

Dragons continue winning streak, annihilating Merino and Wiggins

Written by April Peregoy



Taking a two-week holiday break didn't affect the Dragon basketball team's winning streak. The varsity boys blew away the weekend competition to remain undefeated after eight games so far this season.

Returning to the home court, the Dragons played their first league game of the season against Merino Friday night, Jan. 9. The Rams never stood a chance against Holyoke, who won by a whopping 54 points, with a final score of 71-17.

HHS had the home court advantage again on Saturday, Jan. 10 when the team hosted Wiggins for another league game. The Dragons were prepared for the Tigers to put up more of a fight than Merino did, but Wiggins failed to deliver, and Holyoke took another easy win of 52-20.

"It was good to be back on the court," said coach John Baumgartner. "As a coach, I always worry a little bit after a long break, but the boys were focused and in good shape."

He added, "I'm feeling really good about where we are as a team right now. They're playing with a lot of confidence and getting along together real well on the court."

Holyoke 71, Merino 17

Coach Baumgartner knew Merino had been having a tough season, but he wanted to make sure his team did not take its match-up with the Rams too lightly. He said his team did not disappoint.

"I was really pleased with their effort," he said. "They took it seriously. I liked their mentality."

It didn't take long for Holyoke to run up the scoreboard on Merino. Kyle Carper and Austin Tharp were on fire, earning eight and seven points respectively. In the first eight minutes of play, the Rams only earned one free throw point.

In the second, Tharp again took the ball and ran with it, adding 14 points to the score in only the first few minutes of the quarter. Six of them came from three-point range.

With the team now securely in control of a strong lead, more players came off the bench to get varsity time.

Judging how much to back off in a one-sided game like Friday night's is a tough call according to Baumgartner. "I don't like to run the score up," he said. "On the other hand, it's hard to shut down players who don't get a lot of varsity time and they come in and are shooting well."

With the score at halftime reading 47-3, the chances for Merino to make a comeback looked pretty bleak. HHS kept scoring a little closer in the second half, but still easily won by 54 points.

Baumgartner praised team members Brian DeBoer, Preston King, Reid Baumgartner, Michal Brown and Willie Greenman for their contributions to the game Friday night.

Three players scored double digits against the Rams, including Tharp with 23, Carper 12 and DeBoer 10. Carper dominated the boards in rebounding with 11 and Tharp made five steals.

Overall, Holyoke hit 30 of 54 field goals for a 56 percent shooting average, while Merino made eight of 40 for 20 percent. HHS was also 60 percent from the free throw line compared to Merino's 17 percent.

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In addition, the Dragons outrebounded the Rams 41-20.

Statistics

Holyoke 71, Merino 17

	2	3	FT	F	TP						
	FG										
Tharp	8	2	1-2	0	23						
Baumgartner	0	0	0-0	0	0						
Carper	5	0	2-2	1	12						
Wailes	2	0	1-2	0	5						
Swanson	0	0	0-0	0	0	DeBoer	3	1	1-2	3	10
Brown	3	0	0-0	0	6						
Reid Baum.	0	2	1-2	2	7						
King	2	0	0-0	2	4						
Fricke	0	0	0-0	0	0						
Greenman	2	0	0-0	0	4						
TEAM	25	5	6-10	8	71						

Merino

TEAM 8 0 1-6 9 17

Scoring By Quarters

Holyoke 17 30 16 8 --71

Merino 1 2 10 4 --17

Holyoke 52, Wiggins 20

“We thought they would be more competitive than they were,” said Baumgartner of his team’s Wiggins Tiger opponents on Saturday, who the Dragons defeated 52-20.

Expecting a closer match-up than the one played Friday night, HHS came out of the gate fast and furious. Tharp swooshed the first basket of the game from behind the arc, then hit two free throws to give Holyoke a five-point lead in the first minute.

Four more Dragons would contribute baskets to the game in the first quarter, including Swanson with one two-point field goal and one three-pointer. By the end of the first eight minutes, Holyoke already had a 15-point lead over the Tigers.

The rest of the game continued much the same way as the first quarter. In the most exciting play of the day, Ryan Baumgartner made a break for the Wiggins’ side of the court early in the fourth quarter, and threw the ball to Carper for a slam dunk that brought the Holyoke crowd to its feet.

HHS played great defense, and even held the Tigers scoreless in the third quarter. Though Wiggins did outscore Holyoke by one point in the final quarter, it didn’t make much difference to the inevitable outcome.

To Wiggins’ credit, Baumgartner did note the visiting team was missing a couple of its stronger players. Still, he thought the Dragons moved the ball well on Saturday and was pleased with their defensive efforts as well.

Holyoke was 47 percent from the field with 18 of 38 shots made, and was 61 percent from the line. Tharp again led the way in scoring for the Dragons with 16 points. Carper followed with 10.

HHS outrebounded Wiggins 42-23. Brown came out on top with 11 rebounds, and Carper grabbed 10.

Ryan Baumgartner had an impressive game as well in the point guard position, making 11 assists.

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Statistics

Holyoke 52, Wiggins 20

	2	3	FT	F	TP	
						FG
Tharp	3	2	4-4	3	16	
Baumgartner	1	0	2-3	2	4	
Carper	4	0	2-4	1	10	
Wailes	2	1	1-2	0	8	
Swanson	1	2	0-0	2	8	
DeBoer	0	0	1-2	1	1	
Brown	1	0	0-1	1	2	
Reid Baum.	0	0	1-2	0	1	
King	0	0	0-0	2	0	
Fricke	0	0	0-0	0	0	
Greenman	1	0	0-0	0	2	
TEAM	13	5	11-18	12	52	

Wiggins

TEAM 6 1 5-12 19 20

Scoring By Quarters

Holyoke 18 13 10 11 --52

Wiggins 3 5 0 12 --20

Upcoming action

Up next, Holyoke varsity will take on county rival Haxtun for the second time this season in Holyoke on Friday, Jan. 16 with action starting at 4 p.m.

The following week the Dragons head to Northeastern Junior College in Sterling for a game against Love Christian at 4 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 20. They will then host Sedgwick County on Friday, Jan. 23 at 4 p.m.