By ROY ALLEN

Seward assistant athletic director

PRATT — There was certainly no fear in the eyes of the Pratt Beavers Saturday night as the Seward County Saints came to town to wrap up Round 1 of the Jayhawk West Conference schedule.

Pratt was the aggressor early and often, grabbing an early lead before taking a 16 point lead into the half and cruising to an 85-75 win over the three-time defending Jayhawk West champs to drop Seward from first to third place.

Seward started strong, getting an early three from Niem Stevenson and a runner from Quentin Purtue to take an early 5-4 lead. Their lead was short-lived, though, as Pratt scored the next six points to go up 10-5 before stretching their advantage to 15-6 with 13:51 to go in the first half.

The Saints found themselves down 20-10 before another Purtue bucket cut their deficit to eight at the media timeout, but Pratt continued to have their way with the ball, pushing their lead to 34-19 and carrying a 43-27 lead into the half.

Pratt couldn’t miss in the first 20 minutes, shooting 62 percent from the field and 57 percent from three-point land while Seward shot just 32 percent from the field in the half.

The Saints started to work their way back into the game, cutting the Pratt lead to 13 five minutes

into the half before a pair of Stevenson scores drew them to within 11 at 52-41 with 13:24 remaining in the contest.

A left-wing three from Malcolm Hill-Bey drew Seward to within single digits for the first time since early in the game at 54-45, but Pratt quickly answered, pushing their lead back to 66-50 by the six minute mark and hanging on to a sizable lead at 70-56 with under 4:00 to go.

The Saints drew to within a dozen, and a pair of Brian Bridgeforth free throws made it a 10-point game. With Seward fighting both the clock and the Beavers, the Saints cut the Pratt lead to eight at 72-64 as Hill-Bey slashed to the basket and scored with 1:22 remaining.

A wing three from Tyreke Sharp got the Saints to within seven with 50 seconds left, but that was as close as Seward would get as Pratt knocked down free throws down the stretch to hang on to win 85-75.

Pratt finished the game shooting 52 percent from the field, and the Beavers hit 78 percent of their free-throw attempts. The Saints shot 37 percent from the field and only made 29 of their 41 free-throw attempts in the contest.

Hill-Bey led the Saints with a game-high 22 points while Stevenson scored 14 and Bridgeforth had 12.

Seward fell to 15-8 overall and 5-2 in Jayhawk West play, dropping from first to third as the first round of conference action came to a close.

Pratt is also 15-8 overall and 5-2 in league action, holding the tie breaker against the Saints for a surprising second place perch.

The Saints return home Wednesday when they take on Colby in the Greenhouse at 8p.m. Free tickets are available courtesy of buyout sponsor Holiday Inn Express, and tickets ae available at

their Liberal location as well as at North Hutch's.