



By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

Both of the Longhorns' games last weekend went down to the wire with Chase County coming out on top in the second of the two.

On Friday, the Longhorns rallied from an eight-point deficit late in the fourth quarter but couldn't hold on against Holyoke, falling 53-50 in the final 30 seconds.

On Saturday, the Longhorns trailed 14-0 to open the game against Dundy County-Stratton (DCS) but fought their way back.

Three crucial free throws in the closing seconds gave the Longhorns a 45-43 come-from-behind win.

Coach Carl Zuege said the Longhorns struggled in the first quarter of each game.

Against Holyoke, the Longhorns did get 14 points on the board but gave up 20 defensively.

Against DCS, the Longhorns trailed 14-0 before getting a lone free throw in the final 38 seconds to keep from getting skunked in the first quarter.

Looking at Friday's game with Holyoke, Zuege said his team turned in a poor defensive showing. He said they rely heavily on their man-to-man defense, but Friday the effort just wasn't there. "We've got to fix that."

"That first quarter just killed us," he said. They fell down by nine and then had to struggle to play themselves back in.

He said they couldn't keep Holyoke out of the paint and then sent them to the line. Free throws proved to be a big factor in the game as the Longhorns sent Holyoke to the line 32 times. While they only made 16, the Longhorns got to the line a total of 22 times and made only 12—a four-point difference.

Zuege said his team has to get to the line more going forward, along with cashing in on those opportunities. Otherwise, he said the Longhorns will "continue to be in tight ball games."

After getting out of the man defense, Zuege went to a 1-3-1, which the Longhorns executed well.

They executed well on defense in the second quarter against DCS. After trailing 14-1 after one, the Longhorns ignited the offense for 19 points while holding DCS to just 5.

When the defense is working, it helps take some of the pressure off offensively, Zuege said.

The Longhorns still have to play two games this week before heading into next week's SPVA conference tournament.

Tuesday, the Longhorns faced a tough 10-1 Southern Valley team, falling 58-50.

Tonight, the Longhorns play host to 4-7 Perkins County and then travel to face 4-8 Gothenburg.

While each team may only have four wins, Zuege said both games will be tough. Records don't mean a lot when Chase County and Perkins County face each other.

The Longhorns got a first round bye as the #2 seed behind North Platte St. Pat's in the SPVA tournament. With the bye, the Longhorns won't play until 6:30 p.m. MT Thursday, Jan. 17 at

Mid-Plains Community College in North Platte.

They will face the winner between #3 seed Hershey and #6 Maxwell. Barring an upset, the Longhorns will likely face Hershey, a team they beat in the Cabela's holiday tournament in Sidney.



Holyoke

After trailing by as many as nine in the first quarter, the Longhorns picked up their offensive effort to score 14 and trail by just six, 14-20, going into the second period.

The Longhorns ran off 10 points to tie the score 24-24 but could never take the lead over the next two quarters.

Finding themselves down 48-40 midway in the fourth, the Longhorns put together another rally.

They scored eight unanswered points, six by Issac Sorensen and two from Jeff Dickey to tie the game, 48-48 with two minutes left.

Justus Walling drew a foul and converted both ends of a 1&1 to give the Longhorns their first lead of the game, 50-48.

Holyoke came right back and scored with a drive down the lane to re-knot the score 50-50.

On two straight possessions, the Longhorns couldn't get the ball to fall.

With 10.5 seconds left, Holyoke took the ball to the hoop and drew the foul.

They drained both attempts to give them a 52-50 lead.

The Longhorns then turned the ball over before getting a shot off, forcing them to foul.

Holyoke converted one of two for a 53-50 lead.

A long trey attempt in the closing seconds by the Longhorns missed, sealing their fate, 50-53.

Kelton Fisher led all scorers with 21. He added 7 rebounds while Sorensen led the team with 10.

The Longhorns shot just 31 percent from the floor, going 15-46 inside the arc and 3-13 outside of it.

Holyoke shot 38 percent, going 11-23 inside and 5-19 outside the arc.

Imperial 50

	2 PT.	3 PT.	FT/		
	FG	FG	FTA	F	TP
Travis Luhrs	0	1	0-0	1	3
Ryan Moline	0	0	0-0	0	0
Kevin German	0	0	0-0	0	0
Dan Sullivan	0	0	1-2	0	1
Jeffrey Dickey	2	0	3-4	4	7
Kale Gockley	0	1	0-0	4	3
Kelton Fisher	9	0	3-5	3	21

Justus Wallin	0	0	3-4	5	3
Hunter Spady	0	0	0-2	0	0
Trey Milner	2	0	0-2	3	4
Isaac Sorensen	3	0	2-3	0	8
Calin Griffin	0	0	0-0	0	0
Darrin Knobbe	0	0	0-0	0	0
Brian Bell	0	0	0-0	1	0
TOTALS	16	2	12-22	21	50

Holyoke, Colo. 53

L. Tharp 8, R. Parker 6, Z. Roll 5, L. Zeiler 2, B. Cumming 10, T. Fierro 13, D. Klein 9.

Holyoke's team totals: 2 pt. FG—11; 3 pt. FG—5; FT/FTA—16-32; Fouls—16; TP—53.

Points by quarters:

Imperial 14 11 10 15—50

Holyoke 20 9 12 12—53

Dundy County-Stratton

The Longhorns couldn't have put themselves in much worse of a hole than going down 14-0 to open the game.

They missed their first 13 shots and went to the final 38 seconds of the quarter before Dickey hit a free throw to get on the board.

Back-to-back three-pointers by Travis Luhrs and Kale Gockley gave the Longhorns the offensive spark they needed.

From there, they shocked the Tigers with a 13-5 run and took a 20-19 lead into the locker room at half.

They kept the offensive faucet open, scoring 15 more in the third to lead by three, 35-32.

Late in the fourth, the Longhorns built their biggest lead, a five-point 42-37 margin, but the Tigers didn't fold.

They hit a pair of shots, including a trey, to tie the game 42-42.

In the final 90 seconds, DCS put the press on and caught the Longhorns off balance.

Zuege said they expected to see the press in the first quarter. Instead, DCS saved it for down the stretch.

Zuege said his team got rattled some. Fortunately, when the Longhorns would make a turnover of the press, DCS would reciprocate.

That allowed the Longhorns to get the ball into the hands of senior point guard Gockley.

DCS was forced to foul and sent Gockley to the line with under 20 seconds left.

He dropped a pair to put the Longhorns back up by two, 44-42.

DCS' 6-7 Joe Rettele made a move to the hoop and drew a foul, sending him to the line with a chance to tie the game.

He made the first but missed the second and Longhorns grabbed the rebound.

Justus Wallin drew another foul. He made the first one for a 43-45 lead. He missed the second and DCS got the rebound. They called time to set up their final play.

When the Longhorn defense shut down a trey attempt, DCS tried to go inside. However, they missed a shot under the basket and couldn't draw a foul, giving the Longhorns the 45-43 win.

Luhrs and Fisher led the team in scoring, both in double figures with 10.

Sorensen pulled down 9 rebounds to lead the team, followed by Dickey with 7.

The Longhorns shot just 28 percent from the field, going 14-40 inside the arc and 3-20 outside. DCS shot 34 percent overall, 13-35 inside and 2-9 outside the arc.

Boys split in games decided in final seconds

Imperial 45

	2 PT.	3 PT.	FT/		
FG	FG	FTA	F	TP	
Travis Luhrs	2	2	0-0	2	10
Ryan Moline	0	0	0-0	0	0
Freddie Kasselmann	0	0	0-0	0	0
Kevin German	0	0	0-0	0	0
Dan Sullivan	0	0	0-0	0	0
Jeffrey Dickey	3	0	2-3	2	8
Kale Gockley	2	1	3-4	3	10
Kelton Fisher	3	0	0-0	5	6
Justus Wallin	2	0	2-6	4	6
Hunter Spady	0	0	0-0	0	0
Trey Milner	1	0	1-3	2	3
Isaac Sorensen	1	0	0-0	0	2
Calin Griffin	0	0	0-0	0	0
Darrin Knobbe	0	0	0-0	0	0
Brian Bell	0	0	0-0	3	0
TOTALS	14	3	8-16	21	45

Dundy County/Stratton 43

T. Jensen 5, C. Davel 2, M. Lorens 4, T. Freeland 8, J. Rettele 16, C. Stute 6, K. Krutsinger 2.

Dundy County/Stratton's team totals: 2 pt. FG—13; 3 pt. FG—2; FT/FTA—11-22; Fouls—18;

TP—43.

Points by quarters:

Imperial 1 19 15 10—45

Dundy Co./Stratton 14 5 13 11—43