By EARL WATT
• Leader & Times

Kaheem Ransom was unstoppable in the first round of the Region 6 tournament.

The sophomore guard scored 27 points to lead Seward to an 88-70 win and became the 10th player in school history to score more than 1,000 points.

Ransom scored 14 of Seward's first 16 points including a three-pointer that gave the Saints the lead with 11:23 to play in the first half.

Seward never trailed the rest of the game. Colby was able to cut Seward's lead to one with 10:45 remaining in the first half, but the Saints went on a 20-5 run that included four three-pointers to take a 36-20 lead.

Seward added two more long-range bombs before half for a total of eight threes in the first 20 minutes, and Seward had a 46-29 lead.

Seward jumped out to a 24-point lead with 16:38 to play, before Colby made a run that cut the lead to 11 with 6:03 to play.

Seward coach Bryan Zollinger took several time outs to try to motivate his team to get back to the style of play form the first half.

"Colby was beating us for most of the second half," Zollinger said. "And I mean beating us by eight to 10 points. We got out to a 24-point lead, and we started jacking threes, not playing defense. Once you shut down and lose momentum it is a bear to get back. We were content, and that drives me insane."

Malcolm Hill-Bey and Ransom took over down the stretch, scoring 15 of Seward's final 16 points, and the Saints defense stiffened to preserve the 88-70 win.

"I thought we did most of what we were supposed to do in the first half," Zollinger said. "We didn't finish well inside, but we hit some jump shots, got them in foul trouble, gave up too many drives, but overall a decent effort in the first half."

Colby tried to take the inside game away by packing the lane, but the Saints were able to open up the defense by knocking down the long and mid-range outside shot.

“We weren’t finishing inside,” Zollinger said. “They were sinking in. You have to knock down some jump shots. Luckily, we did.”

The win advanced No. 1 Seward to the second round, and the Saints (24-7) will host No. 8 Independence (17-14) Tuesday. The Pirates advanced with an 83-68 win over No. 9 Dodge City.

In other first round games, No. 5 Barton defeated No. 12 Allen, 93-61. No. 4 Cowley defeated No. 13 Pratt, 67-49. No. 3 Hutchinson held off No. 14 Northwest Kansas Tech, 90-82.

No. 11 Cloud County upset No. 6 Labette, 54-50.

No. 7 Butler defeated No. 10 Neosho, 90-67, and No. 2 Coffeyville was challenged early by No. 15 Garden City before earning a 92-70 win.