



**By Pastor Vince Carrig**  
**Sports Writer**

Senior Plainsmen running back Erik Hagan broke loose for 116 yards and junior defensive lineman Tyler Brott batted down multiple passes to highlight a 28-6 win over the Dragons in Holyoke Friday night.

Hagan chomped off lots of his ground yardage from between the tackles but deferred credit to his blockers: "I did see a lot of holes up the middle; [the offensive line] does a great job and made it pretty easy running straight through the holes," Hagan said after the game.

Holyoke's defense got to pick its poison, as senior running back Nick Turner strung them out for 110 yards, and junior quarterback Michael York picked his way for 88 yards. Erik Hagan, Turner and York all visited the end zone.

The Plainsmen defense "bent" but broke only once, controlling Dragons quarterback Logan Krueger's furious passing attack. Holyoke planned to move up and down the field with short passes; the home team's senior quarterback put the ball in the air 39 times.

Holyoke indeed unleashed a very potent offensive attack, but excellent Plainsmen tackling defused it. The Dragons' 23 catches could have netted them far more than 193 yards had Plainsmen cornerbacks and linebackers not wrapped up their receivers.

"We've really worked on tackling this year, so, we would give them the three-yard plays and then make the hit," Plainsmen safety Michael York said.

Truthfully, the Dragons' short routes frequently went for about three times that amount of yardage. But York stepped in and heisted two interceptions, and teammates Taylor Boldt and Kyle Kurkowski also snagged Krueger passes to kill offensive threats.

Boldt picked off a pass in the end zone intended for Holyoke's leading receiver Kyle Carper with 1:09 left in the first quarter. York, roaming 30 yards downfield, aided Boldt by cutting in on a bomb to Carper on Holyoke's last drive.

"Our defensive goal was not to hold them to a certain amount of yardage, but to keep them out of the end zone. We're excited about our defense more than anything else right now," Plainsmen Head Coach Chip Kay said after the game.

After Holyoke won the pre-game coin flip and deferred ball possession to Perkins County, the Plainsmen made the Dragons pay for that decision by sticking an 11-play, 66-yard drive into the north end zone. Turner did the honors, weaving out right and sprinting out right some more for a 20-yard score.

York's first interception, the harboring of a misguided Krueger pass that sailed over a receiver's head, gave Erik Hagan an opportunity to run 16 yards up the middle of the field for his first touchdown of the year.

Excellent tackling allowed the Plainsmen to increase their lead to 21-0 at halftime. Holyoke's Head Coach Rod Trumper worked to isolate Plainsmen defenders one-on-one with receivers Carper, Ryan Baumgartner, and Parker Redfern.

But time and again, the defenders in white said, "no sale," with Plainsmen Brody Prante, Max

Jones, Kyle Schulze, and Turner coming up with good “sticks” on receivers who wanted more yards. Cornerbacks and linebackers kept the play in front of them, denying long gains.

Coach Kay said, “We spent a ton of time on tackling. We made a huge investment into a drive-back machine which emphasizes being a lower-body tackler, moving your feet and technique, and it has paid off for us.”

Following his blockers, York scored Perkins County’s last two touchdowns. With 3:17 left in the half, York went up the middle from three yards away. With 6:15 left in the game, he rambled out to the right side, followed his blockers, spun and ultimately lunged for the goal line for a 20-yard touchdown run.

Krueger did well to launch 39 throws given the defensive pressure he faced. In one drive before halftime, defensive end Kurkowski came clean and sacked him seven yards back, freshman lineman Vinny Ross put a bone-crunching bear hug on him three yards deep, and Brott batted down one of his passes. Rough drive.

Holyoke passed so much because Perkins County blew up their running game. “Our defensive line—Kye [Kurkowski] and Tyler [Brott] and Vinny [Ross] played very outstanding—they only gave up 10 yards rushing, and we only committed six [defenders] to the run,” Coach Kay said.

The Plainsmen attended to the little details necessary to win. Perkins County’s offense converted three of five third or fourth downs while its defense stopped all three of the Dragons’ attempts. The Plainsmen defense also adapted to stop a completely different style of offense than the one it saw the previous week.

Only Krueger’s successful short slant to Carper blemished a perfect night.

Perkins County also got an edge from its kicker. Jeremy Hagan split the uprights with all four extra points, improving his count to nine of 10. Hagan also pinned the Dragons with two touchbacks, kicking the ball into the end zone.

“I’ve had to work a lot at it so I could kick it that far,” the younger Hagan said of the touchbacks.

“We wanted to kick away from #2 (Carper), so I just kick it as far as I can away from him.”

Carper dashed up the right sideline with a fourth quarter pass for an 88-yard touchdown play, only to have it called back by an “ineligible man downfield” penalty.

The Plainsmen played for the second Friday in a row on a field that had absolutely no hash marks—either on the sidelines or in the middle of the field. Holyoke at least numbered every 10 yards on the field.

Next Action

The North Platte St. Pat’s Irish feasted on Bayard for a 42-12 win Friday, their second against a winless team in as many weeks. St. Pat’s travels to meet the 2-0 Plainsmen on Sept. 18 at Haenfler Field in Grant.