

BAKER GIRLS BASKETBALL

Crane rallies past Bulldogs

■ Class 1A Mustangs outscore Baker 15-5 in fourth quarter

By JAYSON JACOBY

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The fourth quarter couldn't have arrived at a worse time for the Baker girls basketball team Tuesday night, Dec. 28 against Crane in the Baker gym.

The Bulldogs had dominated the latter half of the third quarter, outscoring the Mustangs 11-3 to take their biggest lead at 41-34.

But just as Baker seemed poised to run away with a win after struggling through the middle of the game, the clock went to all zeros and the buzzer sounded.

And with it went the Bulldogs' momentum.

The visiting Class 1A Mustangs, sensing a rare chance to beat a Class 4A team, took full advantage of the intermission.

Crane controlled the final quarter, scoring the first nine points and then squelching Baker's late rally to claim a 49-46 win in the Baker Holiday Tournament.

Jozie Ramos hit a 3-pointer with 11 seconds left to get Baker within 49-46, and the Bulldogs forced a turnover on the inbound pass to get the ball back with 6.4 seconds left.

Macey Moore's corner 3-point try just missed. Baker again regained possession, but this time with just one second left on the clock, and the Bulldogs weren't able to get up a tying 3-point try.

Baker coach Jason Ramos, who recently took over head coaching duties from Buell Gonzales Jr., said the key to Tuesday's loss was longtime Crane coach Stub Travis' decision to switch to a zone

CRANE (49)

L. Doman 8 0-0 19, Miller 1 0-0 3, Joyce 1 0-0 3, Ballard 3 1-4 7, Hill 1 0-0 2, K. Dorman 7 0-1 15, Taylor 0 0-0 0, Baker 0 0-0 0. Totals 21 1-5 49.

BAKER (46)

Elms 2 0-2 4, Flanagan 2 0-0 4, Gyllenberg 0 1-2 1, Pierce 0 0-0 0, Roy 0 0-0 0, Jaca 3 0-0 6, Ramos 10 2-4 23, Moore 3 2-3 8. Totals 20 5-11 46.

Crane 13 14 7 15 — 49

Baker 12 12 17 5 — 46

defense at the start of the fourth quarter.

"It was a good call on their part," Ramos said.

Baker struggled to regain its offensive momentum from the third quarter.

The Mustangs, meanwhile, started making some of the shots that didn't fall during the third quarter.

Leslie Doman, who led Crane with 19 points, scored four points and Kortney Doman five as the Mustangs turned their 41-34 deficit to a 43-41 lead three minutes into the final period.

Ramos, who led all players with 23 points, scored inside to end the 9-0 run and tie the game at 43 with 4:48 left.

But Crane scored the next six points, four by Kortney Doman. Her driving layin with 2:33 left boosted Crane's lead to 49-43.

Jason Ramos said Baker was prepared to deal with a zone defense.

"We tried to get into our zone offense," he said. "We work on it practice. It was a lesson."

That Crane, despite its diminutive enrollment of 45 students, was a formidable foe was not surprising, Ramos said.

The Mustangs, a public boarding school southeast of Burns that draws students from across sprawling Harney County, are a Class 1A powerhouse.



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Baker's Rylee Elms goes to the basket Tuesday, Dec. 28 against Crane in the Baker gym.

Over the past three years, Crane's record is 49-1. The Mustangs won the state championship in the Baker gym in March 2020, capping a 29-0 season, then went 13-0 during the pandemic-shortened schedule in June 2021, beating Country Christian in a nonofficial state tournament, again at BHS.

The win over Baker — Crane's first over a Class 4A school during its three-year run — improved the Mustangs' record this season to 7-1. Crane is ranked fourth in Class 1A, its only loss by a single point to top-ranked Damascus Christian on Dec. 11.

Although Ramos acknowledged Crane's performance Tuesday, and in particular the defensive shift that clogged Baker's offense, he believes the loss was more a reflection of Baker's failure to continue the momentum from its strong third quarter.

Trailing 27-24 at halftime,

Jason Ramos takes over as head coach

Buell Gonzales Jr. said he was committed to coaching the Baker girls basketball team throughout the 2021-22 season.

But Gonzales, who is the Baker School District's athletic director and took over as coach just before the season started in November, said he felt confident, after a month or so at the helm, in turning over the reins to his three assistant coaches.

Jason Ramos is now head coach. He's assisted by Amy Younger and Sonny Gulick.

"This is 100 percent about me just wanting our program to be in the best possible situation," Gonzales said on Tuesday evening, Dec. 28 in the Baker gym as he watched the Bulldogs play Crane. "My assistants were ready to take it over."

Gonzales, who has 20 years of varsity basketball coaching experience, stepped in after Mat Sand, who led the Bulldogs to their first state title in 2019 and compiled a 108-29 record in six seasons, resigned in early November due to commitments with his business.

Gonzales said he enjoyed the month or so he spent as girls coach.

"I had a ton of fun, the kids are great group," he said.

During a trip to Klamath Falls on Dec. 17-18, when Baker beat Mazama and Klamath Union with Ramos running the team, Gonzales said he was confident that it was the right time to make the coaching transition official.

"I want to give Jason enough time to put his stamp on things," Gonzales said.

Ramos, who is also Baker's varsity football coach, said after the Bulldogs' 49-46 loss to Crane that he's eager to guide the team the rest of the season with Younger and Gulick.

"We're all trying to manage this situation the best we can," Ramos said. "We want to do what's best for this group of girls."



Gonzales



Ramos

Baker beats Burns

The Baker girls basketball team rebounded from a loss to Crane on Tuesday night to beat Burns 43-31 on Wednesday afternoon in the Baker gym.

Baker scored the first six points of the third quarter to take its first lead since late in the first quarter.

Crane, which made five 3-pointers in the first half and scored more than half its points from the long ball, didn't make any in the third quarter.

After the Mustangs briefly regained the lead at 31-30 on Kortney Dorman's basket with 4:15 left in the third quarter, Baker scored nine straight points in 90 seconds, six by Jozie Ramos and three by Moore.

The two traded assists during the run.

Ramos whipped an outlet

pass to Moore for a breakaway layin. Moore was fouled on the shot and made the free throw to boost Baker's lead to 37-31.

Moore then returned the favor, finding Ramos in the key with a nifty pass for an easy basket.

Crane cut the lead to 39-34, but Makenzie Flanagan scored just before the end of the quarter to give Baker a 41-34 advantage.

Baker, which dropped to 6-3 on the season, led most of the first quarter, taking advantage of Crane missing all four of its free throws.

But the Mustangs scored the last seven points of the

quarter to lead 13-12 at the break.

Crane extended its run to 15-1, as Leslie Doman and Skye Miller made consecutive 3-pointers to start the second quarter. The Mustangs led by as much as nine, at 21-12, before Baker rallied with a 12-6 run.

Jason Ramos said he was generally pleased with Baker's shot selection, but he noted that the Bulldogs missed several close shots that they normally make at a high percentage.

Moore had eight points, Brooklyn Jaca six, and Flanagan and Rylee Elms had four points each.

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