

## BAKER VOLLEYBALL

# Philomath ends Baker's season

## Senior-led Warriors sweep Bulldogs in playoff match

By JAYSON JACOBY

jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

Even as the Baker volleyball team's breakthrough season was slouching toward its end Tuesday night, Nov. 2 in the Baker gym, coach Ali Abrego had a glimpse of the Bulldogs' future.

And she only had to look across the net.

There, a senior-laden Philomath team was about to conclude a 3-0 sweep of Baker in a Class 4A quarter-final playoff match.

But even as Abrego and the Bulldogs lament the conclusion of a season where they compiled a 16-7 record, claimed the Greater Oregon League title and advanced to the final eight, they know that next year they will have the experience that the Warriors brought to the Baker gym.

The Bulldogs had only one senior — co-captain Lacy Churchfield.

"She'll be a hard one to replace," Abrego said after Philomath had finished its 26-24, 25-13, 25-18 win before a large crowd in the BHS gym. "We have a lot of room for growth."

Abrego said Baker's relative lack of playoff experience — only Churchfield and junior Jozie Ramos were on the roster of the 2019 team that lost a first-round playoff match at Junction City — showed early against Philomath.

Ashlynn Barron, one of the Warriors' senior leaders, had three strong serves, one of them an ace, to give

Philomath a quick 3-0 lead in the first set.

The Warriors extended the lead to 7-3, led by three kills from another senior, Sage Kramer, whose powerful swings tested Baker's defense throughout the match.

Philomath extended its lead to 10-5, but after Abrego called a timeout, the Bulldogs rallied.

Consecutive kills from Ramos and fellow junior Rylee Elms cut the lead to 10-7.

After a Philomath timeout the Warriors forged ahead 19-15, but Baker responded with kills from junior Makenzie Flanagan and Churchfield to cut the lead to 19-18.

The latter part of the set was tense, with ties at 21, 22 and 23.

A Philomath hitting error gave Baker a set point at 24-23, but the Warriors then scored three straight, including a kill by Kramer, to take the set, 26-24.

Abrego said she was gratified to see her young team shrug off the difficult start and quickly adjust to the Warriors' high level of play.

"It was stage fright, almost," she said. "But I felt really good about how we came back from a deficit instead of just rolling over."

Philomath dominated the second set, leading 10-3 early.

Abrego called timeout with the Warriors leading 16-5, and although Baker had a mini rally to get within 10 points at 23-13, Philomath finished off the set.

The final set was much more competitive, with ties at 3, 6 and 8.

After Philomath led 15-12, Ramos served an ace to get Baker to within 17-16.

Flanagan had a kill to cut the lead to 18-17, but the Bulldogs would get no closer.



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Baker senior Lacy Churchfield, foreground, and junior Rylee Elms during Baker's playoff match against Philomath on Tuesday, Nov. 2 in the Baker gym.

Philomath scored seven of the last eight points to end the match and advance to a semifinal match Friday night, Nov. 5 at Corvallis High School.

Abrego said Baker showed its mettle with its performance in the third set.

"It was good to see them come back in the third set and compete," she said.

Looking ahead to 2022, Abrego is excited about Baker's potential. In addition to its core of junior leaders and sophomore libero Ryann Paulsen, the Bulldogs had three freshmen play against Philomath — Ashlyn

Dalton, Sofia Hanson and Taylor Churchfield.

"We had a lot of potential coming into this season," Abrego said. "With a young team you either rise to the occasion or you don't, and I think we did a really good job representing our league and getting to the top eight."

Abrego believes the loss to a veteran team such as Philomath could be an experience that Bulldogs look back on, in future seasons, as an important stop, albeit a disappointing one, on the progression of the program.

"It's a reference point, something we can reflect back on," Abrego said.

# Braves win first World Series since 1995

By BEN WALKER

AP Baseball Writer

HOUSTON — Most of the season, it just seemed this wasn't their year.

They dropped their first four games, and soon injuries piled up. They lost their most dynamic player before the All-Star break. They were stuck below .500 in August.

Yet out of nowhere, suddenly, these Atlanta Braves transformed themselves and took off.

Jorge Soler, Freddie Freeman and the Braves breezed to their first World Series championship since 1995, hammering the Houston Astros 7-0 on Tuesday night, Nov. 2 in Game 6. Max Fried threw six dominant innings in a signature pitching performance to close it out.

"We hit every pothole, every bump you could possibly hit this year," Freeman said. "Injuries, every single kind of thing that could happen, that could go wrong went wrong, and we overcame every single one of those things."

How proud Hank Aaron would've been.

Even so, Atlanta's troubles never fully went away.

General manager Alex Anthopoulos, the architect of the Braves' midseason turnaround, missed this crowning achievement after testing positive for COVID-19. He was back home for the clincher.

Soler, a July acquisition who tested positive for the coronavirus in the playoffs, backed Fried early with a monster three-run shot for his third homer against the Astros.

Freeman hit an RBI

double and then punctuated the romp with a solo home run in the seventh that made it 7-0.

By then, it was a total team effort. Ailing star Ronald Acuña Jr., the dynamo of Atlanta's future, bounded from the dugout to join the celebration for Freeman, the longtime face of the franchise.

When Yuli Gurriel grounded out to end it, Freeman caught the throw at first base, put the ball in his pocket, and the party was on for manager Brian Snitker's club.

A full hour after the game, hundreds of Braves fans packed behind the team's third base dugout kept doing the chop and chant, causing loud echoes to bounce around the ballpark.

About 700 miles away at suburban Truist Park, thousands of fans poured into the Braves' home to holler.

A mere afterthought in the summer heat among the land of the Giants, White Sox and Dodgers, but magnificent in the Fall Classic.

"This is the toughest team I've ever been a part of," said shortstop Dansby Swanson, who also homered.

Soler tapped his heart twice before beginning his home run trot after connecting off rookie Luis Garcia in the third inning, sending the ball flying completely out of Minute Maid Park and clinching the Series MVP award.

By the end, nothing could stop them. Not a broken leg sustained by starter Charlie Morton in the World Series opener. Not a big blown lead in Game 5.



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Baker juniors Rylee Elms, front, and Jozie Ramos go up for a block attempt against Philomath during a playoff match Tuesday, Nov. 2 in the Baker gym.



**BRAGGIN' RIGHTS**  
HUNTING PHOTO CONTEST

**1st Place Winner:**  
John and William Smith, Echo



**2nd Place Winner:**  
Austin Carlson, Pendleton



**3rd Place Winner:**  
Chris Draper, Baker City



Thank you to everyone who submitted photos of their big capture and congratulations to our winners — You've certainly earned Braggin' Rights!



**Tires LES SCHWAB**

**SNOW TIRES**  
are cheaper  
than a wreck

**DOING THE RIGHT THING SINCE 1952.®**  
Come and see us or call to schedule an appointment

**Lew Brothers Tire Service**  
**541-523-3679**  
**210 Bridge St. Baker City, OR**