

BAKER WRESTLER GAUGE BLOOMER, SWIMMER BRIANNA STADLER WIN STATE TITLES

Capping a strange season with a state championship

By Corey Kirk

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Two Baker High School students wrapped up their junior years in exciting fashion on Saturday, June 26, both winning state championships.

Incoming senior Gauge Bloomer won the 195-pound division at the state wrestling tournament, and classmate Brianna Stadler won two events at the state swim meet.

Both excelled despite a shortened season that took place not during winter, as is typical for wrestling and swimming, but during late spring and summer, due to the pandemic.

Early present for Bloomer

Bloomer capped an unbeaten season with a state title at the Class 4A tournament at Cascade High School in Turner, near Salem.

He won the title just three days before his 18th birthday.

"It feels really nice, it feels really good," Bloomer said.

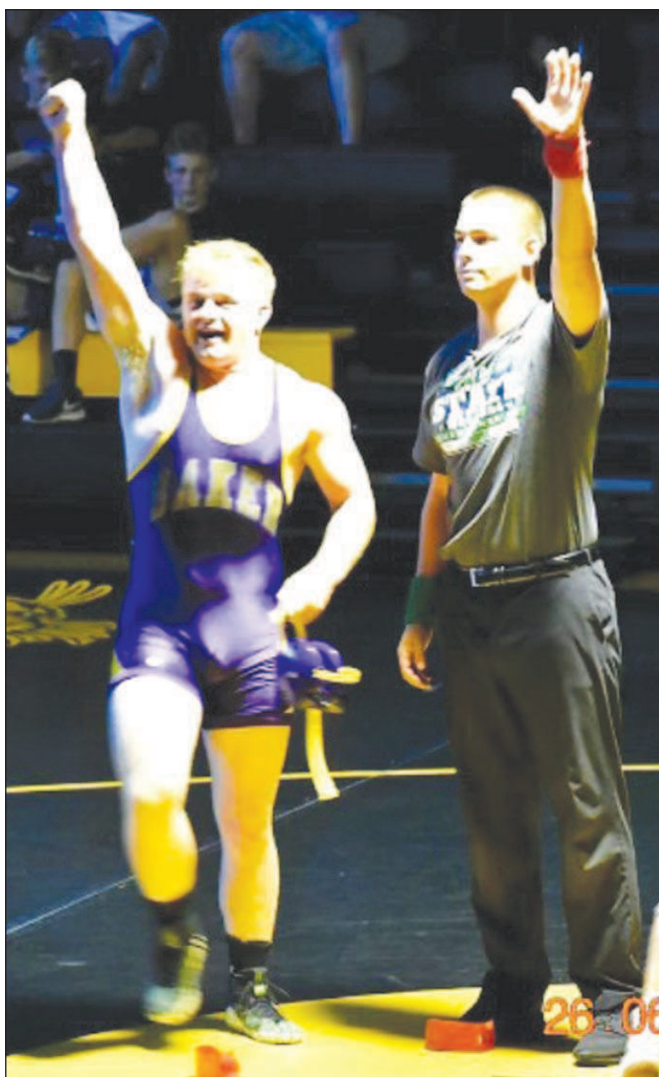
After winning his weight class in the regional tournament at La Grande, Bloomer was the second seed for the state tournament, which wasn't sanctioned this year by the Oregon School Activities Association.

Bloomer started the tournament by pinning Tillamook senior Rafael Martinez in 32 seconds, then winning 12-3 over Jaime Cruz, a senior from Woodburn.

"His first two he handled pretty easily," Baker coach Brandon Young said.

In the semifinal round, Bloomer took on graduated senior Ethan Richards of Mazama.

What took place on the mat



Marianne Stone/Contributed Photo

Baker's Gauge Bloomer celebrates his state championship at the Class 4A wrestling tournament June 26.

between Richards and Bloomer is something that Young couldn't describe as anything but a war.

"He (Bloomer) had a couple of opportunities to score, and didn't quite get it done, and then the kid (Richards) got a reversal on us, to tie it up 2-2, so they were pretty much neck and neck all the way through the entire match," Young said.

The match went into overtime, and Bloomer finally prevailed, 8-6.

"That was a really tough one, that was close, we went into overtime and I barely beat him," Bloomer said.

The win propelled him into the championship match against Estacada junior Jackson Turner.

Staying with his usual pre-match routine, Bloomer put his headphones on, and shredded his air guitar solo moments before stepping onto the mat.

"I was focused and relaxed, I knew if I tried to change

things, I don't think my brain would of handled it, I probably would of done something dumb and lost the match," Bloomer said.

After the first three minutes, Turner was leading, 4-2.

But just 30 seconds into the second round, Bloomer was able to land a throw to get Turner onto his back, shoulders to the mat for a three-count, officially claiming a state title. When the official raised his hand, Bloomer felt a tremendous weight leave his shoulders.

"I didn't know what to do, I just ran over to Coach Young and gave him a hug," Bloomer said.

Young remembers that hug being more like a tackle.

"He came and just jumped all 195 pounds of muscle, jumped into my arms," Young said.

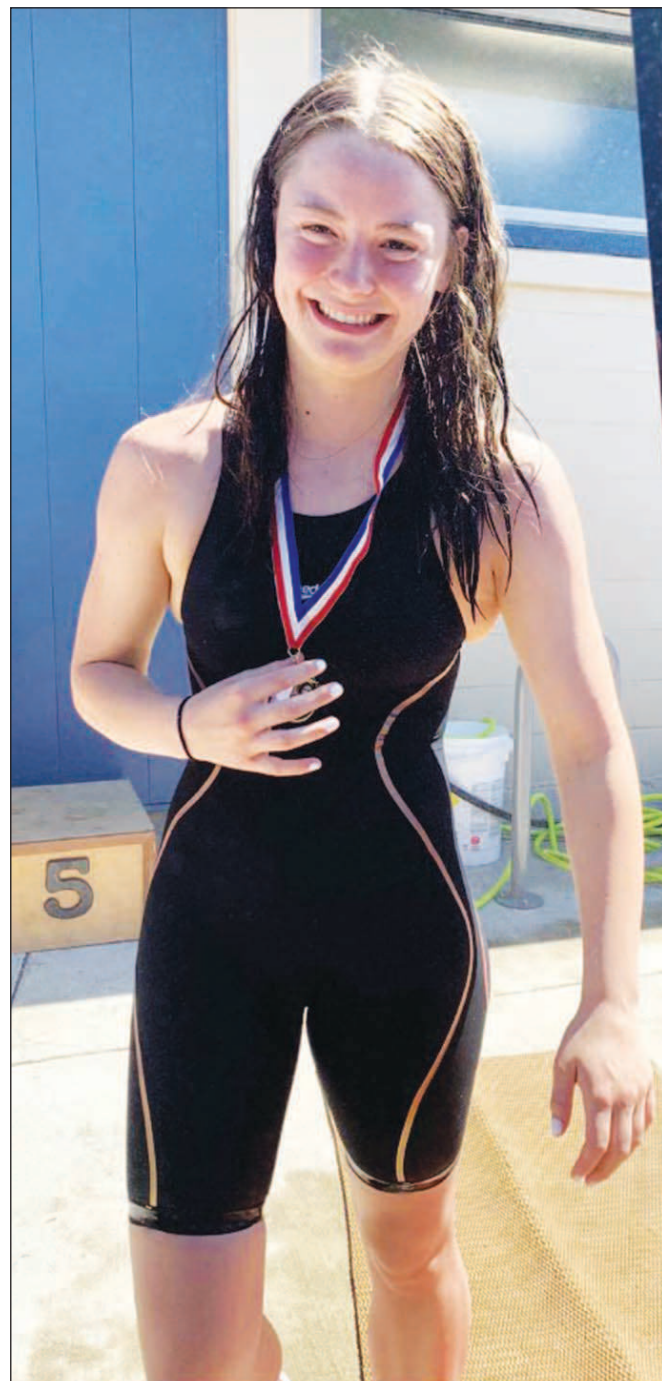
After a year of sports being uncertain, with fall sports being postponed and football, in which Bloomer is a top Bulldog running back, not starting until late winter, Bloomer was happy to have his parents and grandparents in attendance to watch the win.

"It was really cool having them there, it was awesome," Bloomer said.

With a state title in hand, Bloomer still has another season of wrestling to look forward to this winter, and he's already ready to get back to work.

"Going into senior year I'll probably just keep doing what I am doing before my matches, play my air guitar and have the same mindset," Bloomer said.

Bloomer expressed his gratitude to Young, and he



Sydney Lamb/Contributed Photo

Baker's Brianna Stadler is a four-time state champion.

credits Young for getting him into wrestling.

He's also grateful to Shawn Belding for helping him learn how to work hard, Eric Wirfs from Aspect Strength and Conditioning for helping him with weightlifting, Clay Keller for helping him train all throughout the summer, and Hon Rushton for wrestling with him all throughout high school.

Both Keller and Rushton are former Bulldogs and also state champions. Keller won at 145 pounds in 2017 and at 160 pounds in 2018. Rushton

was the state champion at 182 pounds in 2020.

Back on the podium for Stadler

For the third consecutive year, Stadler left the state swim meet as a champion, winning the 200 individual medley and 100 butterfly to increase her tally of state titles to four.

"She's a dedicated, hard-working and accomplished swimmer," Baker coach Paula Moe said of Stadler.

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HOT Temperatures are Coming – Stay Safe!

As we prepare for record high temperatures, we want you to stay safe. Most heat illnesses occur simply from staying out in the heat too long. Exercising too much for your age and physical condition are also factors. Older adults, young children and those who are sick, or overweight are most at risk.

Take steps to stay safe:

- Wear loose-fitting, lightweight clothing.
- Rest frequently and seek shade when possible.
- Avoid exercise or strenuous physical activity outside during hot or humid weather.
- Drink plenty of fluids every day. Drink more fluids before, during, and after physical activity.
- Be especially careful to avoid overheating if you are taking medications that impair heat regulation.
- Be careful of hot cars in the summer. Allow the car to cool off before getting in.

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