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Saturday's Jayhawk West Conference match with Barton County was crucial for more than one reason. First, the winner would sit atop the conference at 5-0 with the loser moving to 4-1. Secondly, a win by the Lady Saints would put them at 5-0 with Dodge City left on their first half schedule while Barton County still has to travel to Hutchinson. The importance... a Seward win Saturday and a Hutchinson win over Barton Wednesday would give the Lady Saints a two game lead over the entire Jayhawk West Conference.

In game one Seward would take control early and never look back. Tied early 4-4, Seward jumped out in front first with a kill from Lindsey Miller and then an ace by Diana Castrillon to go up 8-5. Seward stretched the lead to 5 when Kelen Ricardo and Sheina Fernandes combined on a block to push the score to 13-8. The two teams would play even for the next 20 points but the result was a 23-18 lead for the Lady Saints in which they finished off 25-18 after a hitting error by the Cougars.

Barton came out ready to go in game two and after Seward scored the game's first two points to take a 2-0 advantage, the Cougars rolled off 5 points in a row to go up 5-2.

Barton continued to hold the lead but LaKendra Sanders hammered one to the floor to cut the Cougar advantage to 10-8. Three straight Lady Saint points would give them their first lead of the set at 11-10 and midway through the two teams were deadlocked at 14. With the score at 17-15 in favor of Seward, Fernandes would pick up her 3rd kill of the set to put the Lady Saints up 18-15 and from there they would never look back.

On game point up 24-19, Sanders would smash a quick set from Maddy Taylor to the floor to give the Lady Saints a 2-0 advantage with the 25-19 win. Other than an early 4-3 lead by Barton Seward looked to be in control of game three as well, taking leads of 11-6 and then 18-14 later on in the set looking to sweep away the Cougars from the Greenhouse. Unfortunately in a game of runs, Barton would fight back and take advantage of a couple of miscues from the Lady Saints to even the game at 22 later on.

The two teams would go back and forth down the wire but Barton would force a fourth game after a 28-26 win in game three. The fourth game would look much like the second game did as Barton would hold the early advantage only to see Seward County battle back to tie and then take the lead near the midpoint at 13-11. The Lady Saints would stretch their lead to 5 at 17-12 and then open up even a bigger margin at 22-13 before eventually finishing off their opponents from Great Bend 25-16 to take home the 3-1 win.

Seward moves to 5-0 in Jayhawk West with win over Barton

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Offensively Seward was as usual led by a balanced attack with 4 players recording 12 or more kills on the match. To show even more balance, the Lady Saints two middle's Sheina Fernandes and LaKendra Sanders combined for 29 kills while Seward's top two outside hitters Lindsey Miller and Diana Castrillon combined for 28 kills.

Taryn Westerman connected on 49 percent of her set attempts to record 21 assists while Maddy Taylor led the Lady Saints in the assist category with 23. Castrillon led the Lady Saints in both aces (4) and digs (21) while Miller and Amanda Savage cracked the double digit dig mark with 17 and 12 respectively. Six different players combined for 8 total team blocks with Sanders and Fernandes leading the way with 1 solo and 4 total blocks apiece.

The Lady Saints day wasn't done however as their schedule had them playing another match against Clarendon Saturday night. In a much less anticipated matchup, the Lady Saints took care of business rather easily with all 12 Seward players seeing time in the match.

Game one was never much of a contest as Seward won 25-12 while game two was a little bit better but still a rather easy win for the Lady Saints at 25-17. After taking a 9-3 lead early in game three, it looked as if it would be a laugher as well but Clarendon stayed tough to make it the best game of the three at 25-19 at the end of play.

Kelen Ricardo, Lindsey Miller, LaKendra Sanders, and Sheina Fernandes all recorded 6 kills in the win while Westerman and Savage tied for the team lead in digs with 9.

The win over Barton puts Seward on top of the Jayhawk West all by themselves at 5-0 and their second win on the day ran their overall record to 17-5 on the season.

The Lady Saints will wrap up their first half of conference play Wednesday on the road against Dodge City before kicking off the second half of conference play at 6:30 p.m. Friday at home against Colby.

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