

Sports

BAKER FOOTBALL

La Grande shuts out Bulldogs, 34-0

By Ronald Bond
The (La Grande) Observer

LA GRANDE — La Grande's defense held Baker in check until the offense was able to break through.

Once it did, the floodgates opened, and the Tigers secured an undefeated season.

Nathan Reed rushed for 114 yards and three touchdowns and the Tigers locked up the Greater Oregon League title outright with a 34-0 home win over the Bulldogs Saturday afternoon at Community Stadium.

"We've been working really

Baker travels for playoffs Nov. 8

Baker, which finished second in the Greater Oregon League, earned a first-round playoff game at Cascade, which is in Turner, just east of Salem. The game is set for Friday, Nov. 8. Kickoff time hasn't been set. Cascade's season record is 7-1. The Cougars have won six consecutive games, scoring 63 and 64 points in the last two victories over Newport and Philomath.

hard all week," Reed, who eclipsed 1,000 yards rushing for the season in the win, said.

"The defense of both teams was the tale of the first half.

La Grande scored on its second offensive play of the game — a 15-yard run by Reed — but then both teams held firm. La Grande had just 98 yards of offense — 88 of it on the ground, and 82 of that from Reed. Baker struggled even more, gaining just 88 yards, and getting 60 of that through the air.

"Offensively we just couldn't get anything going," Baker head coach Jason Ramos said. "We struggled. We had opportunities, but we made too many mistakes, costly penalties, interceptions, turnovers."

Two big plays late in the half — including one of those interceptions Ramos spoke of — led to two quick touchdowns.

Reed — who had been held to short gains on his previous four carries — broke through the line on fourth and five for a 39-yard touchdown and a 14-0 lead with 2:12 to play in the half.

Shaw then grabbed an interception — his second of the game — and scored four plays later on a 10-yard reception to make the margin 21-0 at the break.

"Our defense (has) been



Ben Lonergan/EO Media Group

Baker quarterback Spencer Shirtcliff (9) takes a snap in the first quarter against the La Grande Bulldogs Saturday afternoon at Community Stadium in La Grande.



Ben Lonergan/EO Media Group

Baker running back Gauge Bloomer (5) outruns a tackle by La Grande defensive back Zach Wiggins (5).

working really hard, not just the last week but the last two weeks," La Grande head coach Rich McIlmoil said. "There's a couple things that coach Walcott wanted to tighten up, and he's been doing a phenomenal job all year. There's a few changes that he made, and those changes paid off."

La Grande's rushing attack finally took off in the second half — particularly in the fourth quarter — to put the game on ice. Reed and Robinson scored on runs of 5 and 25 yards, respectively, five minutes apart for the final margin.

Despite what became a lopsided loss on the scoreboard,

Ramos was pleased with the play of his defense, which held La Grande to 279 yards, and only 37 passing.

"We just know that our defense is going to keep us in games," Ramos said. "We played well. They got it going late, but through three quarters it was a ballgame."

Baker never did get its offense going in the second half, finishing with just 139 total yards.

Spencer Shirtcliff had 102 of those yards through the air for Baker. However, the senior quarterback, who returned to action Oct. 18 after two games due to a shoulder injury he suffered Sept. 27, was just 8-for-23 passing

and was picked off twice. The Tigers also held running back Gauge Bloomer in check, as he rushed the ball 19 times for 38 yards. Riley Flanagan had three catches for 58 yards.

Baker (5-3 overall, 2-2 GOL) will travel to Cascade for a first-round playoff game on Nov. 8.

"We're happy with where we're at," Ramos said of his squad as it enters the playoffs. "We've lost three games this year to teams that are undefeated. Homedale is a really good team. And we lost to La Grande twice. La Grande hasn't lost a game. It's not like our three losses tell us we're not a good team."



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