

Cougars unable to upset Holyoke' winning streak

Written by April Peregoy

Holding onto their #1 spot in the 2A state rankings, the Holyoke Dragon basketball team beat out league rivals Sedgwick County, 43-29, on Friday, Jan. 23 to remain undefeated after 11 games.

Friday's game was a highly anticipated event. The Cougars are the reigning 2008 state champs, and held the third spot in the 2A state ranks as of Friday. Adding to the tension, Holyoke barely squeezed out a win in overtime when the two teams met before Christmas break. However, that game was not a league or district one, and Friday's counted as both.

To show their support of the home team, members of the Holyoke crowd at Friday night's game were decked out in green and gold.

"It was good to see everybody in green," said coach John Baumgartner. "It was great to have the home court advantage this time, and to get so much support. It was a fun game, and the boys really



appreciated it."

Right off the tip, the Dragons were on fire defensively. "It was a total team effort," said Baumgartner. "I can't give all the credit to one person; they all worked together to shut them down."

They also did well getting the Cougars into early foul trouble. Sedgwick County's strongest points-earner, Justin Tjaden, was forced to stay out of much of the action in the first half, due to three fouls he picked up in just the first quarter.

Still, the first eight minutes of play were close—probably the closest of the game. At the end, the score was tied at eight.

The Dragons began their push for control of the scoreboard in the second, with Austin Tharp leading the way. He scored nine of the team's 13 points for the quarter. The Cougars were held to only six, giving them a seven-point deficit at the halftime buzzer.

It looked like Sedgwick County was going to catch up when the teams returned for the third quarter. Tjaden came back on the court in a big way by hitting a three, followed quickly by two free throws.

Unfortunately for the Cougars, their momentum didn't last long. Ryan Baumgartner took the wind out of their sails with a three-pointer for Holyoke. Kyle Carper then added six more points on top of that to make the score 34-23 at the end of the third.

The majority of Holyoke's final baskets in the fourth quarter were made from the free throw line. Out of the seven earned by HHS, four were made by Tharp and two by Baumgartner.

Though Tjaden continued to make baskets for the Cougars, his teammates couldn't help him out, giving him all six of Sedgwick County's points in the fourth.

Tharp and Carper continued to lead the team in scoring, earning 18 and 12 respectively. The team as a whole had a shooting average of 37 percent, which was actually lower than Sedgwick County's 39 percent.

"We need to continue to work on our offense," said Baumgartner. "We had some good looks at the basket and we didn't turn the ball over very much, but there's still room for improvement there."

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He added the game was actually much closer than the final score indicates. The distance, he said, is due to HHS hitting most of their free throws in the final quarter. From the line, the Dragons shot at 71 percent.

Surprisingly, the Cougars outrebounded the Dragons as well, 26-22. Carper came out on top in that category with seven rebounds.

When it came to turnovers and steals, however, HHS clearly had the upper hand. Holyoke had only six turnovers compared to Sedgwick County's 17. On top of that, the Cougars only nabbed one steal, while the Dragons snatched 10. Of those, Tharp was credited with five.

Statistics

Holyoke 43, Sedgwick Co. 29

	2	3	FT	F	TP	
						FG
Tharp	3	2	6-8	4	18	
Baumgartner	0	1	3-4	1	6	
Carper	5	0	2-3	3	12	
Wailes	1	0	0-0	0	2	
Swanson	1	0	0-0	0	2	
Brown	1	0	0-0	0	2	
Krueger	0	0	0-0	2	0	
Reid Baum.	0	0	1-2	1	1	
TEAM	11	3	12-17	11	43	

Sedgwick County

TEAM 10 1 6-7 17 29

Scoring By Quarters

Holyoke 8 13 13 9 --43

Sedgwick Co. 8 6 9 6 --29

Upcoming action

According to Baumgartner, the Dragons aren't wasting any time celebrating Friday night's victory, as the team has to look forward to traveling to Akron on Friday, Jan. 30. The Rams are a notoriously tough team, but the coach seemed upbeat about the game.

"They (the Holyoke players) have been laying it all on the line the last few games. I think they're tough enough mentally, and physically they're in great shape as well."

Friday night action in Akron will begin at 4 p.m.

HHS will then host Chase County, Neb. on Saturday with games expected to start at 3 p.m.