



By Pastor Vince Carrig

Sports Writer

Perkins County rushers smoked the Dragons for four running touchdowns in the team's first five possessions to secure a convincing 34-7 Plainsmen win in Holyoke Friday night.

Running back Justin Hatcher ran hard up the middle, often reaching Holyoke's second level of defenders and dragging tacklers to pile up 116 yards and help Perkins County to a dominating 31:57 time of possession.



"With our three-back rotation, the job that our [offensive line] guys did up front really lent itself to our backs having a big night. I thought Justin [Hatcher] hit holes hard and did a good job in the open field. If [opponents feel] pretty sure they're going to take this guy away from us, we've got other ways to beat them this year," Plainsmen Head Coach Chip Kay said after the game.

Fellow running back Alex Johnston took the opening kickoff 32 yards and a handful of his 111 yards on the ground set up Eliot Carlson's 25-yard touchdown run to make the Dragons regret giving away first possession after winning the coin toss.

"He's definitely in the best physical condition that he's been; he's made huge strides in strength this last year. He busted his tail all spring doing speed camp stuff in the spring, and that's the stuff that people don't see," Coach Kay said after the game.

Quarterback Quinton Hite faked a handoff to running back Brody Prante and gave Carlson the ball instead. Carlson started on the right side of the field but moved toward the center before giving Perkins County a 7-0 lead by capping a 3:10 drive.

The Plainsmen defense, which shut out the Dundy County-Stratton Tigers and Holyoke Dragons for a combined 91:02, forced a fumble on Holyoke's first possession, with linebacker Hatcher clamping down on it.

Prante then took a handoff from out of the shotgun and turned on the afterburners in reaching the end zone for a 14-0 Plainsmen lead less than four minutes of game time later.

With four running backs for Holyoke to keep an eye on, Perkins County quarterback Hite called

his own number on the Plainsmen's third scoring drive, rolling and running right for 31 yards. Hatcher did the honors by refusing to let any tackler deny him the end zone from nine yards away.

Hite also kicked four of five extra points successfully, and gave his Plainsmen a 21-0 lead with 8:12 left in the half.

Hatcher ripped off a 27-yard run (as Hite faked as if he had kept the ball himself) to set up Johnston's 15-yard touchdown—gained mostly on sheer determination.

With a 28-0 lead, the Plainsmen fell one yard short of turning on the continuous clock as time ran out in the first half.

Perkins County's defense sent Holyoke away empty-handed several times with key plays. Cornerback Taylor Boldt broke up a 15-yard pass to force the Dragons to surrender the ball 2:30 before halftime. Linebacker Chad Fosbinder captured an interception at midfield with 2:43 left in the third quarter to thwart a Dragons drive. Boldt dropped running back Brett Cumming where he stood at the Holyoke 28 yard-line to force one of the Dragons' five punts.

Holyoke, however, capitalized on picking up a fumble at midfield to break the Plainsmen's shutout. Skilled senior receiver Reid Baumgartner's 28-yard catch and run with quarterback Broc Pelle's pass set up an 11-yard pass from Pelle to receiver Trevor Dalton with 4:58 to make the score 28-7.

Johnston manhandled the Dragons' defense with runs of 12, 20 and a scoring run of nine yards for his second touchdown with 1:31 left.

Score by Quarter

	1	2	3	4	
PC	14	14	0	6	34
Holyoke	0	0	0	7	7

Team/Quarter/Time/Play

- Perkins Co. 1 8:58 Carlson 25 run (Hite kick)
- Perkins Co. 1 6:24 Prante 23 run (Hite kick)
- Perkins Co. 2 9:52 Hatcher 9 run (Hite kick)
- Perkins Co. 2 5:30 Johnston 15 run (Hite kick)
- Holyoke 4 7:00 Pelle 7 pass to Dalton (Tuokko kick)
- Perkins Co. 4 1:37 Johnston 10 run (Kick failed)

Rushing leaders—Perkins Co.: Hatcher 17/116 (27) 1TD; Johnston 19/111 (28) 2TD; Prante 6/67 (31) 1TD; Hite 5/39 (34); Carlson 1/25 1TD; Holyoke: Cumming 12/53 (17); Pelle 5/13 (6).

Passing leaders—Perkins Co.: Hite 6-13-61; Holyoke: Pelle 9-15-80-1-1; Dalton 3-5-24.

Receiving leaders—Perkins County: Boldt 5/54 (15); Carlson 1/7; Holyoke: Baumgartner 7/80 (28); Cumming 2/3; Dalton 1/7 1TD.

Tackling leaders—Perkins Co.: Boldt 6/2; Prante 3/5; Hatcher 7.