

BAKER BOYS SOCCER

Ontario blanks Baker in home finale

By COREY KIRK

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In its final home match, the Baker boys soccer team wasn't able to fend off the Ontario Tigers Saturday afternoon, Oct. 16 at the Sports Complex.

The Tigers (5-3-3) won 8-0.

Baker coach Victor Benites said he hoped the Bulldogs would maintain the momentum from their 3-3 tie against La Grande on Oct. 14.

"We just tried to do the same thing we did against La Grande, I mean we were ready for them," Benites said of Ontario.

Early in the first half Saturday, defense dominated on both sides.

Benites said he was proud of his team, which was not at full strength.

"With having a couple of players

missing today, we had to shuffle some people around and we managed to play good," Benites said.

On the other side of the field, however, the Bulldogs struggled to get anything going, managing just a few shots on goal in the first half.

"I think where we are struggling is with midfielders to forwards, that's where our problem is," Benites said. "We don't finish and we have to step up."

Ontario got goals from senior Jamie Gonzalez in the 18th minute and from freshman Bryan Alejandro in the 39th minute to take a 2-0 lead at halftime.

With just a two-goal deficit, Benites said he remained optimistic as the second half started.

"We could start playing our game

and we could get some goals," he said.

But Baker's offensive struggles continued during the second half.

"I don't know what happened," Benites said. "I think we had about two or three chances and that was about it."

The Tigers, meanwhile, scored six more goals in the first 25 minutes, and the match ended early due to the 8-0 lead.

With six days to prepare for the final match, Oct. 25 at 5 p.m. at Mac-Hi (8-2), Benites said the Bulldogs will seek to end the season with a better performance.

"We are just going to practice the same stuff that we do and hopefully we will just be communicating better and better passes so we can come up with something," Benites said.



Corey Kirk/Baker City Herald

Baker junior Diego Quintela is surrounded by Ontario defenders early in the first half Saturday, Oct. 16 at the Baker Sports Complex.

BAKER FOOTBALL

Baker holds off Ontario, 27-14

By COREY KIRK

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Baker scored in a variety of ways in a 27-14 win over Ontario Friday, Oct. 15 at Ontario that boosted the Bulldogs' record to 3-4.

Baker sophomore Malaki Myer had two long touchdown runs in the first half, the first on a punt return and later on an interception.

Senior running back Gauge Bloomer had a pair of touchdown runs in the second half.

"That helped — early scores, special team scores, which was kind of nice to see," Baker coach Jason Ramos said. "We've set a goal, we wanted a defensive score, we always set a goal to get a special teams turnover or score so we were feeling pretty good about ourselves."

Baker struggled early with an interception on the first offensive series.

But after the Baker defense forced an Ontario punt, Myer took the kick back 65 yards for a touchdown and a 6-0 Baker lead.

Later in the half, Myer grabbed a bobbled Ontario pass and returned it 79 yards for another score and a 13-0 Baker lead.

It was the first of Myer's two interceptions, and the Bulldogs' total of four, as freshman Jaxon Logsdon also picked off a pair of Tiger passes.

Although Baker led 13-0 at halftime, Ramos said he instilled in the Bulldogs the importance of having a strong start offensively in the second half, since Baker hadn't scored an offensive touchdown.

"We felt like we needed to get some momentum, we hadn't really gotten an offensive flow going yet," Ramos said.

Not finding much success in the air, the Bulldogs relied on Bloomer, who gained 168 yards on 25 carries.

Bloomer also accounted for Baker's two touchdowns in the second half, running it in from

29 yards at the end of the third quarter, and from two yards out midway through the fourth.

"We had to establish a ground game, and we did kind of wear them down a little bit once we had the ground game going," Ramos said. "We run blocked better, we got Gauge going, and we were able to march down the field."

Ontario scored its two touchdowns in the fourth quarter, but Baker recovered two onside kicks, preventing the Tigers from getting additional possessions.

"It was two critical special teams plays out of our guys to field those onside kicks properly," Ramos said. "Special teams was solid, we covered (the) punt well, we covered kickoffs well, they (Ontario) tried to run a fake punt and we stopped that, so our special teams was pretty solid."

Ramos wasn't entirely satisfied with the defensive effort against the Tigers, who are 1-5 on the season.

"We seemed like we were a little content to just let Ontario step back and complete passes," Ramos said. "We need to be a little more aggressive defensively to just not allow that to happen, credit to them (Ontario), they played a good game."

Tate Powell had two carries for 23 yards, and Dylon Freeman added 11 yards on two carries.

Myer caught two of Paul Hobson's passes for nine yards, and Hudson Spike had one reception for seven yards.

"We were happy with the win," Ramos said, "but we weren't satisfied with the performance, we know that every step we take moving forward is to finish strong."

Baker returns to the road this Friday, Oct. 22, traveling to Burns to take on the Hillanders at 7 p.m.

The Bulldogs will return home on Oct. 29 for the Homecoming game against La Grande, also at 7 p.m.

Watt forces fumble in overtime, Steelers edge Seahawks, 23-20

By WILL GRAVES

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Pittsburgh Steelers coach Mike Tomlin insists there is nothing "mystical" to the way outside linebacker T.J. Watt goes about his business.

The perennial All-Pro is talented. He's focused. He's relentless. And as of last month, he's also one of the highest-paid defenders in the NFL.

And he's playing like he's worth every penny.

Watt strip-sacked Seattle quarterback Geno Smith in the waning minutes of overtime on Sunday night, Oct. 17. Teammate Devin Bush pounced on the loose ball to set up Chris Boswell's game-winning 36-yard field goal as the Steelers escaped with a 23-20 victory.

"I don't think anyone is surprised about his ability to deliver in those moments," Tomlin said of Watt.

Maybe, but Watt's second sack of the night, the one that helped the Steelers (3-3) win their second straight to reach .500 heading into their bye week, began innocently. Watt wasn't sure he had a path to Smith only to somehow thread his way to the former starter turned longtime backup. One mighty chop at Smith's right arm and the ball was on the ground.

"I don't think I had a good rush or anything," Watt said.

In the end, it didn't matter. Watt finished a remarkable game in which he knocked down

three passes and recorded three tackles for loss by making the play that allowed Pittsburgh to avoid a deflating setback.

The Steelers have won two straight following a 1-3 start and will have two weeks to get ready for a visit to Cleveland on Halloween.

"It's kind of crazy, don't know if it's really sunk in yet," quarterback Ben Roethlisberger said. "We got to our goal, which was to get to .500 before the bye, get healthy and get prepared for a long stretch."

Roethlisberger threw for 229 yards and a touch-

down and rookie running back Najee Harris added 83 yards rushing and caught his second scoring toss of the season. Eric Ebron scored the third rushing touchdown of his career as the Steelers found creative ways to move the ball with star wide receiver JuJu Smith-Schuster lost for the season with a shoulder injury.

"We've got a lot of players that can make plays," said Pittsburgh wide receiver Diontae Johnson, who caught nine passes for 71 yards. "They showed that."

Smith, starting in

place of injured Russell Wilson, completed 23 of 32 passes for 209 yards and a touchdown in his first start in nearly four years. Alex Collins ran for 101 yards while filling in for injured starter Chris Carson, the first 100-yard rushing game by a Seahawk since Dec. 15, 2018.

Smith's late miscue, however, dropped Seattle to 2-4.



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