

Sports

BAKER BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM'S BUSY WEEK

Bulldogs' height too much for Mac-Hi

■ Baker relies on its dominance inside to turn back the Pioneers, 59-49, to even Greater Oregon League record

By Jayson Jacoby
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Mac-Hi's Cristian Castillo banked in his third three-pointer in a two-minute span, and suddenly it seemed an upset was brewing in the Baker gym Monday evening.

But the Bulldogs responded by getting the ball to the one place on the court where the Pioneers simply couldn't go.

Or, rather, the place above the court.

Baker thwarted Mac-Hi's third-quarter rally by reverting to the tactic that had proved so effective earlier in the game — passing the ball into the key where the Bulldogs could maximize their height advantage.

Jake Wright, Baker's 6-foot-5-inch post, converted a three-point play inside, and his 6-foot-4-inch teammate, Caden Long, also scored from the lane to boost the Bulldogs' lead, which was pared to 31-30 on Castillo's third three-pointer, back to 36-30.

Wright's and Long's baskets ignited a 13-4 run that extended into the fourth quarter as Baker went on to a 59-49 win in a game originally scheduled for Saturday.

The game was postponed until Monday due to concerns that snowstorms would close Interstate 84 and prevent the Pioneers from traveling from Milton-Freewater.

Baker evened its Greater Oregon League record at 1-1.

Baker coach Jebron Jones said he was well aware of the Bulldogs' potential advantage over the Pioneers.

Mac-Hi's tallest starter is Castillo, at 6 foot.

All of Baker's starters are at least 6-foot-1.

"We put an extra emphasis on getting more shots at the rim," Jones said.

Those tend to be easier shots, Jones said. But even when they don't fall, Baker's height gave the Bulldogs chances for offensive rebound baskets. Baker had three of those Monday.

Baker's size superiority showed itself early, as the Bulldogs scored 16 of their 25 first-half points on shots within 8 feet of the basket.

Wright had 7 points in the first half. Mason Van Arsdall, at 6-foot-2, had 6 points on

"I'm super happy we came out with a win for Gabe. I know how much he wanted to be out there."

— Caden Long, talking about teammate Gabe Gambleton who was injured in Monday's win over Mac-Hi

GOL Boys Basketball

LA GRANDE	2-0
BAKER	1-1
MAC-HI	1-1
ONTARIO	0-2

MONDAY'S GAME

Baker 59, Mac-Hi 49

FRIDAY'S GAMES

La Grande at Mac-Hi
Baker at Ontario

three baskets, all inside the lane.

Baker led 25-19 at halftime despite losing starting point guard Gabe Gambleton to an injury in the first quarter. Gambleton soared high to try to block a shot and landed hard on his tailbone.

Gambleton, Baker's second-leading scorer at 14.6 points per game, didn't return.

But Long, who leads the Bulldogs with 17.2 points per game and has scored in double figures in all but one of Baker's 18 games this season, took over ball-handling duties in Gambleton's absence.

"Caden did a good job," Jones said.

Long, who led Baker with 20 points Monday — 16 in the second half — said he had played point guard at times during recent practices, but he didn't expect to replace Gambleton in that role against Mac-Hi.

"My team trusted me," Long said. "I'm super happy we came out with a win for Gabe. I know how much he wanted to be out there."

Mac-Hi tried to take advantage of Baker's changing lineup after Gambleton's injury, employing at times a full-court press and a half-court trap.

Jones said he was pleased with how Baker handled the



Kathy Orr/Baker City Herald

Baker's Jake Wright tries to corral the ball against the defense of Mac-Hi's Francisco Flores Monday night.

Pioneers' aggressive defense without Gambleton, who is the Bulldogs' most deft dribbler.

"We did a great job," Jones said.

Long agreed. "I feel like we handled the pressure well," he said.

Long's layin early in the fourth quarter boosted Baker's lead to 46-34, its biggest of the second half.

But Issac Earls swished a three-pointer and Dareagan Stephens, Mac-Hi's quick and shifty point guard, drove for a layup that cut Baker's lead to 46-39 with 3:33 left in the game.

Baker responded with Long's free throw and Van Arsdall's inside basket on a nice feed from Jamisun Rigueiro to boost the lead back to 10.

The Bulldogs tried to slow the game in the fourth quarter, focusing on crisp passing around the perimeter until a teammate came open in the lane. Mac-Hi forced a few turnovers but the tactic limited the Pioneers' offensive possessions.

Jones said he emphasized to his players that they had the lead and could afford to be patient.

"I told them, 'they have to come to you, you don't have to go to them,'" he said.

Jones also issued an edict in the third quarter — no more three-point shots.

Baker tried a few three-pointers earlier in the game and made only one — Spencer Shirtcliff's from the right wing in the first quarter.

Mac-Hi had seven three-

pointers but that wasn't enough to overcome Baker's dominance in the key.

Wright had 10 points, and Riley Flanagan and Van Arsdall added 9 points each.

Mac-Hi coach Jordon Poynor drew a technical foul in the final minute when he pointed out to the referees that they had called 12 fouls on the Pioneers in the second half, and only one on Baker.

Baker won the JV game, 60-44.

MAC-HI (49)
Stephens 4-4-7 13, Brinkley 4-0-0 9, Gilmore 1-2-2 4, Flores 1-0-0 2, Earls 4-0-0 10, Castillo 4-0-0 11, Badillo 0-0-0 0. Totals 18-6-9 49.

BAKER (59)
Younger 0-0-0 0, Gambleton 0-0-0 0, Flanagan 4-1-2 9, Robb 0-0-0 0, Rigueiro 2-2-6 6, Wright 4-2-4 10, Shirtcliff 1-0-0 3, Long 7-6-8 20, Van Arsdall 4-1-2 9, Smith 1-0-0 2. Totals 22-5-9 57.

Mac-Hi 7 12 13 17 — 49
Baker 17 8 15 19 — 59
Three-point baskets — Shirtcliff, Stephens, Brinkley, Earls 2, Castillo 3. **Total fouls** — Mac-Hi 19, Baker 7.

Blazers acquire Trevor Ariza

PORTLAND (AP) — The Portland Trail Blazers have acquired veteran forward Trevor Ariza from the Sacramento Kings.

Portland also gets Wenyen Gabriel and Caleb Swanigan from the Kings in exchange for Kent Bazemore, Anthony Tolliver and two second-round draft picks.

Ariza, a 15-year NBA veteran, has averaged 6.0 points and 4.6 rebounds with the Kings this season. Gabriel was with the Stockton Kings of the NBA G League. Swanigan was originally selected by the Blazers with the 26th overall pick in the 2017 draft.

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