

Dragons suffer second loss of season

Written by Chris Lee



The first home football game on Max Bernard field Friday, Sept. 11 proved to be yet another tough test for the Holyoke Dragons. Perkins County, (Grant) Neb. came to town and ran all over the home team on their way to a 28-6 win.

For the second straight week, the Dragons were outplayed in the first half leading to the loss. After the first two quarters Holyoke found themselves in a 21-0 hole. It was the same scenario from a week earlier in Imperial, Neb. where the Longhorns built up a 21-point lead at the half.

“If we can figure out how to play the first half, I think we’ll be alright,” Trumper said. “They were very similar to Imperial. Big and strong up front and run oriented. We aren’t giving up very many big plays, just first down after first down.”

Trumper said they were really tough up front and were successful at taking away the deep ball, forcing Holyoke to throw short passes and run the ball.

Holyoke won the toss and selected to defer to the second half, kicking off to the Plainsmen. Perkins County only needed three and a half minutes to reach the end zone on their opening drive taking the early 7-0 lead.

The Dragons’ opening drive began at their own 20-yard line. Broc Pelle grabbed 6 of his 24 rushing yards and his 4 receiving yards for a first down. Brett Cumming got stuffed in the middle on the next carry for a loss of 2 yards. A holding penalty against the Dragons brought up third down and Logan Krueger threw his first of four interceptions on the night.

The Dragon defense stiffened, forcing the Plainsmen to attempt a fourth down from the 29-yard line. A pass from quarterback Michael York looked as if it hit the ground and the receiver trapped it. It was called a catch. After arguments from the Holyoke sideline the play stood as called giving Perkins County a first down and eventually a touchdown with just under four

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minutes left in the first quarter.

The next drive for the Dragons ended a lot like the first. Holyoke moved the ball into Perkins County territory after a couple of long runs by Pelle and passes from Krueger. On third and five from the 33-yard line, Krueger was picked off again.

A long drive followed for the Plainsmen. After some penalties and long plays, Perkins County managed to take the ball down to Holyoke's 13-yard line. The Dragon defense held strong forcing the visitors to attempt a field goal on fourth and six. The kick was no good pumping some life into the Holyoke sideline. It didn't last long as the Dragons went three and out and were forced to punt.

The Plainsmen again pounded it out on the ground on their way to another touchdown. This time it was a 3-yard quarterback keeper by York. After a successful PAT the scoreboard read in favor of Perkins County, 21-0.

Holyoke managed to maneuver into Plainsman territory but again was unable to convert on fourth down. Perkins County took two knees to run the clock out at the half.

Holyoke came out full of energy in the second half but a few mistakes kept the Dragons from building any momentum.

Kyle Carper began the second half, returning the kick-off to the 27-yard line. From there, the Dragons moved across midfield down to the Perkins County 33-yard line. After a sack it was fourth and 23. Krueger's pass was incomplete giving the Plainsmen the ball. It wouldn't be long before the Dragons got another chance as Perkins County put the ball on the turf and Holyoke recovered. Four plays later, Krueger found Carper in the end zone for Holyoke's first and only score of the game.

The two teams traded two scoreless possessions each before the Plainsmen found the end zone again with just over six minutes left in the game.

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With a 28-6 lead, the Perkins County kick-off sailed into the end zone for a touch back. After a 9-yard sack, it looked as if the Dragons would again be forced to punt. On third and 19, Krueger hit Carper who was wide open along the sideline. Carper streaked down the field for an 89-yard touchdown. As the crowd and sideline cheered, the whistle blew and a flag had been thrown. Illegal man down field was the call.

Trumper said Ryan Baumgartner told the official he was going to line up off the line but ended up being a little close and the official didn't say anything. Trumper said it was a tough call because Baumgartner knew what he was doing and where he needed to be but was flagged for an illegal man down field, negating the 89-yard touchdown pass to Carper.

The Plainsmen were unable to do anything with their next possession and were forced to punt. With two and a half minutes left in the game, the Dragons took over at their own 20-yard line. Krueger connected with Parker Redfern on a 21-yard completion. Krueger's next two throws were incomplete with the next one finding Carper for a gain of 10. On the next play Krueger was picked off for the third time ending the drive. The Plainsmen were able to run out the clock and lock up the 28-6 win.

Trumper said the road ahead will be a tough one for Holyoke. "As you look down the rest of the season, Burlington, Akron, Yuma and Wray, they will all be similar," he said. "They all will be tough up front."

Peyton comes to town for the homecoming game on Friday and brings an 0-2 record. Trumper doesn't expect the Panthers to be quite as big as the last two teams they have faced. He also said they aren't a pass oriented team so stopping the run will again be crucial. "Hopefully we can come out and play the first half," he said. "I told the kids, if we played the first half the first two weeks, we have a chance to be 2-0 instead of 0-2."

Stats recorded

Pelle led the rushing with 24 yards. Baumgartner and Carper finished with 79 and 72 receiving yards respectively. Redfern added 33 receiving yards. Krueger was 23 of 37 for 193 yards.

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Holyoke finished with 105 total yards on offense.

Krueger led the team with five tackles followed by Carper four and Baumgartner, Pelle and Jesus Hermosillo three.

Other North Central action

Other North Central Conference teams played Friday, Sept. 11. all picking up wins except for Wray.

Akron pounded Lutheran 42-7, Yuma blew out Custer County 48-6, Highland beat University 27-6, Wray fell to Burlington 27-7 and Wiggins grabbed a win from Resurrection Christian 36-12.