

Sports

BAKER BASEBALL



Corey Kirk/Baker City Herald

Baker's Cody Skidgel fouls off a pitch against Nyssa on Tuesday, April 27.

Bulldogs blast Nyssa, 11-1

By Corey Kirk
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After almost a week since their last contest, the Baker baseball team didn't show any signs of rust in routing Nyssa 11-1 on Tuesday, April 27 at the Baker Sports Complex.

Baker improved its season record to 4-2. Nyssa dropped to 0-6.

Moving from his usual position behind home plate to the pitcher's mound, senior Mason Van Arsdall breezed through the first three innings, holding Nyssa scoreless.

"It's kind of weird. I haven't pitched in a really long time. Being on the mound is weird because I'm always behind the plate," Van Arsdall said.

Baker also failed to score in the first two innings. But in bottom of the third, after Andrew Zellars got on base, Jake Wright found a fastball to his liking from Nyssa pitcher Collin Hysell, crushing the ball over the left field wall for a two-run homer.

"That was huge, you can feel it, you can feel it on the Nyssa side, you can feel it on our side," Baker coach Tim Smith said. "We needed a spark, we needed something, and we got it."

Prior to Wright's blast, Smith was disappointed in his team's sluggish start offensively.

"We started out awful slow," Smith said. "That's two dates now that we came out not ready to go."

Nyssa scored its only run in the top of the fourth to briefly cut Baker's lead to 2-1.

But Baker responded immediately with five runs in the bottom of the inning.

With the insurance runs, Van Arsdall continued to hold Nyssa at bay. He allowed just four hits and struck out nine.

Van Arsdall credited his battery mate in Zellars, who is one of Baker's top pitchers, and Baker's defense.

"Zellars did a really good job sticking the ball where it was — he got me a lot



Corey Kirk/Baker City Herald

Baker's Mason Van Arsdall, who usually plays catcher, was the winning pitcher against Nyssa on Tuesday, April 27. He struck out nine in five innings.

"I haven't pitched in a really long time. Being on the mound is weird because I'm always behind the plate."

— Mason Van Arsdall

of strikes I didn't know I would have had with anybody else back there," Van Arsdall said. "I just had a lot of good back up behind me tonight."

Baker continued its offensive momentum with four runs in the bottom of the fifth to end the game by 10-run mercy rule.

Zander Arriaga led the way going 3-for-4 with four RBIs.

Hayden Younger was aggressive on the basepaths with three stolen bases.

"I thought Hayden Younger was a spark on the bases, he's just a go getter," Smith said. "He runs the bases like we want everyone to run the bases."

Smith was also happy with Baker's offensive performance in the final three innings.

"We finally started to put the ball in play and capitalize on their mistakes," Smith said.

He was impressed with the work of sophomores Kai Ogan and Thomas Smithson, who moved up from

junior varsity for Tuesday's game.

"I thought they did a good job for us," Smith said.

Baker now welcomes rival La Grande to the Sports Complex for the teams' second doubleheader, this one set for Saturday, May 1 with a first pitch at noon.

La Grande dominated the first twinbill against Baker on April 20, winning 16-3 and 18-3.

Van Arsdall said Baker's performance against Nyssa, despite the score, won't be good enough against the Tigers.

"We had way too many K's today, backward K's, backward K's are the worst, against a team like La Grande, they will make us pay," Van Arsdall said.

His coach agreed.

"We are going to work on early count hitting, early count pitching, we want to throw strikes, (and) we did not do that against La Grande," Smith said. "We can't put La Grande on the bases, we can't give up any freebies."

Blazers snap 5-game losing streak

By Michael Marot
AP Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS — Anfernee Simons delivered the knockout flurry for Portland on Tuesday.

His teammates and coaches enjoyed watching it.

Simons made his first nine 3-pointers, finished with 27 points and helped the Portland Trail Blazers snap a season-high, five-game losing streak with a 133-112 rout at Indiana.

"After the first 3 I made in the second half, I knew it was going to be a good night for me," Simons said. "After that, I felt like it didn't matter who was contesting or how close they were, I knew it was going to go in."

They did — time after time.

Simons fell two 3s short of Damian Lillard's

franchise record and became the first NBA player to open a game with nine consecutive 3s since Klay Thompson made 10 straight on Jan. 21, 2019. Simons wound up 9 of 10 from beyond the arc and 9 of 13 overall.

How good was he?

"The man of the hour, talk to him," Lillard said when Simons showed up for his postgame Zoom call. "Nine 3s."

Lillard added 23 points and the Blazers shot a season-best 57.1% from beyond the arc.

With the Trail Blazers going 20 of 35 from 3-point range, Indiana never really had a chance. Portland broke open the game in the second quarter by taking advantage of a 13-5 discrepancy in offensive rebounds and, of course, the long-range shooting.

BAKER SOFTBALL

Baker nips Nyssa, 9-8

By Corey Kirk
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Baker's softball team used late-inning heroics to claim its first win of the season with a 9-8 victory over Nyssa on Tuesday afternoon, April 27 at the Baker Sports Complex.

Baker was down to its last three outs trailing 8-5.

The Bulldogs tied the score at 8, but there were two outs when sophomore Skylar Roy stepped to the plate.

After taking a few pitches per her coaches' instructions, Roy rapped a single for the walkoff win for the Bulldogs (1-3).

"I was pretty nervous," Roy said. "I was proud of myself. I was excited to be able to hit that, and to be the one to do it."

Baker coach Sonny Gulick was happy to see Roy shine in such a high-pressure moment.

"She finally put her weight back, and gave us the hit we needed," Gulick said.

With a team made of primarily sophomores, Roy among them, Gulick said he was optimistic going into Tuesday's game against Nyssa (1-5) due largely to the Baker junior varsity's strong performance on April 24 against Vale. The Bulldogs swept the twinbill, 14-4 and 18-7.

"We just had won two games in JV so I was very confident in how we were going to play against them," Roy said.

But Tuesday's varsity game against Nyssa didn't have a promising start, as Nyssa scored three runs in the top of the first.

Baker responded in the bottom of the second, with senior Rebekah Davis and sophomore Taylor Gyllenberg each getting an RBI as Baker tied the score at 3.

Gulick was excited to see his players capitalize on their opponents' mistakes, and heeding his advice to be more patient at the plate.

"We were going to see a pitch, because what we found is that if a pitcher is throwing a little slower, we're not very patient," Gulick said. "Everybody is going to see a pitch, ball or strike, before they were going to swing."



Corey Kirk/Baker City Herald

Taylor Gyllenberg waits for a pitch Tuesday against Nyssa.



Corey Kirk/Baker City Herald

Kaycee Cuzick went the entire way in the circle for Baker in a 9-8 win over Nyssa on Tuesday, April 27.

Nyssa regained the lead but Baker stayed close thanks in part to sophomore pitcher Kaycee Cuzick, who pitched the entire game.

"I really loved how she (Cuzick) battled through some early location issues, and in the last two and a half innings she was right down the zone, really just shut

them down and gave us an opportunity to win," Gulick said.

Baker took advantage of that opportunity with the last-inning rally.

Baker returns to varsity action on Tuesday, May 4 by playing host to Ontario in a doubleheader starting at 3 p.m.

NFL draft heavy on quarterbacks

By Josh Dubow
AP Pro Football Writer

As soon as the San Francisco 49ers traded three first round picks to move up to No. 3 overall, it became clear that quarterbacks would come off the board at a record pace at the NFL draft starting this evening.

While QBs are widely expected to go 1-2-3 for just the third time in the common draft era that started in 1967, there are still questions about how many others will follow in the top 10 and first round.

Trevor Lawrence and Zach Wilson are expected to be the top two picks, to Jacksonville and the New York Jets, with the Niners likely choosing among Mac Jones, Trey Lance and Justin Fields at No. 3.

That would match 1971 (Jim Plunkett, Ar-

chie Manning, Dan Pastorini) and 1999 (Tim Couch, Donovan McNabb, Akili Smith) as the only drafts with quarterbacks taken with the top three picks.

A record could be set with four QBs going in the top four if Atlanta drafts the successor to Matt Ryan or trades down to a quarterback-needy team.

If Fields, Jones and Lance all get taken in the top 10, that would also be a first, beating the four top-10 QBs taken in the 2018 draft when Baker Mayfield, Sam Darnold, Josh Allen and Josh Rosen all went off the board quickly.

All five of those QBs are almost assuredly first-round picks, something that also happened in 1999 when the five came off in the top 12, and in 2018.

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