Coming up only three points short of taking the state title,

Holyoke's Dragon basketball team claimed runner-up honors at the Colorado State Basketball Tournament at Pueblo on Saturday, March 14. In Saturday's championship game, the Colorado Springs Kodiaks took the first lead of the game and never trailed, topping the Dragons 42-39 for the state title. The game ended the Dragon basketball season with an impressive 25-2 record, and put the team in the CHSAA record book for holding its opponents to an average 34.30 points per game during the season—the lowest in Colorado basketball history. "This is the best scoring defensive team I've ever had," said coach John Baumgartner. "The great thing about them is they play for each other. It will be hard for the seniors to leave us. They will leave big holes for us to fill next year."

About the championship game, Baumgartner said, "They played their hearts out. As a coach, I feel bad for my kids because they deserved to win. They worked their butts off all season."

He added he thought his players did well on Saturday, they just couldn't get their shots to fall. "We can't be ashamed," he said. "It wasn't a bad game for us, we just lost to a great team who played a little better than us that day."

Scoring was tight in the first quarter, with CSS hitting the first three of the night, quickly followed by another from Evan Swanson to tie the score. Two more times in the period, the Kodiaks pushed ahead only to have the Dragons catch up. At the end of the first eight minutes, CSS led by two, 11-9.

First half of the second quarter played out much the same way as the first, with Holyoke catching up to the Kodiaks at 15. However, CSS used the rest of the period to extend the lead to six, with the score 24-18 as the teams headed into the locker rooms at halftime.

In the third, the Kodiaks maintained their six-point advantage, despite the efforts of Kyle Carper, who scored three two-pointers. It was a low-scoring quarter for both teams, with each adding only six to the scoreboard.

Heading into the final stretch, Evan Swanson kept the Dragons within reach with a three-pointer. But again, thanks largely to DeLovell Earls, CSS pushed ahead to 36 points, leaving the Dragons facing a nine-point deficit with 4:33 remaining on the clock.

"That Earls kid is tough," said Baumgartner. We played good defense on him in the first and third quarters, but unfortunately, not so well in the second and fourth."