

## Dragons handed tough first loss

Written by Chris Lee

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It was a tough first night for the Holyoke Dragons as they traveled east to Imperial, Neb. for their first game of the season. After going scoreless in the first half, the Dragons battled back to outscore their opponent in the second half. But it wasn't enough as they suffered their first loss of the season, 22-35.

Coach Rod Trumper said his team was uptight and nervous in the first half but came out and did exactly what they needed to do in the second.

Both teams had trouble getting anything going on offense during the first quarter. The first score of the game came with only 24 seconds left on the clock. Imperial's Steven Fish gave the Longhorns the lead 7-0 with the first touchdown of the night.

Holyoke's first possession of the second quarter resulted in a punt with 9:04 left on the clock. Imperial's next score came with just over three minutes left in the half giving them a 14-0 advantage.

The Dragon offense again couldn't get anything going and was forced to punt with two and a half minutes left. Imperial capitalized with their third touchdown of the half. This time it was with five ticks left on the clock.

Coach Trumper and his squad headed into the locker room down 21-0.

Holyoke was again forced to punt on their first possession of the second half. Imperial took the punt for a long return but luckily for the Dragons it was called back due to a penalty. Imperial was unable to do anything with the ball giving it back to the Dragons.

With 9:23 left in the third quarter, senior Logan Krueger threw his first interception to Imperial's

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Fish who returned it 16 yards. The Holyoke defense again held Imperial giving the ball back to the offense.

After another failed series, Holyoke was forced to punt with 4:45 left in the third. It wasn't long though before the Dragons got the ball back and a shot at the end zone.

### **Dragon scoring begins**

Imperial fumbled and Holyoke recovered. On the next play, Krueger found wide open Kyle Carper for a 44-yard touchdown pass. The two-point attempt failed leaving the score 21-6 in favor of Imperial.

The Longhorns answered with a touchdown on their next drive. The scoreboard read 28-6 with two minutes left in the third quarter.

Senior Carper took the kickoff and returned it 42 yards for the Dragons. With just over a minute left on the clock, freshman Brett Cumming busted off a 25-yard touchdown run. Broc Pelle added the two-point conversion to cut the deficit in half, 28-14.

Imperial took the ball in the fourth and answered the Dragon touchdown when Michael May scored with just over 11 minutes left in the game. Less than a minute later, Holyoke answered with another touchdown. Krueger found Ryan Baumgartner open for a 38-yard touchdown pass. Carper added the two-point conversion and the scoreboard read 35-22.

After trading scoreless series, Holyoke tried a successful fake punt with just over six minutes left. Cumming took the ball giving the Dragons a first down.

Krueger connected with Baumgartner again, this time for 20 yards moving Holyoke into the red zone. With 3:57 showing on the clock, Holyoke was forced to go for it on fourth down. Imperial's Miscal Garcia ended the Dragons' hope after picking off Krueger and returning it 35 yards.

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Imperial ran out the clock capturing their first win and sending Holyoke home with an 0-1 record.

Trumper said he saw a lot of positive things from the game they need to work on to get ready for Perkins County (Grant, Neb.) this Friday, Sept. 11. He said if they can get the Plainsmen to commit to the outside, the Dragons' running game will come alive.

Kickoff for Friday's home game against Perkins County will be at 7 p.m.

### **Stats recorded**

The Dragons ended the night with 267 total yards on offense. Krueger finished the night with 197 passing yards and four rushing yards. Cumming added 54 rushing yards, Carper had 10 while Pelle added two rushing yards.

Baumgartner led the team with 103 receiving yards. Carper added 69, and Pelle had three.

Carper led the team with 15 tackles, Krueger 14, Mark Gertner 10 and Pelle had eight.

### **Other North Central action**

Other North Central Conference teams played Friday, Sept. 4 earning non-conference wins.

Akron held on to beat Weld Central 30-22, Highland blew by Resurrection Christian 53-6, Wray shut out La Junta 45-0, Wiggins beat Lutheran 43-8 and Yuma had no trouble with Custer County 48-6.

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