

Dragons bow out at regionals

Written by Kyle Arnoldy

Holyoke's hopes for moving on to the state tournament were dashed on Friday, March 8 as the boys' basketball team fell to Sierra Grande 33-56 in the first round of the regional tournament at Frederick High School.

The Dragons got off to a decent start, taking control early with a 10-6 lead. Holyoke's hard-nosed defense bothered the Panthers, limiting their scoring in the first few minutes.

Things went south from there for the Dragons as Sierra Grande got over their early missteps and finished the first quarter strong. The Panthers rallied back to take a 16-10 lead at the end of the first quarter.

The onslaught did not slow down as Sierra Grande stretched the lead to 26-10 midway through the second.

"We started well, but they scored 20 straight at one point and we just couldn't make a basket," coach Scott Dille explained. "They're a really good team so it's hard to come back from that situation. The kids played hard, just didn't end the way we wanted to."

Logan Zeiler hit a pair of 3-pointers to close out the first half. At the intermission, the Dragons faced a 19-29 deficit.

Sierra Grande used a combination of a press and zone defense to slow down the Dragons. The Panthers forced some turnovers but also got some transition points off of missed Holyoke shots.

"After that run, they definitely didn't quit, but I felt like they knew they were up against a tough challenge," said Dille. "They didn't need to be perfect, but pretty close to that. Each time they didn't get a basket or turned the ball over or whatever, the pressure just built up."

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The Dragons did cut the lead to single digits in the opening minutes of the second half, but could not keep up with the Panthers in the long haul.

The third period came to an end with the Dragons down 27-40.

Holyoke's offensive woes continued in the fourth quarter. Throughout the game, the Dragons had many good looks at the hoop, but the shots just weren't falling. The Panther zone defense also greatly limited the Dragons from entering the paint for closer shots.

When the buzzer finally sounded, Holyoke's season had come to an end with the 33-56 loss to Sierra Grande.

"This was a real coachable group of guys who were very selfless, who always thought of their teammates before themselves," Dille said. "It was a great experience to be able to coach this group and I am sad to see it end."

Seniors Deyten Klein, Logan Zeiler, Brett Cumming and Matt Golden suited up in the green and gold and stepped onto the basketball court for the last time as a member of the Holyoke High School boys' basketball team.

Over the summer the team will continue to lift, attend tournaments and team camps and prepare for the 2013-2014 season.

Teams advance to state

Sierra Grande went on to win the regional tournament. Yuma will be the lone Lower Platte team at the state tournament. Teams who also qualified for the tournament include Sanford, Resurrection Christian, Lutheran, Denver Christian, Limon and Peyton.

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