

## Dragons top Ignacio Bobcats in state b-ball semifinals

Written by April Peregoy

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Earning their way to the state championship game for the first time since 1996, the Holyoke Dragons held their ground against the Ignacio Bobcats in semifinal action to win the game 45-33 on Friday, March 13.

Physically, Ignacio had a huge team, according to coach John Baumgartner, noting one of the players was 6'7". "They played a very physical game too," he added.



Yet, Holyoke's defense stood strong, forcing a lot of turnovers for the Bulldogs and holding the team to single digits in every quarter but the last.

Colby Wailes made the first three Holyoke baskets of the game, two of which came from three-point territory. This greatly contributed to the Dragons' four-point lead at the end of the quarter, 13-9.

But the Bobcats weren't going down without a fight. In the second, they actually outscored the Dragons by one, cutting their deficit to three. With only :58 left in the first half, Ignacio tied the game at 18. Yet again, Wailes pulled through, hitting a three in the last eight seconds to put Holyoke back on top at halftime.

The Dragons stepped up their defense when they returned for the second half, holding the Bobcats to only four in the third period. Offensively, HHS added nine points to the scoreboard during the eight minutes, broadening their advantage to eight.

In the final quarter, the Bobcats were forced to foul the Dragons in an effort to gain control of the ball, but Holyoke was 13-20 from the line in the final eight minutes. Carper made the only HHS field goal of the period, with the rest coming from the free-throw line, adding 15 to the board for a 12-point win over Ignacio.

Earning double digits was Austin Tharp with 13 points, while Wailes added 12. "Wailes got hot during the game and hit some big shots for us," added coach Baumgartner. But unfortunately, the player rolled his ankle in the last quarter, that left him unable to play much in the following championship game.

Overall, the team was 12 for 29 in field goal attempts for a 41 percent average. Ignacio was 13 for 38 for 34 percent.

In rebounding, the Bulldogs actually outdid HHS, 26-25, with Tharp leading the Dragons at 10.

The Holyoke defense caused Ignacio 25 turnovers, and had 12 steals. Ryan Baumgartner

