

Holyoke falls to Lutheran at regional tournament

Written by Kyle Arnoldy

After a dominant regular season and a second-place finish at the district tournament, the Dragon baseball team bowed out of the regional tournament in the second round to end the season.

After completing a come-from-behind victory over Paonia at Niwot in the first round of the tournament Saturday, May 18, the Dragons could not manufacture the same type of comeback in the second round, falling to Lutheran 7-2.

HHS finished the year with a 20-4 record. All season they buried opponents with a lethal combination of speed and power. As a testament to their abilities, the team combined for 27 home runs and 72 stolen bases on the year.

In fact, across all classifications, Holyoke was the top-ranked team for home runs and second only to Bayfield in RBIs.



Jaydin Goldenstein lays into a pitch for a grand slam during Saturday's match with Paonia.☐☐

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—Enterprise photo

Holyoke 6, Paonia 4

It was a sound Dragon fans were familiar with. A sound that instantly warranted loud cheers from the stands and immediately caused Holyoke players in the dugout to jump the fence and rush toward home plate, well before the ball had even cleared the fence.

“I heard the crack of the bat and knew it was gone right away,” said coach John Zilla.

In the top of the sixth inning and the Dragons down 4-2, Jaydin Goldenstein stepped into the batter’s box with two outs and the bases loaded. As he had done seven other times during the season, the senior unloaded on a pitch, dropped his bat and began the jog around the bases.

None of his other home runs proved as timely as Saturday’s grand slam against Paonia, as it completed the two-out, late inning rally the Dragons desperately needed to keep their season alive.

The Dragons struggled to take advantage of base runners in scoring position early in the match, but came through when it mattered most.

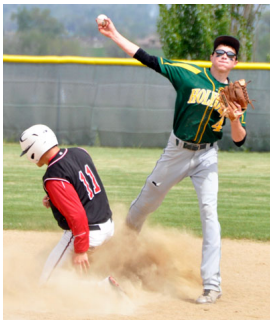
Paonia jumped to an early lead, scoring in the bottom of the second inning on a two-run home run that cleared the center-field fence.

After getting the lead, Paonia went to the bullpen for their ace in hopes of holding on to the two-run lead for the remainder of the game.

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The Dragons responded to the challenge, scoring two runs in the top of the third inning. Goldenstein got things started with a triple down the right-field line. Jesus Hermosillo would bring in Holyoke's first run with a single roped to left field.



Shortstop Trevor Dalton attempts to turn a double play during Holyoke's win over Paonia Saturday, May 18. □ □

—Enterprise photo

Tanner Smith, who was Hermosillo's courtesy runner, scored as a throw down to third to catch him stealing sailed into left field, tying the two teams at two apiece.

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Paonia crossed two more runners in the fourth inning to take a 4-2 lead.

Logan Zeiler provided a much-needed single for HHS to begin the sixth-inning rally. Brett Cumming and Trevor Dalton both reached base on balls to set the stage for Goldenstein's late-game heroics. Goldenstein's go-ahead home run was enough to put down the Eagles, giving Holyoke the 6-4 victory.

"That is one thing about our team, our batters always came through for us throughout the season," Zilla said.

Goldenstein and Zeiler both posted two-hit performances in the win. Goldenstein also scored twice and knocked in four runs.

Deyten Klein went the distance on the mound for the Dragons. In his seven-inning, complete game victory, the senior allowed four runs on eight hits while striking out eight and walking four.



Brett Cumming and coach Marcus Kammer celebrate Holyoke taking the lead in the sixth inning of the first round game of the regional tournament against Paonia.□□

—Enterprise photo

Holyoke 2, Lutheran 7

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While the Lutheran squad only recorded one more hit than the Dragons, it was the timing of the hits that separated the two teams.

Zilla pointed out that Holyoke was unable to put together consecutive hits and most hits occurred with two outs in the inning. Lutheran, on the other hand, did a good job of stringing together multiple hits in an inning to score runners.

“I think we were a little drained and we just weren’t ourselves at the plate,” Zilla said.

HHS fell into a hole early as Lutheran scored four runs on four hits through the first two innings.

A Trevor Dalton double in the third inning scored Smith for the first run of the game for the Dragons.

Two innings later Dalton lined a pitch up the middle to score Smith again and cut the deficit in half to 4-2.

The road to another comeback win was made exponentially more difficult in the bottom of the sixth inning when Lutheran poured in three more runs on two hits to extend their lead to 7-2.

Although Holyoke made some of their best contact at the plate in the final inning, they went three up, three down, giving Lutheran a 7-2 victory.

Dalton and Smith each had two hits in the match to lead the Dragons as the duo were responsible for both Dragon runs as well. Dalton picked up two RBIs and Smith scored twice.

Goldenstein started on the hill for Holyoke. In 5 ²/₃ innings, Goldenstein allowed seven runs on seven hits while walking three, hitting one and striking out two.

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Alfredo Santos came in to finish the sixth inning and retired the only batter he faced.

“The team performed very well over the season,” Zilla said. “They did everything we asked of them and it was just a great season.”

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