

Sports

BAKER VOLLEYBALL PLAYS HOST TO POWDER VALLEY

Badgers sweep Baker to remain unbeaten

■ Powder Valley improves to 8-0 with win in the Baker gym

By **Corey Kirk**
ckirk@bakercityherald.com

Less than 24 hours removed from taking the La Grande Tigers to five sets, the Baker volleyball team fell to Class 1A powerhouse Powder Valley in three sets on Wednesday, March 31, at the Baker gym.

The undefeated Badgers (8-0) also swept Baker (3-7) in a season-opening match March 4 at North Powder.

"Tonight our performance was much better than it was at Powder," Baker coach Ali Abrego said. "I definitely think the La Grande game tired us out a little bit. I'm definitely proud of them pushing through being tired."

Powder Valley finished second at the Class 1A state tournament in 2018 and 2019, losing both championship matches to St. Paul. The Badgers avenged that loss by beating the Buckaroos in three sets on March 12 at St. Paul.



Corey Kirk/Baker City Herald

Baker senior Hailey Zikmund, right, tries to get a spike past the block of Powder Valley senior Belle Blair during a nonleague match Wednesday, March 31, at Baker High.

Powder Valley has lost just three sets since, and the Badgers took a commanding lead early in the first set Wednesday against Baker.

The Bulldogs rallied, though, forging a 19-19 tie.

But Baker couldn't maintain the momentum, and the

Badgers won the set, 25-21.

Powder Valley won the second set in more dominant fashion, 25-14.

Abrego said the Bulldogs struggled with mistakes in the second set.

"Communication errors, transition errors, serving



Corey Kirk/Baker City Herald

Baker's Lacy Churchfield, No. 9, battles above the net with Powder Valley's Brooke Allen while Baker teammates Hailey Zikmund and Jozie Ramos, background, look on.

errors, so I just hounded that at them," she said. "The fact that we beat ourselves with too many errors that's just a tough pill to swallow sometimes."

Baker played better in the final set, but Powder Valley prevailed 25-23.

Abrego was pleased with the Bulldogs' improved play.

"In the first and third sets when things got tough,

if they got a big swing, we were able to adjust quicker than we did the first time around and with a young team what you want to focus on is learning how to play in those situations," Abrego said.

Baker played its final home match Friday, April 2, against Vale, then traveled to Nyssa on Saturday.

Baker concludes its season

on Monday, April 5, at Burns.

Abrego said she will emphasize the positive parts of the loss to Powder Valley in preparing for the season's final stretch.

"It's hard to lose but we can't have peaks or valleys, we have to have hills," Abrego said on Wednesday.

"Really focusing on the good things we did tonight, and carrying those over."

BAKER BOYS SOCCER

La Grande Tigers blank Bulldogs

By **Corey Kirk**
ckirk@bakercityherald.com

The Baker boys soccer team, missing four starters and playing for the second day in a row, lost 8-0 to La Grande on Wednesday, March 31, at the Baker Sports Complex.

With the Bulldogs coming off a 3-0 home loss to Riverside on Tuesday, Baker coach Victor Benites had to shuffle his lineup to account for the missing starters.

"Just kept putting in players that I thought would be good," Benites said.

Junior Dysan Robb suffered a concussion, freshman Giacomo Rigueiro is out with an ankle injury, junior Wyatt Hawkins has been battling an ankle injury all season, and senior Clayton Dennis was dealing with a nagging hip injury.

On Wednesday, La Grande scored in the 14th, 25th and 26th minutes to lead 3-0 at halftime.

Benites said the Bulldogs struggled to communicate with each other, and to control the ball.

"I just told them to work together, they can do it, you just had to keep communicating," Benites said.

La Grande kept up the



Corey Kirk/Baker City Herald

Baker's Diego Quintela, center, in black, competes for control of the ball against La Grande's John Remily during a Wednesday, March 31, match at the Sports Complex.

"I think we did really well having all of those young players."

— **Victor Benites, Baker boys soccer coach, whose team has just two seniors**

offensive pressure in the second half, scoring four more goals in the first 15 minutes.

After the Tigers scored again at the 28th minute, the match was halted due to the mercy rule.

Baker (2-6), concluded its

pandemic-shortened season Friday, April 2, by playing host to Four Rivers, Idaho. Baker beat Four Rivers 6-1 on March 16.

Benites said he was proud of his relatively inexperienced team, with only two seniors.

"I think we did really well having all of those young players," Benites said.

See the Tuesday, April 6, issue of the Baker City Herald for a recap of the Bulldogs' final match against Four Rivers.

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL OPENING DAY

Mariners rally to nip Giants in 10

By **Tim Booth**
AP Sports Writer

SEATTLE — After 550 days without fans in attendance, the Seattle Mariners treated those who stuck around late into the night to one of the more unlikely comebacks seen on opening day.

Jake Fraley walked with the bases loaded in the 10th inning to score Evan White with the winning run, and Seattle rallied from a five-run deficit to beat the San Francisco Giants 8-7 on Thursday, April 1.

A wild opening night concluded with a massive comeback by the Mariners, who scored six runs in the eighth to take a 7-6 lead, only to lose it on pinch-hitter Alex Dickerson's solo homer in the ninth.

According to Sportradar, the Mariners were the 16th team to rally from a deficit of five or more runs on opening day and win, dating to 1906. The Royals became the 15th earlier in the day when they came back against Texas.

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