Upsetting the #1 ranked Wiggins team, 11-2, on the home field Friday, May 1 allowed the Holyoke Dragon baseball team the opportunity to play in the District 7 championship game and will move them on to the Regional tournament in Sterling on May 9.

In the championship game on Saturday morning, May 2, Holyoke lost to the Akron Rams, 6-12, forcing team members to settle for the title of district runner-ups.

Before they could face Wiggins and Akron, however, the Dragons first had to meet Merino on the field.With weather forecasts predicting some rain on Friday and even more on Saturday, the schedule was bumped up to accommodate.

Rather than starting at 1 p.m. as was originally scheduled, Holyoke's first match against Merino took place at 9 a.m. The early hours didn't phase the Dragons, who overwhelmed the Rams for a 7-2 victory.

Holyoke 7, Merino 2

In the teams' second match-up of the season, and the first game of the district tournament, the Merino Rams were looking ready to edge out the Dragons when they took an early two-run advantage in the first.

"We started out a little rough against Merino," said Bules, "but we were able to keep fighting and end up winning."

Luckily, the Rams would be held scoreless the rest of the game.

Holyoke did not get on the boards until the bottom of the fourth inning, during which they managed to push six runners across home plate. Logan Krueger hit a double to help two runners score.

Another run in the bottom of the sixth gave HHS a five-point lead, which it maintained through the seventh to take the win and move on to the next round of district play.

Brandon Price had a good game on the mound, going the distance for seven strikeouts, no earned runs and only five hits.

At bat, Tharp had a 75 percent average, while Krueger and Price each hit doubles. Krueger also had two RBIs and Price two runs.

Statistics provided to Max Preps by HHS coach

	AB	R	H	RBI
Reid Baumgartner	2	0	0	1
DeBoer	3	1	1	1
Tharp	4	0	3	1
Ryan Baumgartner	4	1	2	1
Krueger	2	1	1	2
Killin	3	0	0	0
Gerk	3	1	1	1
Vasa	1	1	0	0
Price	2	2	1	0
Totals	24	7	9	7

2B - Krueger, Price. SB - DeBoer, Tharp (4), Ryan Baumgartner, Krueger, Gerk, Vasa, Price (2).

Merino	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	—2
Holyoke	0	0	0	6	0	1	-	—7

Holyoke 11, Wiggins 2

Following a slightly disappointing performance against Merino earlier on Friday, coach Bules said the team regrouped and came back ready to catch the Tigers by their tails.

First-inning action saw Holyoke earning a one-run lead over Wiggins, 2-1. Following a scoreless second, the Dragons pushed their edge to five in the top of the third, then added an additional three runs in the fourth.

It looked like the game could end in the sixth, with Holyoke scoring two more runs in the top for a 10-run lead of 11-1. But Wiggins wasn't ready to quit just yet, bringing one player home in the bottom to make sure the game would last another inning.

With both teams held to zero in the seventh, Holyoke held on to the victory and its spot at the Regional tournament.

"Austin pitched very well and our defense did an outstanding job," said Bules, explaining why the Dragons snagged the win. "We executed very well at the plate and on the bases."

Tharp took the win on the mound, pitching all seven innings for eight strikeouts, three earned runs, five hits and two bases on balls.

He was also three for three at bat, hitting a home run and four RBIs. DeBoer and Price had three runs each and Brett Gerk two RBIs.

Statistics provided to Max Preps by HHS coach

	AB	R	H	RBI
Reid Baumgartner	4	0	0	0
DeBoer	2	3	1	0
Tharp	3	4	3	4
Ryan Baumgartner	4	0	0	0
Krueger	3	1	1	0
King	3	0	0	0

Killin	1	0	0	0
Gerk	4	0	2	2
Vasa	4	0	0	0
Price	3	3	1	0
Totals	31	11	8	6

HR - Tharp. 2B - Price. SB - Tharp (4), Krueger, Gerk.

Holyoke	2	0	4	3	0	2	0	—11
Wiggins	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	—2

Holyoke 6, Akron 12

“They are a very good team and hit the ball very well,” said coach Kyle Bules of his opponents on Saturday, the Akron Rams.

Swinging away to what looked like a good start, Holyoke earned three runs in the top of the first to lead 3-0. However, the Rams answered back in a huge way, bringing home nine players in the bottom.

HHS found themselves struggling to catch up to Akron through the rest of the rainy ball game, following the Rams’ huge jump of nine runs in the bottom of the first.

“We got down 9-3 after the first inning and could not come back in this game,” said Bules.

Scoreless second and third innings led to a more productive fourth, with the Rams adding three more runs to their score and Holyoke two.

For the remaining three innings, it was simply up to Akron to hold out for the win. The Dragons scored one more point in the top of the seventh, but the deficit was too great to overcome, and Akron earned the title of district champion.

Logan Krueger started the game on the mound and took the loss. Brandon Price pitched for over four innings, throwing one strikeout, no earned runs and three hits. Brett Gerk took the mound for the last inning and had two strikeouts, no earned runs and no hits.

Austin Tharp scored the most runs with three, followed by Krueger at two. Krueger also hit a double and had two RBIs.

Statistics provided to Max Preps by HHS coach

	AB	R	H	RBI
Reid Baumgartner	3	0	0	1
DeBoer	4	1	1	1
Tharp	3	3	0	1
Ryan Baumgartner	4	0	0	0
Krueger	2	2	1	1
Pelle	3	0	0	0
Gerk	3	0	1	2
Vasa	3	0	0	0
Price	3	0	1	0
Totals	28	6	4	6

2B - Krueger. SB - Tharp (3).

Holyoke	3	0	0	2	0	0	1		—6
Akron	9	0	0	3	0	0	-		—12

Dragons advance to Regionals

Finishing in second-place at the District 7 tournament in Holyoke over the past weekend, the Dragon baseball team is now looking forward to the Class 2A Regional 4 tournament, which kicks off at Sterling on Friday, May 8.

With a 10-9 record following the district tourney, the Dragons will see Resurrection Christian (Loveland) in first-round regional tourney action Friday at 12:30 p.m.

On the other side of the tournament bracket, Akron and Front Range Christian are scheduled to play each other at 10 a.m. on Friday. Winners of the Holyoke/Resurrection Christian game and Akron/Front Range Christian game will compete for a chance at the state tournament at 3 p.m.

The winner will be one of four teams in the state to advance to State baseball semifinals in Pueblo Friday, May 15.

Holyoke coach Kyle Bules is busy preparing his team for this weekend's action. "Resurrection Christian has a great pitching staff," he said. "We will have to be disciplined at the plate and take advantage of any mistake that they might make. I look for the Dragons to show up and play great baseball both mentally and physically."