

By EARL WATT

• Daily Leader

What was expected to be a battle to the final minutes turned in to a Lady Saint rout early in the second half when Seward went on a 13-3 run to take a 25-point lead over Cloud County and went on to hand the No. 11 Lady Thunderbirds their first loss of the season, 76-53.



"The first five minutes of the second half, we played really well on defense," Seward coach Toby Wynn said. "That was the key."

Seward put four in double digits while prevent one Lady T-bird from reaching 10 points in the game.

Seward jumped out to an early 16-4 lead, but the Lady T-Birds went on an 11-0 run to get within one of the Lady Saints with 10:15 to play in the first half.

But the Lady Saints responded with a 14-4 run that included threes by Vaneza Junior and Megan Lassley.

"Whenever Cloud would get going, our girls would rose to the occasion," Wynn said. "They know the importance of this one and the intensity of the rivalry. When we get our kids to play with energy, Cloud had a hard time scoring."

The win was just another for the LAdy Saints over a ranked opponent, something Seward has already accomplished four times in one of the toughest pre-conference schedules in Lady Saint history.

"We've already been in difficult games," Wynn said. "Our kids believe and expect to win. At the end of the day, they executed."

Rachel Barnes led the Lady Saints with 22 points, Junior added 18, Nadia Rosario put in 14, and Lassley scored 10.

Seward's defense forced 27 Cloud (17-1, 3-1) turnovers.

The Lady Saints (17-1, 4-0) travel to Colby Wednesday.