

Sports

BAKER VOLLEYBALL



Lisa Britton / For the Baker City Herald

Baker's Averi Elms goes for a point Monday against Weiser.



Lisa Britton / For the Baker City Herald

Baker's Lacy Churchfield, left, and Hailey Zikmund go up for a block Monday against Weiser in the Baker gym.

Bulldogs stop Weiser in 4, sweep Mac-Hi

By Gerry Steele
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Baker handled Weiser in four sets Monday in a non-league volleyball rematch at Baker High School, then traveled the next day to Milton-Freewater and swept the Mac-Hi Pioneers in a Greater Oregon League match.

The Bulldogs, who lost to Weiser in four sets to open their season, won Monday 25-15, 23-25, 25-18, 25-20.

Baker opened the first set with a 7-2 lead behind the serving of Anna Carter.

Lacy Churchfield then stepped to the service line and increased Baker's lead to 11-3.

The Bulldogs then kept the lead between 10 and 11 points the rest of the set.

The second set was much closer, with neither team gaining more than a 3-point lead until the game was knot-

ted at 20-20.

Weiser then jumped ahead 23-20 before Baker rallied to tie the score again at 23-23 on the serves of Josie Lewis.

Weiser then scored the final two points to even the match.

Baker trailed by as many as eight points in the third set before battling back.

Trailing 17-14, Baker scored seven straight points to build a 24-17 edge.

Lewis supplied the serving during the rally. Emma Baeth and Churchfield combined to dominate the net with five kills in the run.

Churchfield supplied the final hit to give Baker a 2-1 match lead.

Baker then rode the serving of Churchfield and Lauren Benson to a 20-7 cushion in the fourth set.

Weiser battled back to get within 23-19 before Baker

closed out the win.

On Tuesday Baker improved its GOL record to 2-1 Tuesday with a 25-13, 25-5, 25-20 win at Mac-Hi.

Baker coach Chelsea Hurliman said the Bulldogs dominated from the service

line. Churchfield served 18 consecutive points, and Emma Bates 10 in a row.

"We found some weaknesses in their defense," Hurliman said. "There wasn't a lot of rallying in the match. The girls came out and just

decided to get 'er done pretty quick last night."

Baker plays host to Fruitland Thursday, with the varsity match starting around 7 p.m.

— Jayson Jacoby contributed to this story.

BAKER GIRLS SOCCER

Grizzlies shut out Baker, 5-0

FRUITLAND — Fruitland shut out Baker 5-0 in a nonleague girls soccer match Monday at Fruitland.

It was Baker's second straight loss. The Bulldogs are 2-6 overall and 0-2 in Greater Oregon League play.

Baker returns to GOL action Saturday with a noon match at Mac-Hi.

The Bulldogs have four remaining matches during the regular season, all on Saturdays. Following the Mac-Hi match Baker play host to three opponents, all matches starting at noon — La Grande on Oct. 12, Ontario Oct. 19 and Mac-Hi on Oct. 26.

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

Nationals nip Brewers in wild card

WASHINGTON (AP) — After all the heartache and close calls, all the early exits, maybe it makes sense that a 20-year-old kid who never had been to the postseason, Juan Soto, would help the Washington Nationals finally advance.

Soto delivered a bases-loaded single against Milwaukee closer Josh Hader that scored three runs with two outs in the eighth inning, thanks in part to an error by rookie outfielder Trent Grisham, and the Nationals came back to beat the Brewers 4-3 in the NL wild-card game Tuesday night.

Trail Blazers look to build on breakthrough season

■ After advancing to the Western Conference finals, Portland unveiled a revamped roster when camp opened Tuesday

By Anne M. Peterson
AP Sports Writer

PORTLAND — The Trail Blazers have a number of new players for Portland's 50th anniversary season—and a new resolve after their playoff run last spring.

Joining the well-established backcourt of Damian Lillard and CJ McCollum on Portland's roster are such offseason acquisitions as Hassan Whiteside, Pau Gasol and Kent Bazemore. The Blazers opened preseason camp on Tuesday.

"I feel like it's coming together, naturally," Lillard said Monday at the team's media day. "Being together for some weeks now and playing pickup has just been cool. I think the environment that we've created over the years, guys come in and it's easy to get comfortable with it. I think that's what's happening."

Last season the Blazers finished 53-29 and clinched the third seed in the Western Conference, earning home court for the first round—and a series with the Thunder. Portland wrapped that series up in five games, capped by Lillard's memorable walk-off 3-pointer, and

"We've got a completely different team, a lot of building to be done. But this year we're coming in and our focus is to win a championship. I think our mentality has to shift to that."

— Blazers guard Damian Lillard

advanced to the conference finals for the first time in 19 years.

Portland was coming off two seasons that ended with first-round playoff sweeps. The team, which had surprisingly little turnover over those years, started last season determined to take the next step. Now they're aiming for more.

"On one side we're not coming into this season saying, 'Oh we made it to the Western Conference finals last year so that's automatically going to happen.' We've got a completely different team, a lot of building to be done," Lillard said. "But this year we're coming in and our focus is to win a championship. I think our mentality has to shift to that."

The Blazers have shored up their options at center while Jusuf Nurkic continues to rehab from a broken left leg that kept him out of the playoffs. Nurkic was averaging 15.6 points and 10.4 rebounds a game before he was hurt in March.

The Blazers were able to turn to Enes Kanter, who was waived by the New York Knicks following the trade deadline and signed by Portland for the rest of the season. Kanter moved on in the offseason to the Celtics.

In the offseason, the Blazers acquired Hassan Whiteside from the Heat in a four-team deal that sent Meyers Leonard to Miami and Moe Harkless to the L.A. Clippers, while also picking up veteran big Gasol and forward Anthony Tolliver.

Whiteside averaged 12.3 points, 11.3 rebounds and 1.89 blocks per game last season in Miami.

Gasol said he is limited at the moment because of a surgery he had in February, part of a frustrating season that started with the Spurs and ended with the Milwaukee Bucks. A 19-year NBA veteran, Gasol said he'll be limited in workouts during camp and he wouldn't commit to being available on opening day.

Lillard is excited about the depth the Blazers acquired. Among the others is Bazemore, whom the Blazers got from Atlanta in a trade for Evan Turner.

The team's on-court leader, Lillard averaged 25.8 points and 6.9 assists and earned his fourth All-Star nod dur-

ing the regular season. He signed a super-max contract extension worth \$196 million in the offseason.

The Blazers also look forward this season to celebrating the 50th anniversary of the franchise. The team will play a preseason game at the Veterans Memorial Coliseum, where the team won its 1977 NBA championship. The Blazers held their media day at the arena Monday.

Last season the Blazers opened the preseason on a somber note. Owner Paul Allen passed away after a battle with non-Hodgkins lymphoma. Portland dedicated its season to him.

Blazers President of Basketball Operations Neil Olshey said Allen's sister, Jody Allen, wants to win a "couple of championships," with the

Blazers, reiterating her commitment to the team. Olshey said she was just unanimously approved by the NBA's Board of Governors.

Olshey pointed to the team's newly acquired depth and recent playoff experience for his optimism.

"This is the deepest, most talented, most experienced team we've had since we've been here. ... Clearly when Nurk gets back, it's the biggest team we've had. I like the fact we brought in guys like Pau with a championship pedigree, who have been to where we're trying to get to," Olshey said. "And I think coming off the heels of last year's run, it's given these guys a springboard. Instead of finishing on a negative, we finished really strong and it has really inspired the guys."

New message

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