

## **Dragon baseball team off to perfect start**

Written by Kyle Arnoldy

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Dragon baseball had a flair for the dramatic in the home-opening series against county rivals, the Haxtun Bulldogs. Holyoke came from behind twice to pick up two wins Saturday, March 16.

“They’ll never quit on you which is the best thing,” coach John Zilla said of his team. “They believe in each other and they can come back, which is important.”

The Dragon squad topped Haxtun 9-8 and 15-5 during the chilly doubleheader.

### **Holyoke 9, Haxtun 8**

Facing a five-run deficit entering the final inning, the Dragons buckled down and manufactured runs.

With no room for error, all seven batters who stepped to the plate for the Dragons reached safely.

Logan Tharp beat a throw home from third on an infield grounder to complete the comeback as HHS took down Haxtun 9-8.

Haxtun lit up the scoreboard first with a run in the first inning but the Dragons would quickly respond.

After Brett Cumming was hit by a pitch to lead off the bottom of the first inning, Trevor Dalton sent a ball screaming between third and short to advance the runner. A fielding error on

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Haxtun's left fielder on the play allowed Cumming to tie the game at 1 apiece.

The game remained tied until the bottom half of the fourth inning. With two outs and two runners on, Brett Cumming lined a shot up the middle, scoring Bradley Cumming and Logan Zeiler for the Dragons' first lead of the game.

Bats heated up for the Bulldogs in the fifth inning as they picked up two runs on four hits to tie the match at 3. They continued to make solid contact with the ball in the sixth inning as they scored five runs on three hits.

Trailing 8-3 entering the bottom of the seventh inning, the Dragons needed five runs to force extra innings and six to win.

Brett Cumming reached base on a walk and Dalton was hit by the first pitch he faced. A botched catch at first on a Jaydin Goldenstein grounder to shortstop allowed two Dragons to cross home, cutting the lead to 8-5.



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### **Brett Cumming rounds third and heads home for the first Dragon run scored in the first match of the doubleheader with Haxtun Saturday, March 16. —Enterprise photo**

Jesus Hermosillo joined Goldenstein on the base path after being walked. Deyten Klein picked up his first hit of the day as he lined a shot to left field, scoring Goldenstein and bringing the Dragons within two runs.

Logan Tharp stepped to the plate next for the Dragons. He hit the ball hard on the ground to Haxtun's second baseman who could not field the ball cleanly, allowing two more Dragons to score. Tharp was able to advance to third on the error.

With no outs and the winning run on third, freshman Bradley Cumming hit a ground ball to the shortstop whose throw to home was just late. The Dragons rallied from five runs back to beat the Bulldogs 9-8.

Alfredo Santos started on the mound for the Dragons. He tossed four solid innings, allowing just one run on two hits and three walks while striking out four.

Dylan Kotch took over pitching responsibilities in the fifth, lasting 1 2/3 innings. He allowed seven runs on seven hits, one walked batter and one hit batter.

Klein closed the game on the hill for the Dragons. Of the four batters he faced in his 1 1/3 innings of work, he struck out three and threw one out at first.

Tharp recorded the only multi-hit game for the Dragons as he went 2-4 at the plate with a pair of singles.

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### Holyoke 15, Haxtun 5

Zilla told his team that he wanted to see them be more aggressive at the plate in the second game of the double-header with Haxtun, and the Dragons responded with a 14-hit performance for 15 runs.

Seven players for Holyoke recorded hits as the Dragons overcame a 4-5 deficit in the second inning to win by 10 runs just three innings later.

Haxtun put up two runs in the top of the first but HHS was ready for the challenge, scoring three of their own in the bottom half of the inning.

Haxtun added three runs to their total in the second inning and Holyoke added one as well. Down 4-5 headed in to the bottom of the third inning, the Dragon offense began to pile on the runs.



**Alfredo Santos reaches back and fires a pitch to a Haxtun batter during the first inning of play Saturday. Santos allowed just one run in four innings as the Dragons picked up the win. —Enterprise photo**

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Four HHS players crossed home in the third inning, two in the fourth and another five in the fifth while holding the Bulldogs scoreless to evoke the run rule.

Hermosillo got the nod as starting pitcher in the game. In two innings he allowed five runs on five hits, one walk, one hit batter and two batters struck out.

Dalton pitched the following two innings. He didn't give up a single run or hit, walked two and struck out three.

Tharp picked up the save in the final inning. He faced four batters, walking one and striking out three.

Hermosillo and Tharp led the Dragons offensively, picking up three singles apiece. Taylor Mayden, who ran bases for Hermosillo, scored four runs in the game.

The Dragons showed their speed on the base path, stealing bases at almost every opportunity. Between the two games, HHS racked up 17 stolen bases.

### **Upcoming action**

The Dragons will return to action Saturday, March 23 when they hit the road to play Sedgwick County at 11 a.m.

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