



By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

When an opponent shoots 64 percent from the field in a half, it's tough to stay with them.

That's what happened to the Imperial Longhorn boys in the first half Saturday night when they traveled to Holyoke, Colo.

The Dragons of Holyoke shot 14 of 22 from the field, including four treys, in the first 16 minutes for an amazing 64 percent and a 21-point halftime lead. .

Coach Carl Zuege knew the Dragons were playing well but that kind of shooting doesn't happen every night. Unfortunately, it happened against the Longhorns.

"They are a good basketball team," he said, "and are very athletic inside.

Zuege said they knew they had to slow down Holyoke shooters Kyle Carper and Austin Tharp.

They did a good job of that in the second half, but not so well in the first half. The pair combined for 20 points in the first half but the Longhorns held them to just seven in the second half.

The big difference maker proved to be off-guard Evan Swanson, who hit three deuces and three treys to lead all scorers with 16.

Zuege said the Longhorns' zone forced Holyoke to start taking the outside shot. Unfortunately, they knocked them down.

That forced the Longhorns to extend their zone, opening up the inside for the Dragons.

The Longhorns held an early lead and trailed by only three in the first quarter, 9-6, when the Dragons caught fire from the field.

"Take out that five-minute stretch and it's a different game," Zuege noted. "We played hard the whole way through."

In the second half, the Longhorns got the margin down to 14 with a chance to cut it to 11 with a trey.

The shot missed and Holyoke answered with several of their own buckets to keep their lead safe.

Foul troubles hurt the Longhorns inside with post Colin Larson battling four fouls in the third. That allowed Holyoke to capitalize inside.

Zuege said he was especially pleased with the play of Tanner Stromberger, who came in off the bench to score nine.

Zuege said sophomore has really developed during the season and can mix it up with the best underneath.

Josh Schuman was the only double-figure scorer for Imperial with 12.

