

Sports

Baker basketball teams finish North Valley tournament with perfect records

Girls stifle opponents

By Jayson Jacoby
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The Baker girls basketball team could have played much worse and still won all three of its games at the North Valley Winter Blast tournament.

Coach Mat Sand is pleased that the Bulldogs generally played well, of course.

But he appreciates the wide margin for error that Baker's dominating defense gave his team, which improved its season record to 12-1.

"Defense is the start of any good offense, and that's what we focus on," Sand said. "The girls have just done a great job."

In 12 quarters of tournament play, Baker held its opponent to 8 or fewer points in nine quarters.

After restricting host North Valley to just 4 points in the first quarter of a 68-14 win in Thursday's opening round, Baker was similarly suffocating in beating Douglas 50-26 on Friday and Brookings-Harbor 62-38 on Saturday.

Brookings-Harbor had by far the most success, scoring 25 points in the first half.

But Baker also had its highest-scoring half of the tournament, taking a 36-25 lead. The Bulldogs then returned to their stifling ways, holding Brookings-Harbor to just 13 points in the second half.

Sand said he emphasizes defense because it can lead to easy layins in transition.

Sand said Baker "isn't yet



Baker's Anna Carter looks for a shot against Vallivue, Idaho, earlier this season.

where we want to be" offensively, but he was especially happy with the Bulldogs' free throw shooting. Baker made 21 of 27 foul shots during the tournament.

Jayne Ramos led Baker with 46 points over the three games. Sydney Younger scored 40, and Rose Gwillim

38. "The unity on this team is really high," Sand said. "We want to make another run at state, and I think this team is capable of that."

Baker opens Greater Oregon League play Saturday against Mac-Hi in the Baker gym.



S. John Collins/Baker City Herald

Riley Flanagan shoots against Nyssa in a game earlier this season.

Boys' win streak at 7

By Jayson Jacoby
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Coach Jebron Jones knew his Baker boys basketball team had the potential for plentiful distractions at the North Valley Winter Blast tournament.

The Bulldogs had traveled most of the way across Oregon, they were staying in a motel, and it was Christmas break besides.

But Jones said the players not only maintained their focus, they strengthened their bonds while winning all three games and extending their win streak to seven.

"It was cool to see the boys trust each other and play together more," Jones said. "Just being together as a team brought them closer. It was a good bonding trip."

After rallying from a 7-point halftime deficit to beat North Valley 56-43 on Thursday, Baker was in control from the start in beating South Umpqua 69-40 on

Friday and Brookings-Harbor 70-52 on Saturday.

Baker's defense was a key in all three wins, Jones said.

"To be a great team you've got to play defense," he said.

He was especially pleased that the Bulldogs played their best defense in the final quarter of Saturday's win, when they might have been expected to be tired.

The Bulldogs held Brookings-Harbor to only one point in that quarter.

"Defense is basically heart and effort, how hard you want to play," Jones said.

Caden Long led Baker with 59 points in the three games. Kaden Sand had 55 and Gabe Gambleton 37. Zach Schwin scored 13 points against South Umpqua.

Baker, 10-2 overall, plays host to Fruitland, Idaho, Friday at 7 p.m. before starting Greater Oregon League play Saturday against Mac-Hi, also in the Baker gym.



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