sophomores. In another year or two, they should be able to compete for a state championship. The boys will have some major rebuilding to do without Baden and Ryan Baalman. Like with so many other programs, you don't lose a kid like Baden without some sort of fall off the next year.

Girls Golf:

*Head Coach: Rick Williams

*Overview: Had nine girls out compared to three last year

*Falkoff's Grade: C+

*Looking ahead: The Lady Eagles lose only one senior in Courtney Ress, and the younger girls were able to gain a ton of experience this year. I look for this to be one of the more improved programs next year.

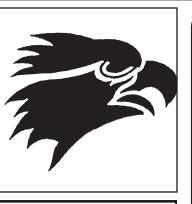
Volleyball:

*Head Coach: Lesley Wagoner.

*Overview: Final Record: 34-8. Most wins in school history. Northwest Kansas League Champions. Sub-State Champions. Made fourth straight appearance at state. Went 0-3 at state for second year in a row. Lissa Mazanec named second team all-state.

*Falkoff's Grade: A-

*Looking Ahead: The one constant in Colby's four straight state appearances has been Mazanec. Now that she's gone, along with two other key players, that could spell trouble. If Wagoner can get this team back to state next year, it will be her best coaching job yet.





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