



Photo by Paige DeLay

ALWAYS A FAMILY
The Holton boys basketball team huddles together before their final home game of the year against Hayden. The Wildcats defeated Hayden, but fell to Highland Park the next day to end their season.

Wildcat boys’ season ends with loss to #1 ranked Highland Park

Going into the sub-state semifinal against Highland Park, the Holton boys basketball team knew that it was going to have to play well to win the game and advance to the finals. They also knew that it would take a strong defensive effort to defeat the undefeated Scots.

The Wildcats accomplished one of those goals, playing one of their best games of the year, but still came out on the short side of things, falling to the Scots, 75-69.

“I thought we played extremely well,” head coach Ryan West said. We adjusted early to the speed of the game and the guys didn’t back down at all.”

The Wildcats came out a little timid in the first quarter, and the Scots capitalized on it, scoring the first eight points of the game before settling down. After Ty Burdiek went on a personal 5-0 run, the ‘Cats were within three at 8-5. The teams traded baskets back and forth after that, and after the first quarter, the Scotts led 25-16.

“We really had to adjust to their overall speed in the first quarter,” Burdiek said. “Once we adjusted, I believe that we did just fine.”

In the second quarter, the Wildcats seemed to adjust to the speed and tenacity of the Scots. Holton stuck right with the #1 ranked team in 4A, holding the Scots to 15 points in the second quarter. However, the Scots held the Wildcats to 12 points, and the ‘Cats trailed by 12 at the half, 40-28.

“Every time we made a run they answered it,” Ryan Haefke, 12, said. “We would get so close, then they would build the lead right back up.”

In the third quarter, it seemed that Holton’s season was on the ropes, as Highland Park built up a 51-35 lead with 3:35 to go in the quarter.

Then, Trent Tanking came alive. Tanking scored 19 of his team-high 23 points in the second half. Tanking led the Wildcats on a massive comeback, cutting the lead to seven late in the third quarter.

After a charge call on Ethan Holaday, Highland Park senior Tray Wheeler hit a three-pointer as the buzzer sounded to give the Scots a 10-point lead at the end of the third period.

“I thought the 3 that bounced several times and then in at the end of the 3rd quarter was big,” West said. “We still battled back to within 4 late but couldn’t quite get it to a 1 possession game.”

However, the Wildcats would just not go away. The Wildcats cut the lead to four at 71-67 with under a minute left and the Holton faithful came to its feet to charge the Wildcats to a victory.

But, the Scots had other plans. Highland Park junior Jahmal McMurray made seven of eight free throws in the final 1:25 to lead the Scots to the victory. McMurray was the second-leading scorer with 24, while Wheeler led with 26 for the undefeated Scots.

“We only turned it over eight times and shot 52% from the field. Unfortunately, Highland Park had one of their best shooting nights of the season as well,” West said.

Burdiek scored 19 points, while Cameron Karn scored 15 to pace the Wildcats, who ended the season with a 17-5 record.

West noted that he was proud of his players for their effort, desire, and enthusiasm. “They didn’t back down at all against what most people think is the best high school team in the entire state of Kansas.”

The Wildcats will graduate seven seniors from this years’ club. Those seven seniors will go down as one of the most successful classes in Holton High history.

“There are many things I will miss about this group,” West said. “Of course their abilities but also their desire to win, willingness to take coaching, leadership, and camaraderie in the locker room. They are a great group individually and as a whole.”

By Zach Porter, sports editor

Holton defeats Hayden, 54-49

Redemption. That was on Holton’s minds ever since they were dominated by Topeka-Hayden in a 66-47 loss in their second game of the season. However, the matchups were a lot different then they were the first time the two teams met.

Holton was still playing football a little more than a week before the teams met, while Hayden had been practicing basketball for more than three weeks. That definitely showed the first time the teams met, but not the second time.

The Wildcats came out hot on their final home game of the season, leading 15-7 at the end of the first quarter. However, the Wildcats knew that a run was coming.

“We had been in this situation before,” Burdiek said. “We knew that they were going to make a run sometime, we just had to be prepared for it.”

Hayden rode the left hand of sophomore Jacob Head, who scored 20 points on the night, to a dominating second quarter performance and led at the half, 28-24.

However, Holton came back with a run of their own in the third quarter, and regained the lead at 38-36. In the final period, the Wildcats delivered the knockout punch, outscoring Hayden by three, and winning 54-49 in what some considered the toughest first-round matchup in the state.

““When you win, it feels great to know you got through a challenge like that,” West said. “But I can’t imagine a tougher first-round matchup in any sub-state in Kansas.”

The Wildcats had four players in double-figures, with Trent Tanking and Garret Beecher each totaling 12 points, while Burdiek and Karn added 11 for Holton.

By Zach Porter, sports editor

Holliday compliments players for his recent successes

Jon Holliday, coach of the Holton girls varsity basketball team for 10 years, recently won his hundredth consecutive league game. While proud of that milestone, Holliday is even prouder of his teams.

After Holliday won his hundredth consecutive league game, there was a great feeling of accomplishment.

“Over eight years, a lot of people had a part of this and I was ecstatic to get the first undefeated league title—let alone the 100+ consecutive,” Holiday said. “It was an amazing feeling, an amazing accomplishment. Huge thanks to the people involved to make that happen; that was a nice reward from a lot of years of hard work from a lot of people.”

Some of those people included his teams. “Being a part of the winning team to bring Coach Holliday his four-hundredth career win was important,” Hannah Coverdale, 12, said. “Then he emphasized that 111 league wins was more important because it was his teams that did that. It felt good because it is always important to help out a coach who helps us out so much and is always there for us.”

Holliday’s coaching talent is evident in the number of successful teams he has coached. Successful teams must work together, work hard, and have some talent of their own.

“The kids work and play hard. Our kids play exceptionally and with a lot of passion. If that continues, then we like our chances. No matter who we play, we are going to have a chance to win the game,” Holliday said.

An athletic, passionate group of kids willing to work hard to achieve success also needs a good coach. Coaching could mean something different to everyone. It could be someone who makes the team get in shape, or it could mean someone who puts an arm around his players and tells them that everything will be okay.

“Generally speaking being a ‘coach’ to me means asking the kids to play hard. I think that the greatest thing that we have done as coaches is getting the kids to play hard. Playing harder than everyone else takes care of a lot of issues for us,” Holliday said.

Under Coach Holliday, the Lady Cats have won two state titles, been to the state tournament eight times, and have played in the championship game four times to date.

“I was a part of the 2012 State team. Even though we lost in the championship, I will never forget Holliday telling us in the locker room afterwards that he would rather coach our team over McPherson any day. While everyone was in tears, I remember thinking that I was going to do everything I could to help get our team to state again in 2013,” Keri Tanking, 12, said.

Others share Tanking’s feelings. “My greatest memory was winning State in 2011. As soon as the buzzer sounded at the end of the championship game against Cheney, everyone jumped into each other’s arms and the feeling I had was unforgettable. It was amazing!” Connor Strader, 12, said.

Holliday and his team capitalize upon H3, a symbolic trait of the Lady Cats that former player Danielle DeVader brought back from a summer camp.

H3 simply means Hustle, Heart, Honor. These are the three main ideas of the team.

“H3 talks about the different levels of basketball, the first one being hustle. You have got to play hard. The second one is Heart; we are going to have a lot more passion in what we do no matter what it is. The biggest one to me is the last level, Honor. When we start to sacrifice for the good of others, then we are becoming a team. When that happens special things will occur,” Holliday said.

Under Coach Holliday, the players share in the philosophy the symbol inspires.

“Hustle, Heart, Honor. Hustle comes pretty easily for most of us because if we aren’t busting our behinds in drills we will be on the line running,” Kara Decker, 12, said. “I’ve played basketball since I was in first grade so the game of basketball has always possessed a huge part of my heart. Honor is a huge thing to our team. It means that we take pride in playing for the team and the community that cares about us. We all have high respect for our teammates and coaches. We were all brought up in the same way, we share the same morals, and we all think of the girls on our team as our sisters.”

The coaching staff shares a bond and rich tradition too. Once Jon Holliday graduated from college 28 years ago, he interviewed at Holton and has been a teacher and coach since then. He started as the freshman boys coach for two years, varsity girls coach for 12 years, freshman girls coach for one year, coached nothing for three years, and has been the varsity girls coach for 10 years and counting.

Aside from Holliday, there are two assistant coaches who coach the junior varsity and freshman teams. Kurt Haussler is the freshman coach and Dennis Tegethoff is the junior varsity coach.

Coach Kurt Haussler, currently the freshman girls coach, came to Holton in 1997, but didn’t start coaching until 2000. In 2000 he had the opportunity to take a teaching position as well as a coaching spot for football and girls basketball. He saw this as an opportunity to grow as a coach and have a positive impact on the lives of the young people in Holton.

“I am now in my thirteenth year in Holton, and still very much enjoy teaching and coaching,” Haussler said.

Dennis Tegethoff coached the junior varsity team for 10 years. Prior to moving to Holton, Tegethoff coached for four years at Mulvane. After moving to Holton, he coached the boys varsity team for 14 years, took three years off, and has now been coaching the girls junior varsity team for 10 years. He has coached basketball for 28 years and has been a teacher for 31 years.

“The families and community that I’ve gotten to share my life with have made my time in Holton fly by. You don’t stay in one place for 27 years doing what you love unless you love the people and the place. What a wonderful place to raise a family and spend your life in. It’s home,” Tegethoff said.

By Maddie Foster and Shari Riley, J1 reporters



Photo by Jim McClintock

PREPARING FOR VICTORY
Coach Jon Holliday explains a play for his team during the first round sub-state game against Royal Valley at home. Holliday and the girls won their 100th consecutive league win this past year, but Holliday credits all of his success to his teams. The Holton girls season ended with a loss to Wamego in the sub-state championship game.