

Sports

BAKER GIRLS BASKETBALL

Bulldogs dominate Ambrose & Ontario

By Jayson Jacoby
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As Baker piled up the points against Ambrose, Idaho, in the first quarter Saturday afternoon in the Baker gym it might have seemed more like a practice than a game.

But the 77-13 final score officially goes up in the win column on the Bulldogs' schedule, and coach Mat Sand said the difference between any game, even a blowout, and a practice is significant.

"It's always better to play games than to practice, the way I see it," said Sand, whose team, ranked second in the state in Class 4A, won its eighth straight game and improved to 17-2 on the season. "You're in game situations, and that's the way you grow as a team," he said.

Although Ambrose, a private school from Meridian, Idaho, that came into the game with a 4-10 record, posed little challenge for Baker, the defending state champion, Sand said he was pleased with the way the Bulldogs executed on both ends of the court.

Baker, as it usually does, put on a full-court press to start.

The Bulldogs' relentless pressure yielded about a dozen steals in the first quarter.

"We want to come right

out of the chutes and get on people," Sand said. "We call it playing Baker basketball."

After senior point guard Sydney Younger opened the scoring with a three-pointer, freshman post Jozie Ramos scored three straight baskets and the Bulldogs led 9-0 less than 90 seconds into the game.

After an Ambrose free throw — the Archers' only point in the first quarter — Baker scored 21 straight points.

Senior Isabella Nemec had 9 of those points, including a three-pointer.

Ambrose had a brief offensive flurry in the final minute of the second quarter, scoring 8 points to cut Baker's lead to 35-10 at halftime.

The Bulldogs, after scoring just 5 points in the second period, resumed their onslaught in the third quarter, outscoring the Archers 24-2.

In setting a season high for points with 77, Baker spread the points around the roster.

Ramos, with a game-high 19, was one of four Bulldogs in double figures.

Younger and Nemec had 14 each, and Sydney Keller had 11. Lauren Benson added 8 points, and Hailey Zikmund and Makenzie Flanagan had 5 each.

At Ontario

Baker was similarly

dominant Friday night in the Ontario gym. The Bulldogs in particular flexed their defensive muscles from the start, holding Ontario to just three field goals, and eight points, in the first half en route to a 64-21 win.

It was the second straight game in which Baker's defense was omnipotent from the opening tip.

In the Bulldogs' 66-28 win over Mac-Hi on Jan. 20 in the Baker gym, they limited the Pioneers to 10 points in the first half.

Against Ontario, Baker really started to roll offensively in the second period, scoring 17 points to take a 27-8 lead at halftime.

Ramos had 8 of her game-high 20 points in the first half, and Younger had 10 of her 19 points.

As was the case with other recent blowout wins, Sand was able to get significant playing time for the entire roster, including a trio of freshmen, Rylee Elms, Flanagan and Macey Moore.

Elms had 4 points, and Flanagan and Moore 2 points each.

In all, 10 Bulldogs scored at least 2 points, matching the total from the Mac-Hi win.

Baker's defense has been a strength all season, but the Bulldogs have been especially stifling the past four games, yielding an average of 23 points. Baker has allowed more than 10 points in just 2 of the

past 16 quarters.

Now that Baker has played, and beaten, each of its GOL opponents once, Sand said it's clear that La Grande, whom the Bulldogs beat 42-35 at La Grande on Jan. 10, pose the biggest challenge to Baker's goal of going unbeaten in league play and defending its conference title.

"That's the game to look at — it has been the five years I've been here," Sand said. "They're a good team and we've got to be ready to play."

Baker's rematch with La Grande will be Friday at 6 p.m. in the Baker gym. But first the Bulldogs will travel to North Powder Tuesday to take on the Powder Valley Badgers at 6 p.m.

SATURDAY						
AMBROSE (13)						
Ambrose roster unavailable						
BAKER (77)						
Elms 0 0-0 0, Heilberg 0 0-0 0, Flanagan 2 1-1 5						
Keller 5 1-2 11, Younger 4 4-4 14, Zikmund 2 0-0 5,						
Carter 0 0-0 0, Mackenzie 0 0-0 0, Nemec 6 0-0 14,						
Ramos 7 5-6 19, Benson 3 1-2 8, Moore 0 1-2 1.						
Totals 29 13-17 77.						
Ambrose	1	9	2	1	—	13
Baker	30	5	24	18	—	77
Three-point baskets — Younger 2, Zikmund,						
Nemec 2, Benson. Total fouls — Ambrose 11,						
Baker 16.						

FRIDAY
BAKER (64)

Elms 1 2-4 4, Hellberg 0 0-0 0, Flanagan 1 0-0 2,
Keller 3 1-1 7, Younger 7 4-4 19, Zikmund 1 3-4 5,
Carter 1 0-0 2, Mackenzie 1 0-0 2, Nemecek 1 0-0 2,
Ramos 8 4-8 20, Benson 0 0-2 0, Moore 0 2-7 2.
Totals 24 16-30 64.

ONTARIO (21)					
Murray 0 0-0 0, Esquivel 2 2-2 6, Romayor 3 0-0 6,					
Hart 1 0-0 2, Navarrette 0 1-2 1, Hernandez 0 0-0 0,					
Houston 1 1-2 3, Jordan 1 0-3 2, Matsumara 0 1-2 1.					
1. Totals 8 5-11 21.					
Baker	10	17	19	18	— 64
Ontario	4	4	7	6	— 21
Three-point baskets — Younger. Total fouls					
— Baker 16, Ontario 23.					



Kathy Orr/ Baker City Herald

Baker's Sydney Keller gets two of her 11 points against Ambrose, Idaho, on Saturday in the Baker gym. The Bulldogs won 77-13 and improved their season record to 17-2.



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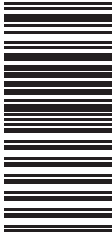
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