

BAKER BOYS BASKETBALL

Bulldogs lose on buzzer-beater

By JAYSON JACOBY

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There's something about the Baker boys basketball team and buzzer-beating shots.

For the second game in a row, a last-second shot made the difference.

But on Tuesday night, Dec. 7 in Fruitland, Idaho, the Bulldogs had to watch as their opponents celebrated a game-winning shot.

Fruitland senior Nolan Bower banked in a shot from the key to give the Grizzlies a 60-58 win over Baker after the Bulldogs, who had trailed the entire game, rallied to tie the score with less than 10 seconds left.

Three days earlier, Baker freshman Isaiah Jones made a 3-pointer at the buzzer to force overtime against Banks. The Bulldogs went on to win that game, 85-81.

Although Baker coach Jebron Jones said he was disappointed by the Bulldogs' first loss after opening the season with two wins, he was proud of his team for coming back against a senior- and

junior-dominated Fruitland team that is 4-0, including a season-opening win over a much larger school, Nampa.

"I was proud of how they fought back," Jones said. "(Fruitland) is a solid team. They played hard, and they beat us to a lot of loose balls. It's tough to be down early on someone else's home court. It was a good test to see what we need to improve on."

Fruitland led 23-16 after the first quarter, and the Grizzlies extended their lead to 37-28 at halftime.

But Baker rallied in the second half, outscoring Fruitland 20-15 in the third quarter. Isaiah Jones had eight of his team-high 12 points in the quarter. Fellow freshman Jaron Long had four points, and sophomore Paul Hobson and junior Diego Quintela each had a 3-pointer as the Bulldogs cut the lead to 52-48 entering the final quarter.

Freshman Jaxon Logsdon scored five of his 10 points in the fourth quarter as Baker forged the tie, only to have Bower hit the game-winner.

Jebron Jones said Baker's difficult nonconference schedule to start the season will benefit the team when it starts Greater Oregon League play in January.

"I'm happy we're playing tough games early," he said.

Fruitland's Jacob Hamann led all scorers with 23 points, including five 3-pointers.

Baker shot just four free throws against Fruitland, making three, and Jones said the Bulldogs, who have several good free throw shooters, need to do a better job of getting to the line.

The Grizzlies were 5 for 8 from the line.

Baker's JV team beat Fruitland, 67-61, and the Baker JV2 team lost 62-51.

Baker plays its first home game tonight at 7:30 p.m. against Homedale, Idaho, a rematch of the season-opener, which Baker won 55-49 at Homedale.

The Bulldogs then head west for the first of three long road trips, playing at Estacada on Friday, Dec. 10 and at Molalla on Saturday.



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald, File

Rylee Elms, shown here against Homedale on Dec. 2, scored 11 points in Baker's 48-47 loss at Pendleton on Tuesday, Dec. 7.

Baker girls rally, but fall short at Pendleton

By JAYSON JACOBY

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Baker girls basketball coach Buell Gonzales Jr. sees missed opportunities when he peruses the scoresheet for the Bulldogs' 48-47 loss at Pendleton on Tuesday, Dec. 7.

Thirteen of them, actually. Baker rallied late after trailing most of the game and had a four-point lead before the Buckaroos scored the final five points of the game.

"It was a tough one," Gonzales said of the loss that dropped Baker's record to 1-1. Especially because of the 13 free throws Baker missed. The Bulldogs were 8 for 21 at the charity stripe, a result that's charitable mostly to the opponents.

Although Gonzales was pleased with Baker's aggressive play on offense, which led to Pendleton committing 23 fouls, the Bulldogs largely squandered that effort with the poor shooting.

"You're not going to win a lot of games on the road miss-

ing that many free throws," he said.

Gonzales said Baker committed costly turnovers and had a couple defensive lapses that allowed Pendleton to rally late for the win.

"We can't turn the ball over like that on the road," he said.

The game was close throughout.

Pendleton led 19-17 at halftime, and 34-29 entering the final period.

"I thought we played really hard, and the girls made improvements over the first game," Gonzales said. "I was pleased with the effort."

But Baker struggled offensively — from the field as well as the aforementioned failures at the free throw line.

"(Pendleton) played zone (defense) for most of the game, and we just didn't make shots," Gonzales said.

Junior Jozie Ramos led Baker with 21 points. Gonzales said fellow

junior Rylee Elms, who added 11 points, "stepped up and played really well," as did junior Taylor Gyllenberg, who played an expanded role with guard Sydnee Pierce out of the lineup for the night.

Junior Macey Moore added eight points.

Gonzales, coaching his second game after taking over as coach just before the season started, said he's satisfied with Baker's progress two games into the season.

Baker traveled to Homedale, Idaho, today for a 6:30 p.m. PST rematch with the Trojans, who the Bulldogs beat 66-36 in the season opener on Dec. 2.

Baker then travels the opposite direction to play at Estacada on Friday, Dec. 10 and at Molalla the following day.

The Baker JV team, which beat Elgin 31-15 on Dec. 4 to finish third in the Elgin Lions tourney, lost to Pendleton on Tuesday. The team's record is 2-3.

Oregon DE Kayvon Thibodeaux announces he's going pro

By ANNE M. PETERSON

Associated Press

Oregon defensive end Kayvon Thibodeaux made it official on Monday night, Dec. 6 and announced that he would not return to the Ducks for his senior year.

Thibodeaux is expected to be one of the top picks in the upcoming NFL draft, and the move to go pro was widely anticipated. He announced his decision on Twitter and Instagram, thanking Oregon for giving him "the opportunity to transition into a man ready to take on the world."

"After much thought, consideration and a lifetime of preparation, I have decided to forgo my senior season of football and enter the NFL draft, further pursuing my dreams," he wrote.

Thibodeaux will not play for the No. 15 Ducks in the Alamo Bowl against No. 14 Oklahoma on Dec. 29.

Oregon coach Mario Cristobal left the Ducks earlier Monday to become head coach at Miami. The Ducks on Monday night named assistant Bryan McClendon, pass game coordinator and wide receivers coach, interim coach for the bowl game.

A 6-foot-5, 258-pound edge rusher out of Southern California, Thibodeaux proclaimed at the start of the season that his goal was to win the Heisman, a tall order for a defense player.

But he sprained his ankle in Oregon's opener and had to miss the next two games. He also was ejected from the Ducks' overtime loss at Stanford, and had to miss the first half of the next game against Cal.

He finished the season with 49 tackles, including 12 for loss, and seven sacks. He is a finalist for the Bednarik Award and Bronco Nagurski Trophy.

Blazers' McCollum has collapsed lung, out indefinitely

PORTLAND (AP) — Portland Trail Blazers guard CJ McCollum has been diagnosed with a collapsed right lung and will be sidelined indefinitely, the team said Tuesday, Dec. 7.

McCollum was injured in the final quarter of the Blazers' 145-117 loss to the Boston Celtics on Saturday, Dec. 4. He was listed as probable with a rib contusion for Monday night's game against the Los Angeles Clippers, but did not play in the 102-90 loss.

McCollum's condition was revealed by a CT scan, the team said.

He is averaging 20.5 points, 4.1 rebounds and 4.5 assists this season.

McCollum's injury is one of several to befall the struggling Blazers. All-Star Damian Lillard has missed four games with lower abdominal tendinopathy. Backup point guard Anfernee Simons is out with a right ankle sprain, while forward Nassir Little has missed four games with a left ankle sprain.

Guard Ben McLemore left the game against the Clippers with a bruised hip. Center Cody Zeller has a bruised right quad.

Baker City Herald

The Baker Middle School seventh-grade boys basketball team has won its first seven games.

The most recent win was a 48-8 rout of Central Middle School in Milton-Freewater on Tuesday, Dec. 7.

Quin Wellman and Hayden Churchfield led Baker with 10 points each.

Earlier this season, Baker beat La Grande twice, 73-31 and 68-22; Burns, 80-10; John Day, 69-22; Mac-Hi, 68-10; and Pendleton, 47-43.

Baker's roster is Gavin

Scott, Kane Hellberg, Gabe Schwartz, Hayden Churchfield, Quin Wellman, Ryder Nimmo, Ben Nudd, Jace Whitfield, Ezaiah Suarez, Jacob Burton, Wes Burton and Jake Christensen.

Baker plays host to Burns Friday, Dec. 10 at noon at BMS.

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