

CHAMPIONS

Continued from Page A1

The first game in the championship round was supposed to start at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Briels said.

But a lightning storm that pummeled Baker City delayed an earlier game three times, pushing back the first pitch of the Baker-Pilot Rock contest to about 7 p.m.

Baker led 8-3 in that game and seemed poised to win the district title the easy way — and long before day's end.

"But we had a couple of bobbles and things went the other way," Briels said.

Pilot Rock scored nine runs in the sixth inning and won 11-8, forcing a winner-take-all second game.

But with the time nearing 10 p.m., the question was whether that game would take place Wednesday or be moved to Thursday.

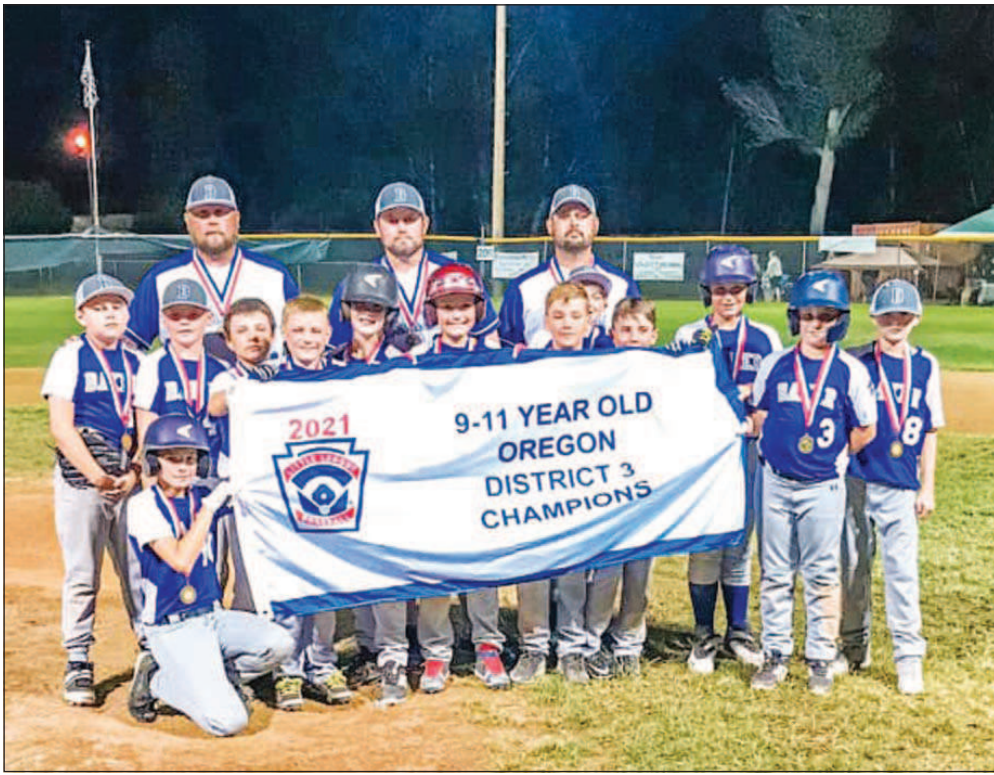
Briels said Baker was eager to play despite the late hour.

Had the game been pushed back to the next day, a couple of Baker players and one coach, who had previous family commitments, would have missed the game, he said.

Pilot Rock was willing, so the final game started around 10:10 p.m.

The next potential time issue was midnight.

Briels said Little League rules don't allow an inning to start after midnight.



Baker Little League/Contributed Photo

Baker's all-star baseball team in the 9-11-year-old division won the District 3 championship late Wednesday, June 23. Baker will compete in the state tournament starting July 17.

Fortunately, Baker took a 14-4 lead after four innings, which ended the game, at about 11:40 p.m., by 10-run mercy rule.

After a scoreless first inning, Baker scored five runs in the second and led 5-3 after two innings. Baker took control with six runs in the third inning.

Antonio Govern earned the complete-game win on the mound for Baker.

Briels said he was glad the final game was played Wednesday night, and for a couple of reasons.

It was much cooler, for one thing, compared with playing Thursday afternoon.

And he said the Baker players also enjoyed claiming their district title banner under the lights at Wade Williams.

"For this age group it's pretty special to win a championship under the lights," Briels said.

Jim Ingram, one of Baker's coaches, said he was impressed that Baker's players — most of whom typically are in bed by the time the first pitch of the championship

game was thrown — maintained their composure and focus.

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— Jim Ingram, assistant coach for Baker's 9-11-year-old baseball team that won the District 3 championship

keep it together physically, emotionally, mentally," said Ingram, whose son and team member, Coleman, is nine.

"It was pretty remarkable. It was a drama-filled evening."

Jim Ingram said Baker players arrived at Wade Williams around 3 p.m. to start warming up.

"It was a long nine hours," he said.

After the disappointing end to the first game, Ingram said the Baker coaching staff, once the decision was made to play the championship game despite the late start, encouraged the players to not worry about what was at stake.

"We said let's just go out there and have fun," Ingram said. "The second game was a far more relaxed atmosphere. And it worked. I think these

kids deserve a lot of credit for their energy and enthusiasm, and that goes for both teams."

Baker's team roster is Beau Briels, Landon Marlia, Tucker Reid, Antonio Govern, Coleman Ingram, Joseph Warbis, Wyatt Carey, Ambrose Rexroad, Liam Jobses, Cooper Bain, Ty Price, Gavin Meyers, Keller Barr.

Manager Brandon Briels is assisted by coaches Ingram and Brandon Reid. Briels said that although the team can only have three coaches in the dugout for games, he also has had invaluable help from two other coaches, Drew Barr and Kelly Jobses.

"We would not be where we are without them," Briels said.



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State COVID mandates to end

EO Media Group

Oregon will lift pandemic limits in place for over a year no later than Wednesday, June 30, Gov. Kate Brown said Friday, June 25.

"When Oregon reaches 70% or by Wednesday, June 30, we will lift the safety programs we have relied on and open our economy," Brown said in a press call on Friday morning.

After the deadline passes, mandates on masks, social distancing and capacity limits of restaurants and venues will be removed.

"Effectively, Oregon is 100% open for business," Brown said.

But Brown and health officials said that the crisis for the state is not over.

"Some 98 percent of people dying from COVID-19 are unvaccinated," Brown said.

Oregon Health Authority Director Pat Allen said the pandemic is not over, but the management of the crisis will shift to local officials.

County commissioners will be responsible for public health decisions and the state will only compile statistics and offer assistance.

"Local officials will be responsible for those decisions and for the consequences," Allen said.



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