

Sports

BAKER BOYS BASKETBALL



Kathy Orr / Baker City Herald

Baker's Gabe Gambleton, shown here earlier in the season against Weiser, scored a game-high 14 points Tuesday in the Bulldogs' 52-31 win over Mac-Hi at Milton-Freewater.

Defense key to big win over Mac-Hi

By Jayson Jacoby
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Baker boys basketball coach Jebron Jones knew Mac-Hi was capable of pulling an upset Tuesday, and he knew who was most likely to lead the Pioneers.

The priority was to limit Dareagan Stephens, Mac-Hi's shifty 5-foot-9 senior point guard.

The Bulldogs did that — and more.

Baker held Stephens to 5 points, and Mac-Hi to just 10 points in the first half, in rolling to a 52-31 win Tuesday at Milton-Freewater.

The game was originally scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 8, but postponed because residents who evacuated due to flooding were temporarily staying in the Mac-Hi gym.

Stephens had 13 points in Baker's 59-49 win over the Pioneers on Jan. 20 at Baker.

"We had a game plan to stop (Stephens), and we executed it," Jones said. "The boys came out and played hard from the get go."

The Pioneers showed they can be a dangerous opponent during the Jan. 20 game, rallying in the third quarter to get within 31-30 before Baker pulled away in the final period.

But Baker's aggressive defense Tuesday night never allowed Mac-Hi to mount a serious threat.

The Bulldogs held the Pioneers to just 3 points in the second quarter and led 29-10 at halftime.

"It's a testament to how good we can play defense," Jones said. "It was a team effort."

Offensively, Jones said he was pleased with his team's patience in attacking Mac-Hi's zone defense.

"We did a pretty good job of making the extra pass," he said. "We got a bunch of layups."

Gabe Gambleton led Baker with 14 points. Caden Long added 12 points, and Riley Flanagan and Mason Van Arsdall had 8 each.

Baker improved to 4-1 in the Greater Oregon League to remain tied with La Grande atop the league standings. The two teams split their two games, both winning on their home floor. Baker and La Grande each have one league game remaining — Baker plays host to Ontario Friday, and La Grande plays host to Mac-Hi Saturday. If both Baker and La Grande win, the GOL's top spot would be determined by RPI ranking. Baker is ranked 12th, and La Grande 19th.

Baker's JV team beat Mac-Hi 49-10 on Tuesday.

| BAKER (52) | |
|-------------|---------|
| Younger | 0 0-0 |
| Gambleton | 5 2-2 |
| Flanagan | 4 0-0 |
| Robb | 0 0-0 |
| Rigueiro | 1 0-0 |
| Wright | 2 0-0 |
| Shircliff | 1 0-0 |
| Long | 3 6-9 |
| Van Arsdall | 4 0-0 |
| Smith | 1 0-2 |
| Totals | 21 8-13 |

| MAC-HI (31) | |
|-------------|--------|
| Stephens | 1 3-6 |
| Brinkley | 1 1-2 |
| Gilmore | 0 0-0 |
| Lewis | 2 0-0 |
| Flores | 3 0-0 |
| Earis | 3 0-0 |
| Hemdon | 0 0-0 |
| Castillo | 2 0-0 |
| Badillo | 0 0-0 |
| Totals | 12 4-8 |

| | Baker | Mac-Hi |
|----------|-------|--------|
| Points | 52 | 31 |
| Rebounds | 17 | 12 |
| Assists | 13 | 9 |
| Steals | 6 | 5 |
| Blocks | 9 | 12 |

Three-point baskets — Gambleton 2, Lewis, Earis, Castillo. Total fouls — Baker 12, Mac-Hi 10.

BAKER GIRLS BASKETBALL

Bulldogs stifle Mac-Hi to stay perfect in GOL

By Jayson Jacoby
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Baker's girls basketball team had to wait a couple of extra days to resume its quest for a fourth straight Greater Oregon League regular season title.

But when the Bulldogs finally got their chance Tuesday night at Mac-Hi, they wasted no time in exerting themselves.

Baker's defense was dominant, limiting the Pioneers to two free throws in the first quarter and to a single field goal in the first half.

The Bulldogs' offense, meanwhile, was efficient, especially during a 22-point second quarter that boosted Baker's lead to 35-6 at half-time.

Baker freshman post Jozie Ramos scored 11 of her game-high 15 points in the first half. Junior guard Sydney Keller had 9 of her 11 points before halftime.

The Bulldogs went on to a 54-17 win and improved to 5-0 in GOL play with one league game remaining — Friday at 6 p.m. in the Baker gym against Ontario, which has a 1-4 league record.

Baker beat the Tigers 64-21 on Jan. 24 at Ontario.

Tuesday's game at Mac-Hi was originally scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 8. The contest was postponed because Mac-Hi's gym was being used to house residents who evacuated due to flooding in Umatilla County.

Baker, the defending Class 4A state champion, continued its recent trend of playing stifling defense.

The Bulldogs have allowed an average of 27.4 points per game in their five GOL games.

Baker scored an average of 54.4 points in those games.

"We want to be a defensive-focused team, and we did that (against Mac-Hi)," Baker



Kathy Orr / Baker City Herald

Baker's Hailey Zikmund, playing against Ambrose, Idaho, earlier this season, scored 2 points in Baker's 54-17 win over Mac-Hi Tuesday at Milton-Freewater.

coach Mat Sand said. "Our defense was great. It took us a while to get our offense going, but we did that too."

With Baker in control throughout Tuesday's game, Sand was able to get extensive playing time for freshmen Rylee Elms, Makenzie Flanagan and Macey Moore.

And that meant more rest for the starters.

"This time of year, rest, physically and mentally, is

huge," Sand said. "I want to give the girls that rest. With young kids you need to pace the season."

Distributing playing time is a balancing act, Sand said.

Although he was pleased to be able to give the three freshmen valuable experience in varsity games, with the playoffs looming he said he'll now focus on the eight-player rotation that likely will take most of the minutes as the Bulldogs seek to repeat last year's state championship.

Seniors Sydney Younger, Isabella Nemeč, Lauren Benson and Anna Carter, along with juniors Keller, Jocelynn Hellberg and Hailey Zikmund, all return from last year's title team. Ramos, a freshman, is the lone newcomer.

The rescheduling of the

GOL Girls

| | |
|-----------|-----|
| BAKER | 5-0 |
| LA GRANDE | 3-2 |
| MAC-HI | 1-4 |
| ONTARIO | 1-4 |

TUESDAY'S GAME

Baker 54, Mac-Hi 17

FRIDAY'S GAME

Ontario at Baker, 6 p.m.

SATURDAY'S GAME

La Grande at Mac-Hi, 3 p.m.

"We want to be a defensive-focused team, and we did that. Our defense was great. It took us a while to get our offense going, but we did that too."

— Baker coach Mat Sand

Mac-Hi game means Baker will play three games in four days this week. The Bulldogs will seek to run their winning streak to 12 games tonight when they travel to Vale for a nonleague game against the Vikings.

Baker beat Vale 50-28 on Jan. 7 at Baker.

But after Friday's Senior Night game against Ontario, Baker will only have to play one game — for playoff seeding from the GOL — until the playoffs start March 6. The state tournament is March 12-14 at Forest Grove.

"I'm very pleased with where we're at," Sand said. "We have good chemistry as a team. We're right where we want to be."

Baker was even more dominant in the JV game Tuesday, beating Mac-Hi 67-4.

| BAKER (54) | |
|------------|----------|
| Elms | 0 0-0 |
| Hellberg | 3 1-1 |
| Flanagan | 0 0-4 |
| Keller | 5 1-1 |
| Younger | 1 4-4 |
| Zikmund | 0 2-2 |
| Carter | 0 0-0 |
| Mackenzie | 0 1-1 |
| Nemeč | 2 0-0 |
| Ramos | 6 3-7 |
| Benson | 2 0-0 |
| Moore | 0 0-0 |
| Totals | 21 11-18 |

| MAC-HI (17) | |
|-------------|--------|
| McPherson | 0 0-0 |
| Rencken | 0 0-3 |
| Brown | 0 0-0 |
| Angel | 3 3-3 |
| Leber | 0 2-2 |
| Hernandez | 1 0-0 |
| Oz | 0 0-0 |
| Reichert | 0 0-0 |
| Rhoads | 1 0-1 |
| Garcia | 0 1-2 |
| Ellis | 0 0-0 |
| Oliva | 0 0-0 |
| Urbe-Garcia | 0 0-0 |
| Totals | 5 6-11 |

| | Baker | Mac-Hi |
|----------|-------|--------|
| Points | 54 | 17 |
| Rebounds | 13 | 22 |
| Assists | 10 | 9 |
| Steals | 9 | 5 |
| Blocks | 17 | 17 |

Three-point baskets — Angel. Total fouls — Baker 15, Mac-Hi 18.

POWDER VALLEY BASKETBALL

Badger boys, girls both top Pine Eagle

NORTH POWDER — Powder Valley's girls and boys basketball teams easily handled Pine Eagle on Tuesday on the Badgers' home court.

GIRLS: Powder Valley 61, Pine Eagle 37

Autumn Davis and McKenzie Leggett each scored 15 points Tuesday as the Badgers pulled away early for a blowout Old Oregon League win.

Powder Valley jumped out to an early 18-3 first-quarter lead and added on the rest of the night.

Davis hit five 3-pointers for her 15 points. Belle Blair added 14 points. Keanna Bingham grabbed a team-best nine rebounds.

Powder Valley (12-9 overall, 8-2 OOL) wraps up the regular season Saturday when it hosts Elgin.

BOYS: Powder Valley 75, Pine Eagle 50

The Badgers got back on track Tuesday after a two-game losing streak by bashing Pine Eagle in Old Oregon League play.

Clay Martin scored 13 points to lead a balanced attack for Powder Valley, while Roper Bingham, Reece Dixon and Cole Martin each added 10 points. Clay and Cole Martin combined for five of the Badgers' nine 3-pointers.

Powder Valley (17-6 overall, 9-1 OOL) hosts Elgin Saturday to finish the regular season.

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