

Baker sweeps Pendleton, falls to Weiser

By COREY KIRK

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Baker's volleyball team continued its marathon week of matches on five straight days, sweeping the Class 5A Pendleton Buckaroos on Thursday, Sept. 9 in the Baker gym.

The Bulldogs rebounded from a 3-0 sweep at the hands of the Weiser Wolverines the previous night, also on Baker's home court.

The win over Pendleton improved Baker's season record to 4-2.

Baker was back on its home floor Friday for a tournament, and Saturday against McCall-Donnelly, Idaho.

Buckaroos no match for the Bulldogs

A quick turnaround from Wednesday's loss to Weiser went favorably for the Bulldogs with a sweep of the Buckaroos less than 24 hours later.

Baker coach Ali Abrego said the Bulldogs were prepared for Pendleton, an experienced team with eight seniors on the roster.

As a team that was predominantly made of upper-classmen, Abrego knew that this was going to be a tough

game from the moment that the first serve was made.

"They (Pendleton) have an easier time overcoming deficits, and getting into a rhythm," Abrego said. "We just had to take that with a grain of salt and put our nose to the grindstone. We came out hot, and stayed hot."

Baker led from the start, pushing its lead to as large as 12 points at 20-8. Baker won the set 25-10.

Junior co-captain Jozie Ramos said Baker played the first set at the pace it prefers.

"We have to come in and get it done, we have to play with our tempo and not play how they want to play," Ramos said.

In the second set, Pendleton stayed within one point early but again Baker extended its lead, going on to win 25-14.

Abrego said one of the bigger improvements Baker made after the loss to Weiser was better communication on the court.

"If you don't communicate, then you won't win," she said. "Volleyball is a game of unity, and moving as a cohesive unit and if one piece of the puzzle isn't fitting with another then that's a problem."

During the second set Baker kept multiple rallies going with difficult saves.

Those sequences help the players maintain their excitement, Ramos said.

"It really gets the whole team fired up, it gets the whole crowd fired up which then turns into more momentum for us," Ramos said.

Pendleton rallied a bit in the third set, even taking a lead midway through.

But Baker responded, eventually putting the match away with a 28-26 win.

"That last set Pendleton finally got into their groove, so it really pushed us to be our best," Abrego said. "28-26 is a hard set, so I was really happy with how it turned out."

Abrego said she was pleased with Baker's ability to maintain its lead rather than becoming complacent and letting Pendleton rally.

"You want to increase your lead when you can," she said. "In games like that you want to give everybody the opportunity to play — we want to hold a decent lead so the young ones can come in."

Wolverines sweep the Bulldogs 3-0

Baker held the lead at



Corey Kirk/Baker City Herald

Baker freshman Sofia Hanson goes up for a spike attempt Thursday night, Sept. 9 against Pendleton. At left is senior Lacy Churchfield, and at right, Ryann Paulsen.

multiple points during the match Wednesday evening, but the Bulldogs couldn't hold off Weiser's rallies.

Abrego expected the Wolverines would be a tough opponent, with a schedule that includes some top Idaho teams.

"Honestly they play a lot of good teams over there," Abrego said. "I knew they were going to be well rounded, looking at them they had size on us, they

were tall and they had a solid block. But we didn't really approach them any different than we approach anybody else."

In the first set, the Bulldogs took an early lead but Weiser came back to tie the score at 22 and win the set, 25-23.

The second set was similar, with Baker leading for much of the set but the Wolverines rallying late, again winning 25-23.

Abrego said Baker players struggled to communicate, leading to confusion on multiple key points.

"We had several plays where we ran into each other, or a last minute a person running towards the ball," Abrego said. "Passes, our serve/receive was weaker tonight than it was (Tuesday) night (in a win over Burns). We couldn't get into a rhythm and we sent too many free balls over the net. It's really hard to win when you don't run your offense."

In the third and final set, the Wolverines took the early lead and then had to fend off a Baker rally.

The Bulldogs went on a 10-5 scoring run but Weiser went on to win, again by a 25-23 margin.

Abrego was encouraged by Baker's response in the final set. Had the Bulldogs played that way the entire match, the outcome might have been different, she said.

"It's really exciting, that's the energy we need," she said. "We need to figure out how to maintain that. We start off hot, we get a lead, then we blow it because we get complacent and we can't afford to be complacent. Consistency beats flashy any day."

Brady throws for 379 yards, 4 TDs, Bucs beat Cowboys 31-29

By FRED GOODALL

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Tom Brady and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers didn't flinch.

Down one point with 1:24 to go in the kickoff to the NFL season, the defending Super Bowl champions were confident their 44-year-old quarterback would find a way to win again Thursday night.

It's simply what Brady, who threw for 379 yards and four touchdowns in a 31-29 win

over the Dallas Cowboys, does.

"There was no doubt that we're going to win the game with him," coach Bruce Arians said. "It's just who's going to make plays."

With seats in a NFL stadium filled to full capacity for the first time since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, Ryan Succop won it with a 36-yard field goal with 2 seconds remaining. Brady set it up with a last-minute drive directed on the same field where

the Bucs became the first team to play and win a Super Bowl in its home stadium seven months ago.

It was the 49th game-winning drive the three-time NFL MVP has led in the fourth-quarter or overtime during regular season. That's third on the all-time list behind Peyton Manning (54) and Drew Brees (53), who are both retired.

"There's obviously a lot to clean up," Brady said after completing 32 of 50 passes

with two interceptions.

The Bucs, hoping to become the first team to repeat as champions since Brady led the 2003 and 2004 New England Patriots to consecutive titles, turned the ball over four times.

"We won," the quarterback said, "but we know it was far from perfect."

For Brady, a seven-time champion, it was the 300th regular-season start in a sparkling 22-year career — a

record for a quarterback. The 44-year-old also joined Drew Brees as the only players to throw for 300-plus yards in a game 100 times.

Chris Godwin, Rob Gronkowski and Antonio Brown caught first-half touchdown passes, and the Bucs (1-0) extended their winning streak to nine games dating to last December. Brady's second TD pass of the night to Gronkowski put the defending champs up 28-19. Succop's

field goal came after Greg Zuerlein put the Cowboys ahead with a 48-yarder with 1:24 to go.

"As I told our guys, I learned a long time ago we don't learn anything more from losing than you do from almost losing. We've got a lot to learn," Bucs coach Bruce Arians said. "Obviously not pleased with the start of the game. Loved the finish. Our guys are winners. They're going to finish."



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