

By EARL WATT

- Daily Leader

While Pratt's Phylicia Freeman was having a big night against the Lady Saints, Rachel Barnes was having a bigger night against the Pratt Lady Beavers.

Freeman scored 26 points, and Barnes scored 34.



Unlike Freeman, Barnes had a strong supporting cast that dominated the Lady Beavers in a 99-69 win that kept the Lady Saints on top of the Jayhawk West with a key match-up against third place Cloud County coming up Saturday.

One Lady Saint that stepped up was Morgan Skomal. She hit three three pointers and scored 15 points to go along with three assists in the blowout victory.

Skomal and Barnes weren't the only hot hands for Seward. The Lady Saints shot a blistering 58 percent in the first half. The Lady Saints built a 51-30 lead at the break.

But Pratt put together a 9-2 run to open the second half to cut Seward's lead to 14.

That's as close as the Lady Beavers would get.

The Lady Saints squashed any hopes of a Lady Beaver comeback when Barnes hit a three pointer followed by two baskets by Skomal and a Barnes free throw to push the lead to 68-44.

The Lady Saints forced 26 Pratt turnovers and converted many of them into transition points.

“I thought we played good offensively,” Seward coach Toby Wynn said. “We pushed the ball and got to the free throw line a bunch. We made the extra pass and got some open looks. We didn’t come out and guard the way we needed to guard. We gave up some easy opportunities to them that we can’t give up to other teams in this league. We have to get that fine tuned before Saturday.”

Seward is only one game ahead of Hutchinson and a game and a half ahead of Cloud. Seward can take control with a win with only three conference games to play after the trip to Concordia Saturday.

“It’s never easy to win at Cloud,” Wynn said. “We have to be physically and mentally ready. Only two times in my five years have we won there. If we want to win the league and secure a No. 1 seed out of West, it’s something we have to do.”

The No. 15 Lady Saints will face Cloud at 6 p.m. Saturday.