# Sports

DISTRICT 7-1A BASKETBALL TOURNAMENTS AT BAKER HIGH SCHOOL

## Powder girls clinch playoff berth

By Jayson Jacoby
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The ball left Belle Blair's right hand, poised on the rim for an agonizing second, then fell through the net.

And just like that the Powder Valley girls basketball team had beaten Elgin and clinched the Badgers' 10th straight state playoff berth.

Well, not quite.

Blair's inside basket with 1 minute left broke a 39-39 tie with the Huskies Friday afternoon in a District 7-1A semifinal game in the Baker High School gym.

But the Badgers hadn't quite finished off the Huskies.

After Elgin's Tymra Anderson missed the front end of a 1-and-1 with 53 seconds left, Powder's Autumn Davis made 1 of 2 free throws to give the Badgers a 42-39 lead with 29.4 seconds left.

Elgin worked the ball around the perimeter, and sophomore Gracie Evans' game-tying three-point attempt rattled in and out with 2 seconds left.

"Scary" was Blair's one-word description of the final minute of a game that was close throughout, with neither team leading by more than 4 points.

As for that game-winning shot, Blair, a junior who led the Badgers with 14 points, said the ball seemed to linger on the rim much longer than it should have.

"I was just saying, 'you better go in,' " she said.

Blair's basket capped a tense fourth quarter in which the teams traded the lead three times.

Powder opened the final period leading 29-28, and Keanna Bingham made two free throws to start the scoring.

But Elgin reeled off 6 straight points, the last on an inside basket by Anderson, who led all scorers with 17 points, and Elgin had a 34-31 lead with 6 minutes left.

Powder rallied with a basket by McKenzie Leggett followed by Blair's steal and layin that regained the lead for the Badgers at 35-34 with 4:40 left.

Anderson answered inside to give the Huskies a 36-35 lead with 3:14 left. Powder's Josie Krieger made 1 of 2 free throws to knot the score at 36 with 2:55 left.

Senior guard Jayden Palmer then electrified the Huskies fans with a 3-pointer with 2:40 left to give Elgin its final lead — and final points.

Leggett made 3 of 4 free throws in an 8-second span, the last with 1:35 left to even the score again, at 39, and set up Blair's game-winner.

Powder coach Allen Bingham said he was impressed with his team's resilience — and with Elgin's.

"Neither team gave up," Bingham said.

The Badgers' advantage at the free throw line was key, as Powder was 12 for 18 compared with Elgin's 6 for 15.

"We always believe that in a close game the team that shoots better from the line is going to win," Bingham said. "We just wanted to hang in there and keep our heads and we're going to have a chance to win the game."

The Badgers played much of the final quarter without point guard Keanna Bingham, who fouled out.

"Any time your point guard gets in foul trouble the team has to rally around that," Allen Bingham said. "We've just come so far this year. I'm pretty excited."

Powder (15-9) played this afternoon for the district title.

Kathy Orr/Baker City Herald

Powder Valley's McKenzie Leggett looks to make a pass against the defense of Elgin's Kaelin Evans Friday.

**ELGIN (39)**
Jayden Palmer 2 0-1 6, Jocelyn Palmer 1 3-6 5, K. Evans 2 2-2 7, Wilhelm 0 0-0 0, Anderson 8 1-5 17, G. Evans 0 0-0 0, Burton 1 0-1 3, Adams 1 0-0 2. Totals 15 6-15 39.

**POWDER VALLEY (42)**
Elms 1 0-0 2, Hellberg 1 0-0 2, Flanagan 0 0-3 0, Keller 3 1-2 7, Younger 3 4-4 10, Zikmund 1 2-2 4, Carter 1 0-0 2, Mackenzie 0 0-0 0, Nemec 1 0-0 3, Ramos 7 1-2 15, Benson 3 1-2 7, Moore 0 4-7 4. Totals 21 13-22 56.

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Elgin** | 9 | 11 | 8 | 11 — | 39 |
| **Powder Valley** | 8 | 10 | 11 | 13 — | 42 |

**Three-point baskets** — Jayden Palmer 2, K. Evans. **Total fouls** — Elgin 20, Powder Valley 16

## Day 1 at district tourney

### BOYS

• Joseph 58, Pine Eagle 39: Chase Murray scored 22 points Thursday, Mason Ferre added 16, and the Eagles tripped up the Spartans in the Old Oregon League district tournament quarterfinals.

Curtis Elguezabal led Pine Eagle with 17 points, and Caleb Brown added 10.

• Elgin 57, Imbler 33: Kaden McClure scored 15 points Thursday as the Huskies routed Imbler to reach Friday's semifinals.

### GIRLS

• Wallowa 55, Cove 30: Jamie Johnston had 27 points and 18 rebounds Thursday as the Cougars advanced to the semifinals and ended Cove's season.

Wallowa led throughout, going ahead by seven early before taking a 29-16 lead at the half, then scoring 16 more points in the third to extend the lead to 23 and put the game out of reach.

• Elgin 46, Pine Eagle 38: The Huskies won for the 19th time this season as they took down Pine Eagle.

Kaelin Evans led the Huskies with 13 points, and Tymra Anderson added 10.

Sammy Pollock had 14 points for the Spartans and Maddie Morgan added 13.

Kathy Orr/Baker City Herald

Powder Valley's Ethans Stephens goes to the basket.

## Joseph rallies past Badgers

By Jayson Jacoby
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The Joseph boys rallied from an 8-point deficit late in the third quarter to nip Powder Valley 51-48 Friday afternoon and clinch a berth in the Class 1A state playoffs.

When Powder's Clay Martin hit a three-pointer the Badglers led 39-31 with less than 2 minutes left in the third quarter.

But the Eagles responded with a 12-3 run to take a 43-42 lead on Chase Murray's 10-foot jumper with 5:25 left in the game.

Murray led all scorers with 20 points.

After Joseph took a 47-44 lead with 3:57 left, Powder made 3 straight free throws, the last by Roper Bingham to tie the score at 47 with 1:48 left.

But the Badgers didn't score another field goal.

Joseph's Mason Feer made a free throw and then drove the baseline for a layin with 45 seconds left

Powder's Ethan Stephens was fouled on a three-point attempt with 2.9 seconds left. He made the first free throw, missed the second and then intentionally missed the third, but the Badgers couldn't corral the rebound.

## BOARD

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The main objective, the third-graders assured the crowd, was having fun.

As usual, after the recognition portion of the meeting, which brings families out to join the board in honoring their children, and to listen to staff and student presentations, the large crowd thinned out to just a few staff and community members staying behind for the remainder of the session.

Gonzales spoke to the Board about plans to start a clay target shooting club through the State High School Clay Target League. Gonzales said the program has been met with enthusiasm by members of the Baker Trap Club and other gun enthusiasts in the community.

Zach Kimball, a fifth-grade teacher at South Baker Intermediate School, has volunteered to serve as coach for the program as it gets underway this year, Gonzales said. The program has 11 students signed up at this point with another 50 to 55 expressing interest.

Students must sign up by mid-March to participate in this year's program. The program will run through the end of May or longer, depending on the students.

The cost per student is estimated at $60 for practice and competition. Sponsors are standing by to help provide equipment for those who do not own a gun or who need help paying the expense, Gonzales said.

"There are specifics of what can by done," he said. "I haven't heard 'no' yet from people who want this to happen.

As the program progresses money could be added to the budget to fund the coach's position through an extra-duty contract, Witty said.

The final presentation of the night was made by members of the BHS science department: teachers Tim Smith, Robbie Langrell, Nicole Sullivan and Robert Barrington.

They pointed out a deficiency in the science curriculum that sends advanced freshman students on a course that does not expose them to earth science classes.

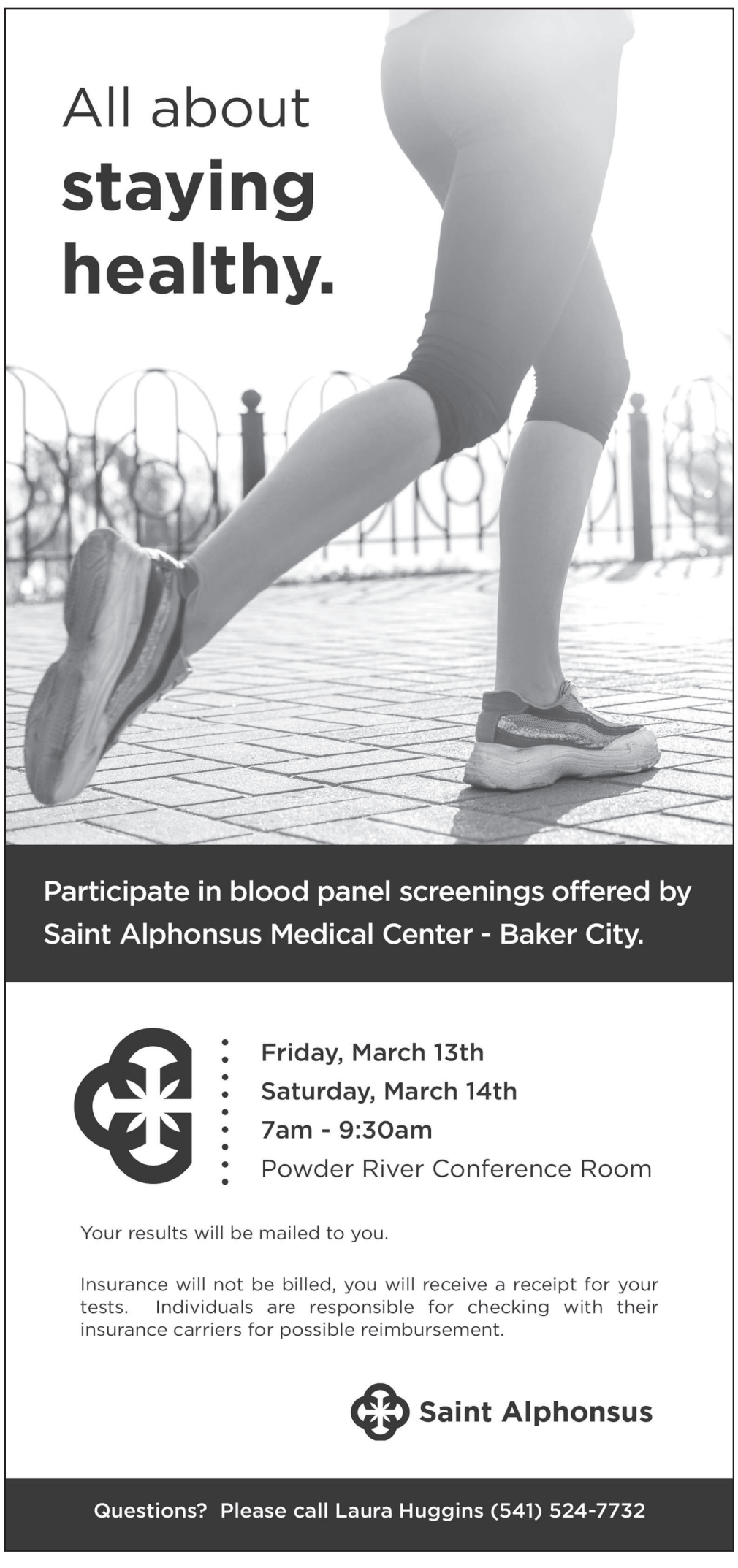
Sullivan told the board that the science department has recognized that about one-fourth of BHS students have been missing one-quarter or more of the Next Generation Science Standards under the current model.

To remedy that situation, the teachers took the Board through a PowerPoint presentation that would ensure that most students coming in would take a general science class, thus closing off the loopholes that exist under the current program.

By juggling classes taught by each teacher and rearranging prep periods, the goals could be accomplished with no additional staff needed.

The board will act on the proposal at its March meeting, which has been set for March 12.

The board also will meet for a work session from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Monday, March 16, at South Baker Intermediate School, 1285 Third St.

In other business, Witty reported on his participation as president-elect of the Oregon Association of School Executives at the national conference of the School Superintendents Association in San Diego Feb. 12-15. Witty said he was honored to present the award for the national Superintendent of the Year to Gustavo "Gus" Balderas, the Oregon Superintendent of the Year. Balderas, a graduate of Nyssa High School, is superintendent of the Eugene School District.

Witty also announced that the Oregon Community Foundation has awarded a $100,000 grant to the Baker Early Learning Collaborative. The District has applied for two other $100,000 grants through the Collins Foundation and the Ford Family Foundation, Witty said.