

Marcus James takes a shot in the lane late in the second half Sunday at the Dodge City Civic Center. Seward won in overtime, 70-67.

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DODGE CITY — For this year's edition of Seward County Saints, 40 minutes of basketball just isn't enough.

The Saints have gone to overtime five times this season, three of those in Jayhawk West competition.

The latest was against Dodge City Saturday, and it was the first overtime win in the conference, 70-67.

Seward had a seven-point lead with five minutes to play, but the Conqs rallied.

The game was tied 61-61 with 33.9 seconds to play when Thijin Moses took a shot and missed. But Marcus James tipped in the rebound to give the Saints a 63-61 lead.

Dodge City's Cory Perkins hit a late basket to send the game to overtime.

The game stayed tight throughout the extra period, and Marquez Patterson gave the Saints a 68-67 lead with 1:59 to play on a free throw.

With less than 20 seconds to play, Patterson attempted a drive to the basket and made contact with a Dodge City defender. No foul was called, and the Conqs rebounded the ball and headed down for what could have been a game-winning shot.

But the Saints intercepted a pass and lobbed the ball ahead to James who was intentionally fouled with a tenth of a second left on the clock. He made both free throws, and the Saints earned the 70-67 win.

"We've been asking guys to step up and play harder, and Marcus has taken that challenge." Seward coach Bryan Zollinger said. "We need

more people to follow his example. We need to play with more tenacity.” While Seward chalked up the win, Zollinger indicated that some defensive statistics have not been trending the way he would like to see them.

“We are giving up 18 out of 19 teams in points allowed,” he said.

“three-point shooting against us, rebounding margin, a lot of defensive statistical categories we led the country in a year ago we are at the bottom of Kansas now. That comes down to toughness.”

Seward exhibited more toughness in the second half Sunday and was able to cut Dodge City’s shooting percentage from 57 percent in the first half to 44 percent in the second. The Saints won and only shot 38 percent for the game.

“We hit some key baskets and got a little more aggressive defensively in the second half,” Zollinger said. “We forced 17 turnovers. It boils down to toughness.”

James led the Saints with 29 points and 14 rebounds, Moses had 18, and Patterson scored 10.

Dodge City had one major threat, Rodney Clinkscales, who scored 27 points including six three-pointers. But Zollinger’s defensive strategy protected against a strong second scorer.

“You try to be aware of where good scorers are, but there are times when good shooters get loose for shots,” he said. “One guy can’t beat you. One guy might get 30-35, but we win the game. Clinkscales got his, but as long as you don’t let another guy have a career day, you’ll be OK.”

Seward is 3-2 in overtime games following the victory over Dodge City, the third extended affair in the Jayhawk West.

“I think it’s a great chance to learn,” Zollinger said. “We’ve made some mistakes in other games. We had three possessions against Barton and Cloud and had a chance to win the game and didn’t get a shot off. Tonight we did get the shot off. So that’s progress.”

Seward is currently fourth in the Jayhawk West, two games behind league-leading Barton County (18-2, 5-1). The Saints (16-2, 3-3) will travel to Garden City to face the Broncbusters (13-7, 3-3) Wednesday.