



Baker's Rylee Elms defends against La Grande's Makenna Shorts Tuesday, June 8.

## Tigers too much for Baker

By Corey Kirk  
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Baker's youthful girls basketball team showed its inexperience against a veteran La Grande squad in a 51-32 loss to the undefeated Tigers on Tuesday, June 8 in the Baker gym.

"We are learning how to grow, we have a great nucleus, they're learning what basketball really means when it comes to the mental game, and you can't coach experience," Baker coach Mat Sand said. "La Grande's got the experience."

Two of La Grande's five seniors — Camryn Collman and Ella Dunlap — accounted for 32 of the Tigers' 51 points.

Baker has only one senior on its roster, Sydney Keller.

In the first half, the Tigers scored consistently and denied Baker second-chance points, taking a 29-14 lead.

Sand said he reminded the Bulldogs that they were playing one of Oregon's top Class 4A teams, and that this is part of the growth process.

"We get to mature as a team, we get to learn what this feels like, we get to learn

how the game flows with this type of competition," Sand said.

Baker bounced back with a strong third quarter, outscoring La Grande 13-11.

Sophomore Macey Moore scored six of her team-high 10 points during the quarter.

"She's got a high basketball IQ," Sand said of Moore. "She's going to be an asset for us as she grows, she's competing and doing well."

Macey and fellow sophomores Jozie Ramos (seven points), Makenzie Flanagan (five points), Sydnee Pierce (four) and Rylee Elms (two) scored 28 of Baker's 32 points.

Keller scored the other four points.

Sand said he was proud of his team's effort, as they played a full court pressing defense most of the game despite having played games the previous two nights.

"That's when you dig deep even though you are exhausted, for them to do that just shows you their passion, their desire, their will to compete and that's all that I could ask for as a coach," Sand said. "I can build something out of that."

## Bulldogs stifle Powder Valley

Jozie Ramos scored a game-high 13 points as Baker beat Powder Valley 36-21 on Monday, June 7 at North Powder.

Baker held the Badgers scoreless in the second quarter, and to just two points in the final period.

Sydney Keller added eight points for Baker, and Macey Moore six.

He was also grateful for Keller, a three-year starter and the lone remaining member of Baker's 2019 Class 4A state championship team.

"Keller shows up every night and plays just like that, she plays at that level of competition and beyond, that's her nature," Sand said. "You can never find a person with a bigger heart."

Sand said he's confident that the Bulldogs will learn from the loss to La Grande.

"They're just going to use this as a stepping stone and a building block," Sand said.

## BAKER BOYS BASKETBALL



Corey Kirk/Baker City Herald

Baker's Grant Gambleton (No. 3) scored a game-high 35 points in a heartbreaking 70-69 loss to La Grande on Tuesday, June 8. Mason Van Arsdall, left, had five points.

## Late 3-pointer lifts La Grande

By Corey Kirk  
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An exciting night in the Baker gym turned dour in the span of a couple seconds.

That's all the time it took for a three-pointer to travel from La Grande sophomore Sam Tsiatsos' fingertips and slip through the net.

The shot, with just six seconds left, gave the Tigers their first lead of the game, at 70-69.

And it was the only lead they needed, as that turned out to be the final score.

"It's a tough loss, it's probably the toughest loss that I've been a part of for my playing or coaching career," said Baker coach Jebron Jones.

Tsiatsos' game-winner erased what had been a strong performance by Baker, which lost 79-69 at La Grande on May 27.

On Tuesday, Baker scored the first 10 points and led 14-3 midway through the first quarter.

"I knew our kids were going to fight hard, I am glad we came out the way that we did. I told the dudes before the game that basketball is a game of runs," Jones said.

La Grande rallied, closing Baker's lead to 39-31 at halftime, and to 49-43 entering the final period.

Starting the second half, Jones encouraged his team to maintain its intensity.

## Baker tops Badgers

Freshmen Paul Hobson and Hudson Spike combined for 33 points, and senior Gabe Gambleton had a team-high 19 as Baker held off Powder Valley 70-66 on Monday, June 7 at North Powder.

Powder's Kaden Krieger led all scorers with 20 points.

"I told the dudes the game was 0-0, we won the first half but obviously there are two halves," Jones said.

The Tigers managed to overcome a career night for Baker senior guard Gabe Gambleton, who scored 35 points.

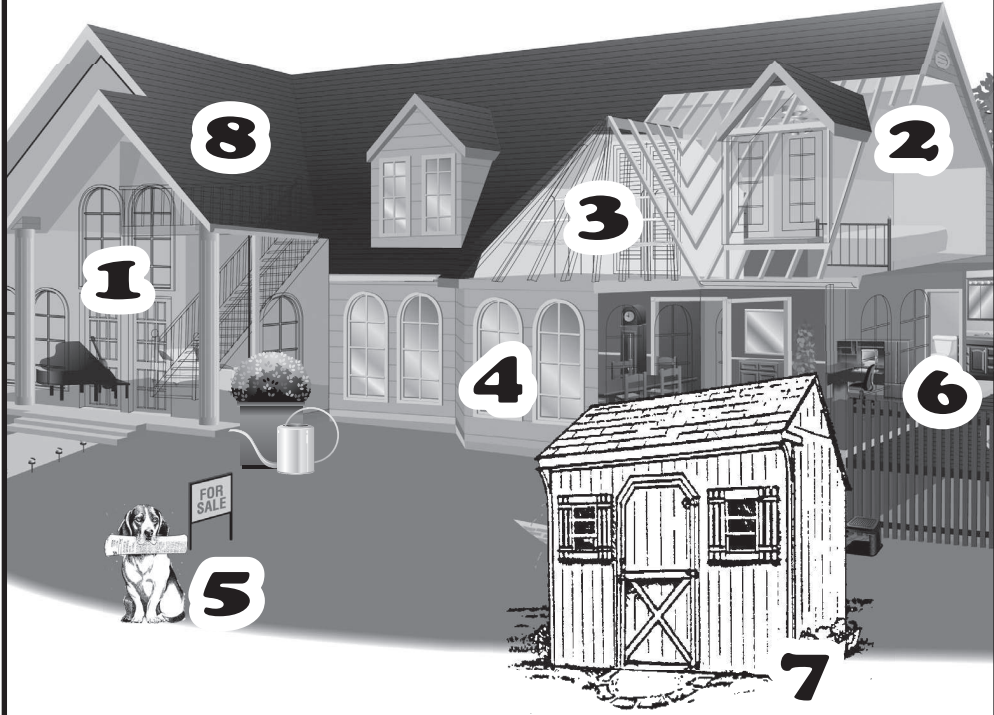
"He played a great game," Jones said of Gambleton. "I think that he realized this was the last time playing at home against La Grande, so he wanted to put his stamp on the game."

Freshman Paul Hobson added 19 points, including five three-pointers.

Though understanding that the team is frustrated in defeat, Jones is hopeful that they can recover.

"The hardest part for these guys to understand is they need to move on, but it's hard because you are so emotionally tied to the game," he said.

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