

Tiger boys top Baker, win district title

By Jayson Jacoby
EO Media Group

BAKER CITY — When Caden Long started the fourth quarter by throwing down a two-handed slam dunk, La Grande’s 10-point lead had shrunk to a single point and the roaring Baker crowd sensed a stirring comeback win on the way.

The Tigers had another idea. La Grande weathered Long’s individual effort — a game-high 26 points, including 17 of Baker’s 29 in the second half — to claim the Greater Oregon League title with a 57-50 win Saturday, avenging a 53-47 loss to the Bulldogs in the Baker gym on Jan. 31.

“Regardless of if it’s first place on the line or last place, rival games, they’re always tough, especially on the road,” LHS head coach Mark Carollo said.

Baker led briefly in the final period — its only lead of the second half — when Mason Van Arsdall scored inside to give the Bulldogs a 49-48 lead with 4:06 left.

But La Grande scored the next seven points.

On the ensuing possession after Van Arsdall’s basket, La Grande’s Devin Bell was fouled on a 3-point attempt and made two of three free throws to regain the lead. The Tigers never trailed again in yet the latest win earned by La Grande after its 1-10 start. The Tigers now have won nine of their last 11 games.

“When you start 1-10 it’s easy for anyone to say, ‘We’re going to have fun with the season,’ but (then) throw in the towel,” Carollo said. “I give me kids a



Photo by Kathy Orr/EO Media Group

Devin Bell (21), Zach Wiggins (behind) and the La Grande boys basketball team defeated Baker Saturday to win the Greater Oregon League district tournament.

lot of credit for sticking with it, putting their trust in me and their teammates. I’m proud of how they have been able to stick with it.”

Justin Jenner’s 3-point play on a rebound basket boosted La Grande’s lead to 52-48 with 2:49 on the clock, and Jenner then made a layin with 1:08 left to put the game out of reach.

“La Grande played hard, and they hit open shots,” Baker coach Jebron Jones said.

Jenner’s putback was the last, and most devastating, example of Baker’s biggest failure Saturday, Jones said — defensive rebounding.

“They had a lot of second-chance baskets, some for layins and some where they kicked out for a 3,” he said. “Those are daggers.”

Although the loss means Baker will have to travel for its Class 4A playoff game March 7 rather than host a game, Jones said he was pleased with the Bulldogs’ effort Saturday night.

Third time’s not the charm for LHS girls

By Jayson Jacoby
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BAKER CITY — Hailey Zikmund gave Baker the lead, and then she made sure the Bulldogs kept it.

The Baker junior scored in the lane with 2:05 left in the game to give the Bulldogs a 41-39 lead over La Grande on the way to a 49-42 win in a classic contest between the rivals for the Greater Oregon League championship Saturday night in the Baker gym.

Baker senior point guard Sydney Younger whipped a pass to Zikmund, who was open in front of the basket.

But the Tigers, who were trying to end a 12-game losing streak to the Bulldogs, including two regular season GOL games earlier this year, didn’t wilt after failing to hold a lead that reached four points late in the third quarter.

After Younger made two free throws to boost Baker’s lead to 43-39 with 1:39 left, La Grande’s Ella Dunlap, who led all scorers with 21 points, made one of two free throws.

After a Baker miss, the Tigers’ dynamic point guard Camryn Collman, who scored 13 points, nailed a 15-footer to cut Baker’s lead to 43-42 with 53 seconds to go.

The Tigers were forced to foul, and it was Zikmund who ended up at the line with 27.4 seconds left.

She swished both shots.

“I was really scared,” Zikmund said with a smile after the game. “It was the first time I’ve been in a situation like that. I just told myself I have to make these. It was amazing. It’s hard to explain.”

Trailing 45-42 after Zikmund’s free throws, La Grande had one last chance.

Collman’s 3-pointer from the top of the key missed, but the Tigers grabbed the rebound and Alexyss Chamberlain was fouled with 11.9 seconds left.

Chamberlain missed the front end of a 1-and-1 opportunity, and Baker secured the rebound after a scrum under the basket.

Dunlap was called for a technical foul for slamming the ball to the court, and Younger made both foul shots.

Union, Joseph girls named district champs

Observer staff

Union 63, Stanfield 41: Callie Glenn scored a game-high 20 points Saturday, Brianna Kohr got 15 of her 19 points from outside the arc and the Bobcats took down Stanfield for the third time this season to win the Blue Mountain Conference tournament.

“I’m extremely proud of my team tonight,” Union head coach Rhondie Rickman-Johansen said. “It’s hard to beat a team three times. I’m proud of the unity my team played with. That’s typical for us, but tonight we were a really cohesive unit. We were hungry for a district title.”

The Union coach said it’s the first time since 2009 Union has won both the regular season and district tournament titles.

Union scored 23 first-quarter points to take the early lead, and responded to every Stanfield run. The Bobcats hit 10 3-pointers on the night.

“We shot the ball well. Brianna and Callie had an awesome night of ball,” Rickman-Johansen said.

The Bobcats (23-3 overall) host Lakeview at 6 p.m. Friday in the first round of the playoffs.

Enterprise 40, Heppner 38, OT: Saturday’s comeback win for the Outlaws was not only thrilling but historic.

The victory, which secured the No. 3 seed for Enterprise in the Blue Mountain Conference, was the 500th career win by EHS head coach Mike Crawford.

“I don’t know how to put that into words,” said Crawford, who owns a 500-258 record in 31 years at Enterprise. “It’s pretty incredible.”

It wasn’t an easy win for the Outlaws, though. Enterprise shot just 12% in the first half and trailed 16-8, then surged back to take the lead. A late field goal by Sydney Wilson of Heppner forced the game into overtime.

“They weren’t going to be denied at that point,” Crawford said.

Carsyn Miller scored to put the Outlaws ahead for good late in a back-and-forth overtime session, 39-38. Ashlyn Gray added a free throw for the final margin, and the defense held on on Heppner’s last possession.

Miller finished with 10 points, while Gray added nine points and 14 rebounds.

Enterprise (17-6 overall) travels to Monroe at 6 p.m. Friday for a first-round playoff game.

Old Oregon League girls basketball tournament

Joseph 31, Powder Valley 26: The Eagles held off Powder Valley Saturday in a defensive battle to claim the Old Oregon League district title, a major feat during a season that saw Joseph lose the ability to play in its home gym.

“So impressed with our kids and the resiliency and how they came together with a common goal,” head coach Lance Homan said. “They got it done. So impressed with how they got it done.”



Photo by Kathy Aney/EO Media Group

Enterprise coach Mike Crawford earned his 500th career victory Saturday.

Sabrina Albee scored 16 points to lead Joseph, half of which came from the free-throw line.

Free throws, in fact, were the difference in a game that saw the team shoot a combined 16-for-78 from the floor. Joseph was 15-for-16 at the line, while the Badgers were 6-for-10.

“We just couldn’t hit shots,” Powder Valley head coach Allen Bingham said. “(We) had nice shots. We missed some point-blankers. We played really good defense, and so did they. It was a battle.”

Madelyn Nelson added six points for Joseph. Powder Valley was led by Josi Krieger, who had seven points, and McKenzie Leggett, who added five.

Joseph (20-6 overall) will play a second-round playoff game Friday in Enterprise, while Powder Valley (14-10) hosts Jordan Valley in a first-round game Tuesday.

Elgin 54, Wallowa 48, OT: Tymra Anderson made two free throws to send the game to overtime, and the Huskies controlled the extra period to win the third-place game over Wallowa and clinch a playoff berth for the first time since 1996.

“In the overtime they played the best basketball they played,” Elgin head coach Brian Evans said. “The talk before Wallowa’s game was we gotta get back to playing our basketball. You could tell Saturday their nerves weren’t getting to them. They came together when it counted for sure.”

Anderson finished with 21 points for the Huskies, eight of which came in the fourth quarter and overtime. Jayden Palmer added 12 points and Mariah Wilhelm scored 10 points.

Haley Brockamp and Kyla Hook both scored 16 points to lead Wallowa, which saw its season end with a final record of 13-13.

Elgin (20-5) travels to Echo at 6 p.m. Tuesday for a first-round playoff game.

Old Oregon League boys basketball tournament

Nixyaawii 77, Joseph 54: The Golden

Eagles shot the lights out Saturday as they topped Joseph in the Old Oregon League title game.

“We caught Nixy on a night that they couldn’t miss, and we couldn’t hit anything,” Fulfer said.

Nixyaawii had an answer for every defense Joseph threw at it as the Golden Eagles opened up a 15-point halftime lead and broke the game open in the third to lead 60-33.

“What I was proud about is they didn’t get dirty, they lost with class, kept their heads up and fought hard,” Fulfer said of his team.

Chase Murray scored 20 points to lead the Eagles and both Mason Ferre and Hadley Miller added eight.

Joseph (20-7 overall) hosts Jordan Valley at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday in Enterprise in a first-round playoff game.

Elgin 68, Powder Valley 59: Elgin made a defensive change in the second half to take down Powder Valley in the third-place game of the Old Oregon League tournament and clinch a state playoff berth.

“I’m proud of the boys,” said Elgin head coach Kevin Johnson as the Huskies earned their second playoff berth in three years. “I got a couple of basketball players and a bunch of athletes that want to buy in.”

Johnson said a change from zone defense in the first half to man-to-man in the second made the difference.

“We played man the second half, and it started shaking stuff up,” he said.

Stats were not available.

Powder Valley saw its season end with the loss at 18-8 overall. Elgin (15-10) will travel Wednesday to South Wasco County for a first-round playoff game at 6 p.m.

Blue Mountain Conference boys basketball tournament

Heppner 42, Union 34: The Bobcats came up short against Heppner Saturday in the third-place game in the Blue Mountain Conference district tournament, and the setback ended their four-game winning streak and their playoff hopes.

The loss dropped Union from 15th to 17th in the final OSAA ranking before the 2A state playoffs were set. Sheridan, which finished ranked 15th, claimed the final of four at-large playoff bids.

“It certainly was a tough way to go out,” head coach Odin Miller said. “Being on the brink of a state big and coming up short is tough to accept.”

Keegan Glenn had a double-double with 20 points and 10 rebounds to lead Union, and Cole McLean added eight. Heppner led 16-14 at the half and 29-27 after three. The Mustangs also shot 26 free throws to Union’s five, making 14 of them.

The Bobcats’ season ends with a final record of 17-10.

— Brett Kane of the East Oregonian contributed to this report.

