

## BAKER BOYS BASKETBALL

# Baker rally falls just short

■ Homedale holds off Bulldogs to avenge Dec. 2 loss

By JAYSON JACOBY

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Baker freshman Jaron Long grabbed the errant pass, raced downcourt for a layin, and the decibel level from the Bulldog fans reached a crescendo.

The home crowd in the Baker gym sensed the culmination of a fourth-quarter comeback as Long's basket trimmed Homedale's lead, which had been 10 points just a few minutes earlier, to 52-50.

The Bulldogs hadn't been so close since the third quarter in their home opener Thursday night, Dec. 9.

But it wasn't to be.

Homedale coach Cam Long called timeout after Jaron Long's score, and Trojan senior Hayden Kincheloe's rebound basket with 1:48 left pushed the lead back to four, at 54-50.

Baker was forced to foul in the final minute to stop the clock, and although Homedale missed three of four free throws, including the front end of two straight one-and-ones, the Bulldogs were unable to take advantage, missing one shot and turning the ball over on another possession.

The Trojans went on to win 57-52, avenging Baker's 55-49 win at Homedale on Dec. 2.

"We didn't execute overall at the level we have been, but I can't fault their effort," Baker coach Jebron Jones said of the Bulldogs, who dropped to 2-2. "The boys continued to fight."

After Baker freshman Isaiah Jones made two free throws to cut Homedale's lead to 38-36 with 2:49 left in the third quarter, the Trojans concluded the quarter with a 12-2 run to boost their lead to 50-38 at the end of the quarter.

Jebron Jones said a full-court press was the Bulldogs' best chance to quickly pare that lead, and early in the final quarter the strategy yielded dividends.

Isaiah Jones scored off a rebound, and Long had another putback basket after a Baker steal, and 40 seconds into the fourth quarter the Homedale lead was down to 50-42.

After Trojan senior Eli Heck hit a 14-foot jumper in the key to push the lead back to 10, Long took over.

He scored six of Baker's eight points in an 8-0 run — senior Hayden Younger swished a 15-footer for the other points — that ended with his steal and layin that cut the lead to 52-50 and prompted the timeout.



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Baker sophomore Hudson Spike shoots Thursday night, Dec. 9 against Homedale defenders Alijah Joyner, left, and Hayden Kincheloe. Spike had seven points in Baker's 57-52 loss.

Jebron Jones said Long took advantage of his quickness both on defense and on a pair of drives to the basket where he beat his defender.

"Jaron had a great game," Jones said. "He got to the rim — he's quick enough to do that."

Jones said he was pleased with his young team's resilience — the Bulldogs also had a 13-3 run in the second quarter.

"But I'd rather we didn't get into the situation where we have to come back in the first place," he said.

Baker took a quick 2-0 lead on senior post Nick Mitchell's rebound basket.

Homedale senior guard Sigmund Goode scored the Trojans' first 11 points, including a trio of 3-pointers, the last of which gave Homedale an 11-7 lead.

Baker took a brief 14-13 lead late in the first quarter on another Mitchell putback, but Homedale junior guard Elijah Renteria finished the quarter with two straight 3-pointers, within 15 seconds, to give the Trojans a 19-14 lead at the end of the quarter.

Jones said he didn't expect Homedale's long-range shooting — the Trojans had five 3-pointers in the first quarter alone, and eight for the game.

Homedale made just four 3-pointers in the Dec. 2 game.

Goode and Renteria combined for six 3-pointers Thursday, and neither had a 3-pointer in the earlier contest.

Jones said the 3-pointers were "big momentum changers."

Homedale senior Josh Brown had a 3-pointer that boosted the Trojans' lead to 26-16 early in the second quarter.

But Baker then went on the 13-3 run. Three Bulldogs had 3-pointers in the run — sophomore Hudson Spike, freshman Jaxon Logsdon and, lastly, sophomore Paul Hobson. Hobson's shot with 1:32 left in the quarter gave Baker its second, and last, lead, at 27-26.

Homedale scored the last five points of the half to lead 31-27 at the break.

Jones said Baker just couldn't overcome its poor shooting, including missing its first six shots.

"We missed layups and jumpers — there were a lot of missed opportunities," he said. "We had passes we usually catch."

Baker had a balanced scoring night, but only one Bulldog was in double figures — Hobson, with 10. Long had eight points, Spike and Jones seven each, and Mitchell, Logsdon and Grant Gambleton had six points each.

Goode led Homedale with 16 points. Kincheloe added 14 points, and Mason Strong had 13.

Baker's first home game was also its last for more than two weeks.

The Bulldogs' next five games are on the road, starting with a road trip to Western Oregon this weekend for games Friday night, Dec. 10 at Estacada, and at Molalla the following afternoon.

Baker travels to Klamath County next weekend for games against Mazama on Friday, Dec. 17, and Klamath Union the next day. The Bulldogs then head to Pendleton on Dec. 21 before returning home for the Baker Invitational Dec. 27-29.

## BAKER GIRLS BASKETBALL

# Shorthanded Bulldogs breeze past Homedale

By JAYSON JACOBY

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The Baker girls basketball team wasn't deterred by its depleted roster, and the Bulldogs handled Homedale 46-30 on Thursday, Dec. 9 at Homedale.

Junior Makenzie Flanagan wasn't able to play after being injured late in Baker's 48-47 loss at Pendleton on Tuesday, Dec. 7.

And junior guard Sydnee Pierce had only one practice before returning from an injury, Baker coach Buell Gonzales Jr. said.

With fewer players available, Gonzales said he didn't call for as much aggressive full-court defense as he normally would — a strategy that can yield turnovers and easy baskets but also is physically demanding.

Baker used its pressing defense to good effect in a 66-36 win over Homedale on the Bulldogs' home court Dec. 2.

On Thursday at Homedale, Baker maintained a modest lead most of the game, leading 11-8 after the first quarter and 26-14 at halftime.

Junior Jozie Ramos, who led all scorers with 19 points, had 11 in the first half.

"Jozie again played really well," Gonzales said. "She's a tough match up for anybody we play."

Gonzales said fellow junior Rylee Elms also had another strong game on both ends of the court, scoring eight points — including five of seven from the free throw line — and playing good defense.

Junior guard Taylor Gyllenberg also had a strong

outing with nine points.

Baker dominated the third quarter, 10-3, to push its lead to 36-17 entering the final period.

"We opened it up a little in the second half," Gonzales said.

Junior Skylar Roy added four points, and fellow juniors Brooklyn Jaca and Macey Moore had a basket each.

Baker, which improved to 2-1 on the season, is in Western Oregon this weekend for a pair of games.

The Bulldogs played Estacada on Friday, and will take on Molalla Saturday.

Assistant coaches Jason Ramos and Amy Younger will guide the team this weekend, as Gonzales will be attending a funeral.

The Baker JV team routed Homedale 50-12 on Thursday.



Ronald Bond/Wallowa County Chieftain

Baker's Alex Ritter, top, wrestles during the Enterprise Kickoff tournament Dec. 3.

# Wrestlers top Vallivue

Baker City Herald

NAMPA, Idaho — The Baker wrestling team topped Vallivue, Idaho, in a dual match Wednesday evening, Dec. 8 at Columbia High School in Nampa, Idaho.

The Bulldogs also wrestled against Columbia in a dual, losing 60-24.

"Everyone had a fun night at Columbia High School," Baker coach Brandon Young said. "We lost to Columbia but there were a couple of matches where we just got caught in a bad position in matches that we were actually pretty close in. I think as the season progresses we will definitely close that gap on

Columbia, as we improve and get our team down closer to the weight they will compete at for regionals."

Young said he was pleased with the team's conditioning level for so early in the season.

He said freshman Aldo Duran, wrestling at 120 pounds, had a strong match against Vallivue, winning 9-6. Duran was leading his Columbia opponent when the wrestler used a spladle move, a common counter technique.

"Aldo Duran had some of the toughest matches of the night and got into some positions he isn't used to, so it was a great learning

moment for him," Young said.

Senior Gavin Stone, at 160 pounds, also went 1-1, beating his Vallivue opponent and putting in a strong match against a Columbia wrestler who is one of the top competitors in the Idaho 4A level.

"Gavin was close on a couple of reversals," Young said. "One was right at the end of a round and the other one he didn't quite finish, so didn't get awarded his points. It was a good fight, just an in your face physical kind of grind, which is exactly what Gavin likes to do."

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