

BAKER WRESTLING

La Grande downs Bulldogs on Senior Night

BY JAYSON JACOBY

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An enthusiastic audience in the Baker High School gym honored Baker's senior wrestlers before the Bulldogs' dual against La Grande on Tuesday, Jan. 25.

Then the Tigers showed why they're the top-ranked team in Oregon's Class 4A division.

La Grande won the first nine matches and went on to a 60-12 win over the sixth-ranked Bulldogs.

Before the matches started — on a mat illuminated by an overhead light — these senior wrestlers were recognized for their contributions to the program:

- Gauge Bloomer, son of Travis and Tish Bloomer.
- Adrian Allen, son of Vera Allen.
- Sarah Plummer, daughter of David and Faith Plummer.
- Connor Jensen, son of Tina McKean.
- Gavin Stone, son of Daniel and Marianne Stone.
- Billy Kargianis, son of Lena Phillippi.
- Jaden Martin, son of Arvin and Karlie Martin.
- Alex Ritter, son of Richard and Mysti Ritter.

"They are a very special group of young adults and I believe they will be great people long after wrestling is over," Baker coach Brandon Young said.

The wrestlers competed on the spotlighted mat, with music playing throughout.

Young said the atmosphere, created by Travis Bloomer and Buell Gonzales Jr., athletic director for the Baker School District, "was the best we have had for a home match. It really added to the match and we had a great turnout for spectators."

Although the outcome was disappointing, Young said the difference between the two teams is not as great as the raw scores suggest.

"We just got outwrestled," he said. "It's hard to get the right mindset when your team is going against likely the best team in the 4A division. Those are the teams we need to wrestle right now, because it pushes us to get better. I thought our kids were in better shape than La Grande overall. Most of our team went out there and got after it, just made a few mistakes."

Young said the 132-pound match, pitting Baker's Cole Hester against La Grande's Tavian Kehr, was an example of how Baker wrestlers battled throughout their matches.

After Kehr took a 12-2 lead in the second round, Hester was able to throw Kehr to his back.

Kehr recovered and eventually pinned Hester, but Young was impressed by Hester's resilience.

The match at 195 pounds was perhaps the most anticipated of the night, with top-ranked Gauge Bloomer battling La Grande's Brody MacMillan, who is ranked third in the state.

The match could easily be replicated at both the regional and state tournaments, Young said.

"Gauge wrestled really tough most of the match, he made some big mistakes that cost him in the long run, so hopefully we can fix those in the wrestling room over the next few weeks," Young said.

Bloomer trailed 2-1 after the first round and 4-2 after the second before MacMillan extended his lead in the final round, eventually earning a 9-4 decision.

An individual performance that stood out was by Baker's Jaden Martin in the heavyweight class. Facing La Grande's Cole Jorgensen, Martin controlled the match, leading 2-0 after the first round and 4-2 after the second. He ended up winning 6-2.

"Jaden has beaten all of the top heavyweights in the state, and now just needs to continue to put in the work," Young said.



Baker's Gavin Stone, bottom, tries to stave off a pin from La Grande's Braden Carson in the 152-pound match on Tuesday, Jan. 25, 2022, in the Baker gym. Carson eventually pinned Stone.



Baker's Gauge Bloomer, left, grapples with La Grande's Brody MacMillan in the 195-pound match during a dual on Tuesday, Jan. 25, 2022, in the Baker gym. MacMillan won by 9-4 decision.

"They are a very special group of young adults and I believe they will be great people long after wrestling is over."

— Brandon Young, Baker wrestling coach, talking about the eight seniors who were honored on Tuesday, Jan. 25

Young said La Grande tried to surprise Baker's River Clark, at 120 pounds, by forfeiting the 113-pound match against Aldo Duran and having Landon Perry wrestle Clark.

"River was a ready for a fight," Young said. "He was about to outwork his opponent and in position to score most of the match."

Clark trailed 2-1 after the first round but rallied to lead 4-3 after the second round and went on to win a 7-3 decision.

Full results from the varsity dual:

- 106: Mason Wolcott, La Grande, defeated Joey Duran by fall.
- 113: Baker's Aldo Duran won by forfeit
- 120: Baker's River Clark defeated Landon Perry, 7-3
- 126: Braden Carson, La Grande, defeated Sage Darlington by fall.

- 132: Tavian Kehr, La Grande, defeated Cole Hester by fall.
- 138: Joshua Collins, La Grande, defeated Samuel Nelson by fall.
- 145: Cody Hibbert, La Grande, won by forfeit.
- 152: Braden Carson, La Grande, defeated Gavin Stone by fall.
- 160: Eli Bisenius, La Grande, defeated Ryan Brown by technical fall, 18-3.
- 170: MyKail Foster, La Grande, defeated Cody Eskew by major decision, 10-2.
- 182: Cole Shafer, La Grande, defeated Connor Jensen by fall.
- 195: Brody MacMillan, La Grande, defeated Gauge Bloomer, 9-4.
- 220: Kenai Huff, La Grande, defeated Alex Ritter by fall.
- 285: Baker's Jaden Martin



Baker's Jaden Martin, on top, was in control for most of his match against La Grande's Cole Jorgensen on Tuesday, Jan. 25, 2022, in the Baker gym. Martin won by 6-2 decision in the 285-pound match.

defeated Cole Jorgensen, 6-2.

In JV and exhibition matches:

- 113: Baker's Marcus Chamberlain won by fall over Dallin Perry.
- 126: Baker's Michael Endersby lost 9-1 to Rogan Willins.
- 160: Baker's Ben Coburn lost 10-0 to Jared Isaacson.
- 182: Baker's Ethan Morgan won by fall over Payton Stenkamp.
- 285: Baker's Jayden Clark won by fall over Cain End.

After the varsity dual there were several more exhibition matches:

- 106: Baker's Joey Duncan lost by fall to Robert Gulzow.
- 126: Baker's Sage Darlington lost by fall to Jaxson Leonard.
- 170: Baker's Cody Eskew won 8-6 over Preston Westenskow.
- 182: Baker's Adrian Allen lost by fall to Jarett Armstrong.
- 220: Baker's Billy Kargianis lost by fall to Kenai Huff.
- 285: Baker's Russell

Walden won by fall over Cain End.

Baker will play host to a varsity girls and JV boys tournament Thursday, Jan. 27, at BHS, starting at 5 p.m.

On Friday, Jan. 28, there will be a middle school tournament starting at 11 a.m. at BHS.

"Over the next few weeks our schedule will slow down and we will be focusing on reviewing and correcting our technique as well as trying to hit our season peak for regionals and state," Young said.

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