

Dragon softball headed to State

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

Lady Dragon softball team members carved a notch in HHS history Saturday, Oct. 16 when they qualified for the 3A State Softball tournament with a decisive 19-6 win over Yuma.

This marks the first State appearance for an HHS softball team, and is a huge accomplishment for the Lady Dragons.

The girls advance to the top 16 in the state, playing Valley Friday, Oct. 22 at 12:15 p.m. at the Aurora Sports Park in Aurora.

“It was truly a team effort,” said coach Ashley Clayton when the Dragons won the District 4 ball game in Limon Saturday.

The game ended on a thrilling grand slam from Marci Vasa as she scored Chandler Gerk, Marlee Boehm and Makenzie Ault, as well as herself.

“All year long, the girls have been instructed to be relentless and to not look back,” said coach Clayton. “This game was truly an example of the tremendous amount of determination and fight they carry inside of them,” she added.

While Holyoke had a rough second inning, they came right back at the Indians and never let their guard down, praised the coach.

“I couldn’t be more proud of them, and I am very excited they are getting to experience the results of all their hard work,” added Clayton.

Holyoke took a 2-0 first-inning lead over Yuma Saturday, but trailed 2-5 after two. Keeping their focus on the state tournament goal, the Dragons managed four runs in the third and four in the fifth inning for a comfortable 10-5 lead.

In a solid sixth-inning effort, the local girls ran nine runners across home plate, then held Yuma

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to one run to end the game 19-6 in six innings.

Ashley Campbell went the distance on the mound, pitching six strike-outs and three bases on balls. She allowed five hits and six runs, and had five errors.

Ault and Vasa both hit home runs in the district ball game, while Chandler Gerk hit a single and Macey Pierce and Campbell each hit a double.

Vasa, Pierce and Ault each had three hits; Campbell and Chandler Gerk had two apiece; and Laura Gerk, Karci Lockwood and Boehm each had one hit.

Vasa, Pierce and Chandler Gerk managed four RBI; Lockwood had two; and Laura Gerk, Ault and Jordan Zeiler each had one. Pierce had one stolen base.

"I am so excited for the girls. It couldn't have happened to a better group of kids," said coach Clayton.

In first-round districts Saturday, Burlington defeated Wray 12-2 and Yuma topped Akron 11-5. Burlington advanced to the state top-16 with a 5-4 upset of #1-seeded Limon in Saturday's districts.