

Sports

BAKER BASEBALL OPENS GREATER OREGON LEAGUE PLAY AT HOME

Bulldog pitchers stifle Ontario

■ Baker hurlers Andrew Zellars, Cody Skidgel and Zander Arriaga combine to allow just 2 runs

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

Baker opened its Greater Oregon League baseball schedule with a 12-0, 9-2 doubleheader sweep of Ontario Saturday, April 17 at the Sports Complex.

A trio of Baker pitchers — starters Andrew Zellars and Cody Skidgel, and reliever Zander Arriaga — combined to limit the Tigers during the twinbill as Baker improved its overall record to 3-0.

Zellars allowed only one hit and no runs in the opener.

Skidgel scattered seven hits in the second game.

First game

The Bulldogs took a 3-0 lead after one inning and never looked back.

Baker took advantage of multiple Ontario walks, something coach Tim Smith emphasizes.

“We want to be disciplined when we get free bases, we want to run, execute hit and runs and do that kind of stuff,” Smith said. “It allowed us to do that a little more frequently in that first game. Their starter had some trouble and I thought we took advantage of that.”

Zellars, who tossed three innings in Baker’s 14-10 season-opening win at Grant Union on April 14, had no such problems in his 4.1 innings of work against Ontario.

Zellars, a senior, struck out eight.

“I’m very fastball dominant,” Zellars said. “I know that if I start off with my fastball, and be able to locate it well and be able to keep people off balance with that, and come in and bring in the off-speed, being really good changing up speeds, that’s really all I focused on.”

Smith was impressed with Zellars.

“You can see it as the game went on, he had a lot of confidence,” Smith said. “He’s a solid pitcher when he’s on his game.”

After a scoreless second inning, Baker exploded for seven runs in the bottom of the third to boost its lead to 10-0.

Again the Bulldogs benefited from multiple walks — Ontario pitchers had 13 in the game.

Zellars said the big lead gave him confidence on the mound.

“In terms of getting me some insurance runs it was awesome, big pressure comes off your shoulders when you see the numbers start to rise and trying to keep a level



Corey Kirk/Baker City Herald

Andrew Zellars allowed only one hit in 4.1 innings against Ontario on Saturday, April 17.

head and don’t do too much,” Zellars said.

Baker plated two more runs in the fourth.

Arriaga replaced Zellars in the fifth inning and shut out the Tigers, and the game ended by 10-run mercy rule after five innings.

Although Ontario pitchers gave Baker all those walks, the Bulldogs took advantage at the plate.

Arriaga went 2-for-3 with two RBIs, and leadoff hitter Hayden Younger also drove in two runs on a double.

Mason Van Arsdall, Jake Wright, Hudson Spike and Silas Carter each had a hit.

Second game

Skidgel was dominant through three innings, but unlike in the opener, Ontario’s starter, Nick Esplin, was also solid, keeping Baker off the scoreboard.

“I knew that he (Esplin) was their ace, I was kind of surprised he didn’t throw game one,” Smith said.

The Tigers took a 2-0 lead with a pair of runs in the top of the fourth — their only runs of the day.

Esplin did the damage, taking a Skidgel pitch over the wall in right-center.

“We missed a spot, and he (Esplin) turned on it and drove it well,” Smith said.

But Baker responded immediately with three runs in the bottom of the fourth.

Skidgel then settled in, shutting out the Tigers in the fifth and continuing into the

sixth, when Arriaga relieved him with one out.

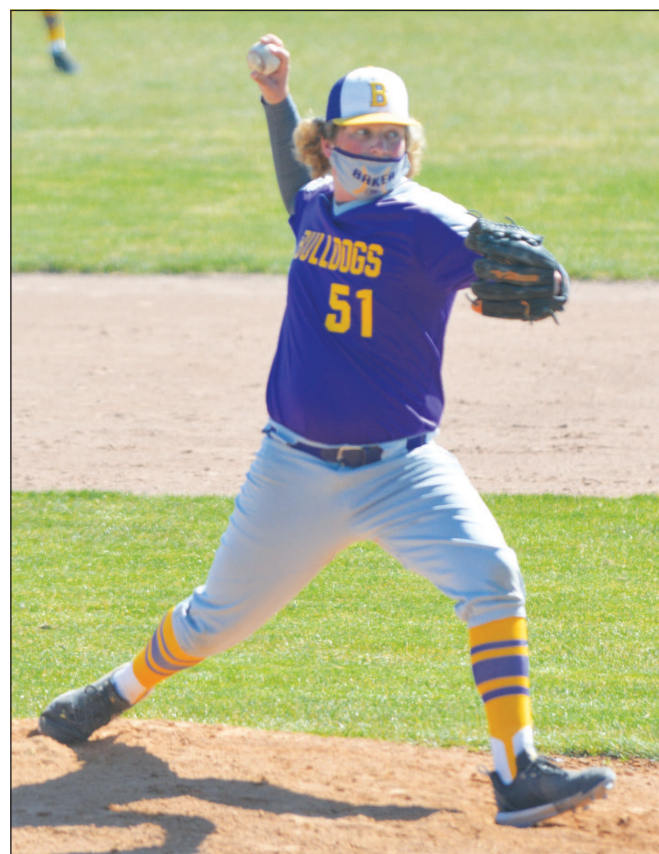
“He (Skidgel) has really come around with his mechanics so he can rely on that, knowing he can just throw the baseball,” Smith said.

“I was kind of relaxed, don’t want to get too wild and stuff and keep my head clear,” Skidgel said.

Zellars said he was impressed with Skidgel’s ability to shrug off the home run, saying his teammate took to heart what assistant coach Al McCauley preaches in practice: that home runs are just accidents.

“It’s very big for him to keep a level head,” Zellars said of Skidgel. “It’s really about wiping it off, having a short-term memory and then just going back to war.”

Baker extended its lead with a run in the fifth and



Corey Kirk/Baker City Herald

Cody Skidgel scattered seven hits over 5.1 innings and earned the win against Ontario in the second half of a doubleheader on Saturday, April 17 at the Baker Sports Complex. Skidgel also drove in a run.

five more in the sixth.

Connor Chastain went 2-for-3 with two RBIs, and Van Arsdall, Zellars, Wright and Skidgel each drove in a run.

Skidgel said the extra runs were welcome.

“It helps a lot, makes you feel good about yourself, and keeps your head up,” Skidgel said.

Arriaga struck out three in his 1.2 innings. In his two relief stints he struck out five in two innings.

Smith said he was pleased with Baker’s performance during its first games at the Sports Complex in almost two years.

“This is a great start for us, I’m happy for them, they played great,” Smith said.

Playing host to La Grande

Baker’s homestand contin-

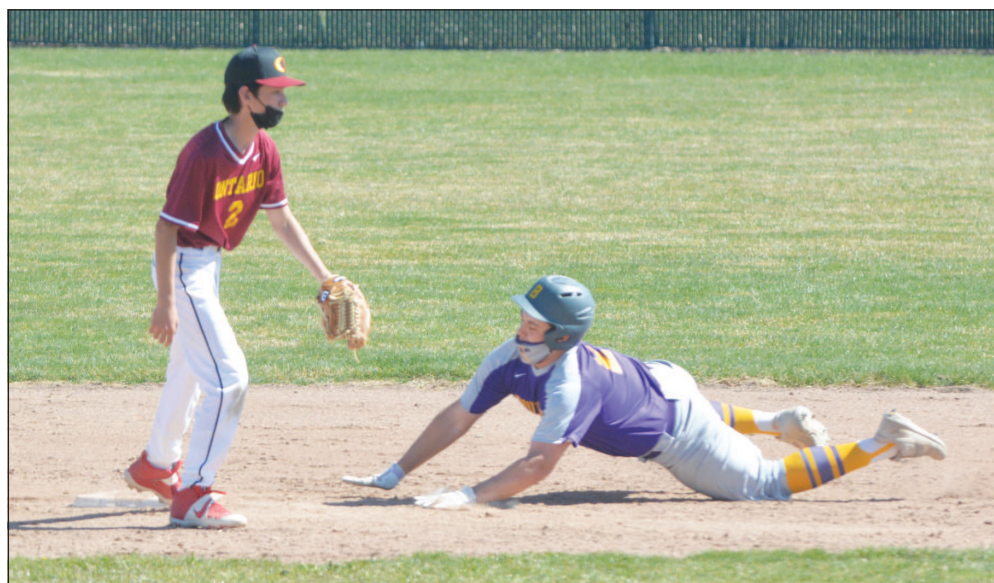
ues this afternoon when the Bulldogs play host rival La Grande for a doubleheader, with the first pitch set for 3 o’clock.

Today’s games are the first of the season for La Grande.

“It’s always the World Series when you play La Grande,” Smith said. “This momentum will carry us in, we will have confidence going into La Grande.”

Zellars is excited about the hot start the team has had on the diamond, but he wants to remain grounded with tougher opponents, including La Grande, slated in the coming weeks.

“It’s really important for us to think we are going in 0-0, it’s a brand new ball game, and just go out there and hit the ball well, do well on defense and have a good time,” Zellars said.



Corey Kirk/Baker City Herald

Cody Skidgel slides safely during Baker’s sweep of Ontario on Saturday, April 17.

Blazers, without Lillard, lose to Charlotte Hornets

By **Steve Reed**
AP Sports Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Terry Rozier told coach James Borrego before Sunday night’s game that the Charlotte Hornets needed a win over Portland, and that he was available to play extra minutes, if needed.

Rozier broke loose with 34 points, 10 assists and eight rebounds in 39 minutes, and the Hornets rode a strong first quarter to a 109-101 win over the Trail Blazers, snapping a four-game losing streak and moving to .500.

“He was great tonight,” Borrego said. “He came out and set the tone and was making shots. It has to be one of his finest performances as a Hornet.”

P.J. Washington had 23

points and eight rebounds after missing three games with an ankle injury, and Miles Bridges added 19 points, including two highlight-reel dunks, for the Hornets (28-28).

Rozier knew the Hornets needed a win as they fight to earn a top-six seed in the playoffs and avoid a play-in game situation.

“This was huge after losing the last four,” Rozier said.

Rozier, Washington and Bridges were a combined 15 of 31 from 3-point range as Charlotte snapped a seven-game losing streak against Portland.

Carmelo Anthony had six 3-pointers and 24 points for the Trail Blazers (32-24), who played without star Damian Lillard for the second straight

game due to a hamstring injury. CJ McCollum scored 22 points.

The Hornets charged to an early lead, building a 43-18 lead in the first quarter behind 17 points on 7-of-8 shooting from Rozier. Rozier, despite the focus of the Blazers defense, also had six assists in the quarter, meaning he either scored or assisted on 31 of Charlotte’s 44 first quarter points.

As a team, Charlotte shot 77.3% in the opening quarter with Rozier and Bridges combining to go 6 of 6 from 3-point range.

“Those guys came out firing,” Anthony said of the Hornets. “They were locked in. They are a scary team. They played freely and play spaced out. They play with a

lot of confidence. They play fast paced and you have to match that pace or contain that pace.”

“Their transitions kind of really set the tone for the quarter and their 3-point shooting set the tone the rest of the way,” Trail Blazers coach Terry Stotts said.

Rozier is having to play more point guard with LaMelo Ball and Devonte Graham out with injuries — and he likes it.

“It’s unpredictable when I’m on the ball as opposed to when I’m off the ball and teams can focus on me more,” Rozier said.

BAKER TENNIS

Bulldogs fall at Ontario

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

The Baker girls tennis doubles team of junior Phoebe Wise and sophomore Riley Shaw had the Bulldogs’ lone girls win in a match at Ontario on Friday, April 16.

Wise and Shaw, who played two matches, defeated one of their opponents in straight sets, 6-3, 7-5.

On the boys side of the match, Baker sophomore Anthony Christopher won one of his two matches, 6-0, 6-3.

Two Baker boys doubles teams also won.

Freshmen Noah Lien and Weston Downing won their pro set, 8-2, and sophomore Davis Macias and freshman Karsten Cikanek prevailed in straight sets, 6-0, 6-2.

“As a whole the kids have improved since day one, they’re really receptive and they are really a respectful group of kids,” Baker coach Amy Younger said.

Baker played host to La Grande on Monday, April 19, and the Bulldogs travel to Vale on Wednesday.

Other results from Friday’s match at Ontario.

GIRLS SINGLES

• Sarah Plummer lost, 6-0, 6-1

GIRLS DOUBLES

• Phoebe Wise/Riley Shaw lost, 6-3, 7-5

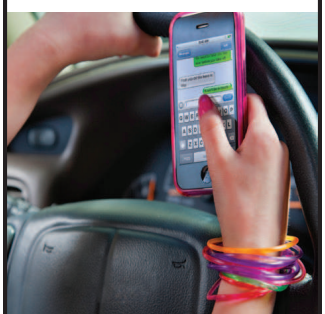
BOYS SINGLES

• Noah Lien lost, 6-0, 6-0
• Anthony Christopher lost, 6-2, 6-2
• Karsten Cikanek lost, 6-1, 6-2
• Austin Hays lost, 6-4, 3-6, 7-5 (7-3)

BOYS DOUBLES

• Davis Macias/Austin Hays lost, 6-0, 6-0
• Weston Downing/Noah Lien lost, 8-2
• Anthony Christopher/Karsten Cikanek lost, 8-2

Don’t text and drive... you won’t have to come see us!



Joe Scott's Premier Auto Body, Inc.

2390 Broadway, Baker City
541-523-5223

We’re now offering home remodels through the winter months as we’re fully licensed and bonded.

541-519-5268

STONE ELITE
LANDSCAPING & IRRIGATION

stone.elitesprinklerland@gmail.com CCB#231936 LCB# 9809