

STATE SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS



Ronald Bond/The (La Grande) Observer

Baker sophomore Brianna Stadler won the 100-meter butterfly event at the state swim meet Saturday in Tualatin.

Stadler wins state title

By Jayson Jacoby
jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

Baker sophomore Brianna Stadler claimed her second career state swimming title Saturday, winning the 100-meter butterfly race in a time of 58.99 seconds, more than a second ahead of runner up Kristal Jensen of La Grande.

Jensen's time was 1:00.37. Stadler won the 100-meter backstroke at last year's meet, setting a state record in the process.

She competed in the 100-meter backstroke again this year, finishing second to Sweet Home's Chloe Tyler. Stadler was less than half a second behind, finishing the race in 58.97 seconds to Tyler's 58.63.

Stadler's state record time is 56.54 seconds.

"I was happy with the (butter)fly, but the backstroke could have been a little better," Stadler said.

Stadler said she was optimistic about her chances to win the butterfly, in part because she was well-acquainted with the swimmer who finished second, La Grande's Jensen.

Jensen and Stadler compete together for the La Grande Swim Club, and Jensen formerly lived in Baker City.

Stadler said she was pleased that in addition to winning the butterfly, she set a personal record time in the event. Her

previous best was 59.7 seconds.

As for the 100 backstroke, the event for which she holds the state record, Stadler said she was "a little nervous" in part because she wasn't able to spend as much time in the water as she hoped this winter after the heater broke at Sam-O Swim Center, closing the Baker City pool.

Stadler said her plan was to get in eight practices a week. Forced to travel to La Grande to swim, she said she averaged only about five practices per week.

"That's a lot less in-the-water training than I was hoping for," she said.

Stadler said one of her goals for next year is to win state titles in two events, including the 100 backstroke again. She'd also like to beat her own record.

"I'd like to keep that record for a long time," she said.

Baker's other individual state qualifier, junior Hollie Mays, placed 11th in the 100-meter freestyle in a time of 58.79, and 12th in the 50-meter freestyle in 26.62 seconds.

Stadler and Mays were two of the four members of Baker's two relay teams that also competed at state, joining with sophomore Caitlin Lien and junior Salena Bott.

The Baker relay team placed seventh in the 200-meter medley, and 10th in the 200-yard freestyle.

DISTRICT 7-1A GIRLS DISTRICT BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT



Kathy Orr/Baker City Herald

Powder Valley's Keanna Bingham scrambles for a loose ball during the District 7-1A championship game Saturday at Baker High School.

Badgers settle for 2nd, host playoff game today

Powder Valley rallied in the fourth quarter but the Badgers couldn't quite overcome an early deficit to Joseph in the girls championship game at the District 7-1A basketball tournament Saturday at Baker High School.

The Eagles won 31-26 to claim the district title.

The Badgers, by virtue of their 42-39 win over Elgin on Friday, had already qualified for the Class 1A state playoffs.

Powder Valley will play host to Jordan Valley tonight at

6 p.m. in a first-round game. The teams played earlier this season, with Jordan Valley winning 60-20 on Dec. 21 at the Union Bobcat Classic.

Joseph earned a first-round bye.

In Saturday's district title game, both teams struggled on offense.

Powder made just 4 of 24 shots in the first half, including 1 of 10 on three-point attempts.

Joseph fared no better from the field, making 3 of 17 shots,

but the Eagles were 11 for 12 from the free throw line and led 17-12 at halftime.

Joseph extended its lead to 27-18 after three quarters.

Powder improved its shooting slightly in the second half, at 5 for 22, but the Badgers were again able to make only 1 of 10 three-point shots.

Joseph finished 15 for 16 from the free throw line.

Josi Krieger led Powder with 7 points. McKenzie Leggett added 5 points and Belle Blair 4.

8 Bulldogs qualify for state wrestling tourney

By Jayson Jacoby
jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

The Baker boys wrestling team finished second in the team standings at the district tournament Friday and Saturday at Ontario, and eight Bulldogs qualified to compete in the state tournament this weekend at Portland.

"That's right about where we thought we'd be," Baker coach Brandon Young said.

Young said the Bulldogs have a good chance of duplicating their fourth-place finish in the 2019 state tournament — Baker's first state team trophy.

"We've wrestled in some big tournaments, and I don't think there's going to be a lot of stage fright with our guys," Young said.

He said La Grande, which won the district team title with 503.5 points to Baker's 218, will vie with Sweet Home for the team title at state, and Tillamook is in a solid position to take third.

"The race is for fourth place," Young said. "We're there, along with Cascade and Woodburn. It's going to go right down to the wire. That'll help to push our kids just a little harder."

Ian Feldmeier was Baker's lone district champion, defeating Gladstone's Hunter Lehman 3-1 in the final match Saturday at 160 pounds.

Young said he moved Feldmeier from 152 pounds to 160 because he believes the senior has a better chance of winning a state title at 160.

Feldmeier placed fourth at state at 145 pounds last year.

Baker had five wrestlers place second at the district tournament:

- Caleb Shaw, 113 pounds
- Gavin Stone, 120 pounds
- Johnny Niehaus, 126 pounds (fourth at state last year)
- Jake Eskew, 145 pounds
- Hon Rushton, 182 pounds (third at state last year)

The other Bulldogs who qualified for state are River Clark, fourth at 113 pounds, and Gauge Bloomer, fourth at 160 pounds.

Young said Jaden Martin, who finished fifth in the heavyweight division, might also compete at state because the fourth-place wrestler, Damien King of Sisters, was injured and might not be able to wrestle at

state.

"Jaden wrestled really well," Young said.

Rushton, who lost to La Grande's Nathan Reed by a 4-3 decision in the district championship match, could get a rematch with his Tiger rival in the state championship match, Young said.

The duo has wrestled three times this year, with Reed winning two.

"Hon's just got to stay focused and not overlook anybody," Young said.

Shaw, a sophomore, has improved tremendously since his freshman year, Young said, winning 18 matches this season, culminating with his runner-up performance in the district tournament.

"We were pretty proud of him,"

Young said.

Other Baker wrestlers who competed at district:

- Ryan Hansen, 0-2 at 120 pounds
- Jordan Cooper, sixth at 126 pounds
- Cody Eskew, eighth at 132 pounds
- Cade Lind, 1-2 at 138 pounds
- Casey Vaughan, sixth at 145 pounds
- Jacob Mills, eighth at 152 pounds
- Hunter Lind, eighth at 170 pounds
- Alex Ritter, sixth at 182 pounds
- Colt Cobb, fifth at 195 pounds
- Adrian Allen, 0-2 at 170 pounds
- Eric Newman, eighth at 220 pounds

ROBBINS

Continued from Page 1A

And the advent of GPS devices, which help farmers plant, irrigate and harvest more efficiently, has revolutionized farming, Robbins said.

"The technology is moving so fast," he said. "I don't move quite as fast. I'm old school."

When Robbins started his business in 1983 he initially did repairs and servicing. In the fall of 1985 he decided to take a risk and become a full-line equipment dealer. That became official in January 1986.

"It was tough times, with high interest rates," he said.

Robbins said that from the start he recognized that to succeed he needed to do more than just sell and repair equipment.

"You need to help producers do what they want to do,"

he said. "These people work hard to make a living, and they're frugal. They expect us to perform. Our customers take care of us and we take care of them."

Robbins said he believed he had an advantage because he was himself a farmer, using the same equipment he sold. He raises horse-quality hay, something he plans to continue in retirement.

"It gives me firsthand knowledge on the equipment," he said. "I try it, and it helps us be a better sales operation. People drive by my place and they look to see if I know what I'm doing. If I can go out there and do it, prove myself, I can show this is how the equipment works for me."

But Robbins said farming his own ground is far more than a business tool.

"I just like to farm — it's my therapy for the stress of everyday," he said. "I turn off

my phone, crawl in the tractor and put in some hours."

Robbins said he's so accustomed to rising with the sun — "farmers and ranchers work from 5 to 8, not 8 to 5," he said — that he can't imagine altering his schedule despite retirement.

He jokes that his wife

wants to put blinds on their bedroom windows, but he can't abide being awakened by anything except the light of a new day.

Robbins said he considered retiring five years ago but that plan didn't work out.

About two years ago, he said, he started making defi-

nite plans with his sons and the rest of his family.

Then, when his wife retired last June, Robbins said he figured he would stay on until 2020 — to "shoot for 50" years.

And since Feb. 29 is Leap Day, that seemed a fortuitous pick for his final day.

His surprise honor as Legacy Man of the Year made the decision to retire seem all the more appropriate, Robbins said.

"That was quite an honor, to be recognized like that," he said with a smile. "I figured I'd like to go out on a high note."

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