

Scoop'n the News — It's fun to witness a dream come true

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

The ultimate gold ball came home with the Dragons last weekend, and Holyoke couldn't be prouder.

A dream of a state boys' basketball championship has been the aspiration for this group of seniors since they started playing ball together in grade school and possibly even back to when they were toddlers.

They shared that dream with teammates, schoolmates, family, community and all the extensions to build a team and a huge fan base. Not only did the team share the dream in conversation, they showed commitment and dedication, along with fine talent.

Saturday night at Massari Arena at CSU-Pueblo, the Dragons did not disappoint.

They stepped onto that championship game court as the underdogs, with Ignacio seeded first and expected by many to win. But that didn't matter to the determined Dragons.

Confidence radiated from the determined Green and Gold, even when Ignacio scored first. When Holyoke pulled to the top, 6-4, just over two minutes into the championship ball game, it was clear this group of young men was on a mission—stay out of their way.

They blasted forward in true team spirit and unity for an eight-point first-quarter lead, building to a 15-point halftime advantage. The 17-point win left no room for doubt as to who won the championship. And the gold ball came home to Holyoke High School as evidence.

Team members were humble in their pride and were true gentlemen as they met the press, thanked their fans and shared photo opps with the shiny gold ball that is no longer a mere dream.

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They quickly shared the honor of their victory at state for each fan to feel as if the whole extended community played a part. Their appreciation for the support for their efforts rang loud and clear. We all felt like winners.

Having lost the state championship in 2009 in a close, hard-fought, three-point game, the Dragons experienced disappointment at its finest. Their determined return to the state championship this year marks their character, as well.

They were champions in Holyoke a year ago, even though the state basketball record gave them runner-up status.

I watched last year as my Dragon champs never failed their young admirers even with a loss in the state championship. And I watched this year as they embraced the opportunity to make a powerful memory for young and old and everyone in between.

For the young brothers and sisters, cousins, coaches' kids and more, the Dragon role models will be held in high esteem for years to come. And it's not just because they won. It's because they shared that fun, they shared that dream, and made believers of us all.

For the State Champion team from 1984, Holyoke High School's only other state basketball champion, 26-year-old memories were rekindled with fondness.

Within this year's team, the memory of winning the gold will rank high with the Baumgartner brothers and their dad, the coach. It extends to assistant coaches and their young children, and on to all players and their young admirers who can talk basketball with clarity and pride, thanks to the 2010 Dragons.

Dreams do come true, and the Dragon boys' basketball team proved it last weekend.

"I learned a long time ago that it feels a whole lot better to win," said a fan at last year's state

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tournament. Thanks, Dragons, for giving us all the opportunity for a dream come true.

And thanks to Gary and Carol Krumm for leading the cheer last Saturday night, "It's great to be a Holyoke Dragon."