

## Dragons earn top Dist. spot; hold on to perfect record

Written by April Peregoy

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What the Holyoke boys' varsity basketball team thought would be a tough weekend of competition turned out to be another opportunity for the Dragons to add two big wins to their now 16-0 record and to gain the top spot in District 2 rankings.

Hosting Wray on Friday, Feb. 6, HHS took control of the game early on to defeat the Eagles 58-22. The win gave Holyoke the number-one seed in the districts, meaning the team will host the first district playoff game.

On Saturday, Feb. 7, the Dragons traveled to Burlington to play the #1-ranked team of District 4. Again, HHS took the victory over the Cougars, 68-41.

Holyoke 58, Wray 22

"It wasn't anything like the last time we played," said varsity coach John Baumgartner about Friday night's game against Wray. He was referring to Holyoke's first game of the season when the Dragons took on the Eagles. Though they won that game as well, they only scored 28 points the whole game.

Showing how much they have improved offensively since then, the Dragons had that first-game score beat by halftime with 29 points.

"We got off to a good start, and we made it tough for them to score on us," said Baumgartner.

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Indeed, the Eagles struggled against Holyoke's defense, only finding the basket four times. Those eight points, added to three made from the free-throw line, put Wray's score at only 11 at the end of the first half.

Unable to turn things around, the Eagles continued to allow the Dragons to push even farther ahead of them in the third. Austin Tharp and Ryan Baumgartner each landed two three-point field goals and a two-pointer, contributing 16 of the 20 points Holyoke put up that period.

With the score 49-16 going into the final quarter, more JV players saw varsity time. Willie Greenman came in to put up one more three for HHS. Another six points earned in the quarter gave the Dragons a large 36-point win over the Eagles.

Scoring the most points for Holyoke was Tharp with 20. Kyle Carper also earned double digits with 12.

"Michal Brown did a heck of a job for us too," said Baumgartner. He had the most rebounds with eight and the most blocks with six. He also added six points to the scoreboard.

In overall team statistics, there was a huge gap in shooting percentages, with HHS at 51 percent while Wray had only 26 percent. Holyoke also outrebounded the Eagles, 32-22 and had 12 steals compared to Wray's five. Colby Wailes took the most steals with four.

### **Statistics**

**Holyoke 58, Wray 22**

**2 3 FT F TP**

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Tharp 5 3 1-3 1 20

Baumgartner 1 2 0-0 2 8

Carper 4 0 4-5 2 12

Wailles 0 1 4-4 2 7

Swanson 0 0 0-0 1 0

Krueger 1 0 0-0 1 2

Brown 3 0 0-1 3 6

Greenman 0 1 0-0 0 3

Reid Baum. 0 0 0-0 1 0

**TEAM 14 7 9-13 13 58**

**Wray**

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TEAM 8 1 3-12 14 22

### Scoring By Quarters

Holyoke 11 18 20 9 --58

Wray 6 5 5 6 --22

Holyoke 68, Burlington 41

“I was a little worried after the long bus ride,” said Baumgartner of the game against Burlington on Saturday, “but obviously, they came out ready to play.”

In fact, the Dragons had an absolutely outstanding first quarter, quickly shutting down the Cougars 27-9. HHS hit five baskets from behind the arc—three were shot by Tharp, and the other two came from Baumgartner and Evan Swanson. On top of the threes, Tharp added another five points to the scoreboard. Carper also did well, contributing seven points.

“We set the tempo early,” said the proud coach. “Shutting down a quality opponent like that in the first quarter is pretty amazing.”

According to Baumgartner, the Burlington atmosphere, which featured a huge crowd that night, only pumped the team up even more.

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Already behind by 18 after the first eight minutes, the Cougars attempted a comeback in the second period, and actually managed to outscore the Dragons, 14-15. This was due mainly to #24 Canaan Reeverts, who made nine of the 15 points.

On the HHS side, it was Brown who made the most baskets in the second, adding eight points.

Holyoke still had a 10-point lead going into the second half, which they continued to extend throughout the rest of the game. Another 13 points in the third quarter and 14 in the fourth, could not be matched or beaten by Burlington, who only had 17 points the entire second half. This gave HHS the win by 27.

“Austin and Kyle were unstoppable,” said coach Baumgartner. The duo earned Holyoke 44 points total, with 22 each. “They are both playing with a lot of confidence right now,” he added.

They also did well rebounding, with Tharp bringing down 11 and Carper nine. Brown had a good game as well with 10 points and five rebounds.

Colby Wailes was also mentioned by the coach for his defensive contributions to the team.

In team statistics, Holyoke was 26 for 50 in field goals for a 52 percent shooting average. The Cougars, on the other hand, were 16 for 36 to get a 44 percent average. HHS outrebounded Burlington, 32-23.

Turnovers were a really big problem for Burlington, with the Cougars losing the ball 23 times. Meanwhile, HHS had 17 steals, of which Baumgartner had the most with six. He also led the team in assists with seven.

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### Holyoke 68, Burlington 41

2 3 FT F TP

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ G

Tharp 5 3 3-4 4 22

Baumgartner 0 1 0-0 1 3

Carper 8 0 6-9 2 22

Wailes 3 0 0-0 2 6

Swanson 1 1 0-0 2 5

Krueger 0 0 0-0 2 0

Brown 4 0 2-4 1 10

**TEAM 21 5 11-17 14 68**

**Burlington**

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TEAM 14 2 7-15 16 41

### Scoring By Quarters

Holyoke 27 14 13 14 --68

Burlington 9 15 7 10 --41

### Upcoming action

Though they are not in the same class, the Dragons' match-up with Caliche on Thursday, Feb. 12 will be an important one for both teams. The #1-ranked 1A school is also undefeated after 15 games this season. Holyoke and Caliche will be defending their perfect records in the Dragons' final home game of the season, with action scheduled to begin at 4 p.m.

On Saturday, Feb. 14, HHS will travel to Fleming for a 3 p.m. game. The Dragons will play their final game of the regular season in Wiggins on Tuesday, Feb. 17.