Daily Leader photo/Rustin Watt
Marquez Patterson puts in a lay-up in the first half Wednesday against Pratt. Seward jumped out to a 24-point first half lead, but had to end a Beaver rally in the second half to earn an 85-74 win.

By EARL WATT
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What looked like a Seward County rout in the first half turned into a typical Jayhawk West battle in the second half.
Seward jumped out to a 24-point first half lead with strong defensive play that led to fast-break lay-ups.
The lead could have reached 30, but the Saints missed three consecutive point-blank lay-ups.
The defensive intensity faded in the second half, and Pratt erased most of the deficit. Pratt had the game back to 69-66, but Pratt missed a three-point shot, and the Saints were able to stretch the lead and hold on for the 85-74 win.
“Early in the first half, when we had a 24 point lead, we came down and tried to get cute on lay-ups and passes,” Seward coach Bryan Zollinger said. “We stopped executing our offense. Instead of a 30-point lead, it went down to 13.”
While the offensive prowess waned, the lack of defense allowed Pratt’s Denodo Eiland to get open looks. He connected on five of 10 three-point opportunities and scored 25 in the game.
“We talked about it at halftime, “ Zollinger said. “We had to come out and play with intensity. In the first half we were up under Eiland. In the second half, we were 10 feet off of him, and he got shots.”
With about six minutes to play, the Saints got back on track, picking up the defense and forcing Pratt into low-percentage shots.
“We kept challenging our guys to make plays,” Zollinger said. “We forced them to miss a shot. We had rebounds in our hands, took them down and scored.”
Marcus James paced the Saints with 20 points. Three other Saints, Jon Tassin, Thijin Moses, and Antonio Smith each scored 16.
Seward (2-2) has moved up to fourth in the Jayhawk West behind Barton (4-0), Hutchinson (3-1) and Butler (2-1). The Saints will face Cloud (1-2) at 8 p.m. Saturday
“We have talent,” Zollinger said. “We need to play with toughness at the defensive end, and keep our focus on the offensive end. If we do

that, we can play with anybody.”