

BAKER GIRLS BASKETBALL

Bulldogs tame Tigers again, this time for GOL crown

Baker's 3rd win over La Grande ensures home playoff game on either March 4 or March 5

BY JAYSON JACOBY

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Brooklyn Jaca thought the ball was going in when it spun off her fingers.

But she still had to wait, and watch.

When the ball plunged through the net with 14 seconds left in the third quarter, the Baker girls' bid for the Greater Oregon League championship was all but assured.

Jaca's 3-pointer boosted Baker's lead over La Grande to 41-28, and the Bulldogs went on to a 50-39 win on Saturday evening, Feb. 19.

Their third victory this season over the rival Tigers clinched a home playoff game for Baker on either Friday, March 4, or Saturday, March 5. The opponent has yet to be determined. The winner will advance to the Class 4A state tournament March 10-12 in Coos Bay.

Buell Gonzales Jr., Baker School District athletic director, said he would prefer to schedule the playoff game for Friday, March 4, because it would be easier to incorporate the game into the schedule for the state Class 1A tournament, which takes place at Baker High School from March 2-5.

"I was glad it went in," Jaca said with a smile, and a bit of understatement, about her key 3-pointer.

Her shot capped a 7-0 Baker run that was possible largely

because the Bulldogs snared five straight offensive rebounds in the final 50 seconds of the third quarter.

The first sequence, with one offensive board from Jaca and three from Jozie Ramos, led to Ramos being fouled with 18.1 seconds left in the quarter. Ramos made the first free throw to give Baker a 38-28 lead, its largest to that point.

She missed the second shot but another offensive rebound, from Rylee Elms, gave Baker yet another chance.

Sydnee Pierce saw Jaca alone and made a crosscourt pass to set up Jaca's 3-pointer.

Jaca said Pierce's pass, and the offensive rebounds that set up the play, exemplified the importance of teamwork.

"We played together as a team, and that's when we have our best moments," she said.

"Brooklyn's three was a big shot," Baker coach Jason Ramos said. "She had a great game."

Baker's 7-0 run at the end of the third quarter was a decisive sequence, he said.

"That was huge, getting that separation right there at the end of the quarter," Ramos said. "It gave us some momentum."

And it continued into the final quarter, as Makenzie Flanagan scored just 10 seconds into the quarter and Macey Moore made a pair of free throws to extend Baker's lead to 45-30.



Baker's Rylee Elms and La Grande's Makenna Shorts vie for a loose ball during the GOL title game on Saturday, Feb. 19, 2022, in the Baker gym.

Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

LA GRANDE (39)
Shorts 1 1-6 3, Collman 2 7-8 12, Strand 1 2-2 4, Jensen 0 0-0 0, Kump 1 0-0 2, Wilcox 4 0-1 8, Neer 3 0-3 6, A. Dunlap 2 0-0 4. Totals 14 10-20 39.
BAKER (50)
Elms 4 3-4 11, Flanagan 3 0-0 6, Wilde 0 0-0 0, Gyllenberg 0 1-2 1, Pierce 1 0-0 2, Ramos 2 6-10 10, Roy 0 0-0 0, Jaca 4 0-0 10, Moore 2 6-7 10. Totals 16 16-23 50.
La Grande 10 14 4 11 — 39
Baker 12 17 12 9 — 50

scored two baskets in the next minute, the last on a rebound of her own miss, to tie the score at 18 with 3:56 left in the half.

Jaca then swished a 17-footer as part of an 11-2 Baker run that gave Baker a lead it would never relinquish.

Baker led 29-24 at halftime, and after the Bulldogs pushed the lead to eight points early in the third quarter, La Grande got as close as 34-28 on Maezie Wilcox's basket midway through the quarter.

Baker then went on the 7-0 run capped by Jaca's 3-pointer.

Baker, which improved to 18-5, had one of its most balanced scoring games of the season.

Elms led the way with 11 points. Ramos, Jaca and Moore had 10 points each. Flanagan added six.

"It's great to know that we've got players out there that can score," Jason Ramos said.

Baker will conclude its regular season schedule by playing host to Pendleton on Friday, Feb. 25, at 5 p.m.

La Grande never got closer than 9 points after that.

Jason Ramos said Baker excelled at getting the ball to players in the key, where they were able to draw fouls when they didn't score.

"They (La Grande) were in foul trouble, and we tried to take advantage," he said.

Ramos made 16 of 23 free throws.

Ramos was also happy with the Bulldogs' defensive effort.

Baker controlled La Grande's Makenna Shorts in particular. The junior guard

led the Tigers in both previous games, scoring 11 points in Baker's 51-43 win at La Grande on Jan. 28, and 13 points in the Bulldogs' 43-25 win on Feb. 8 at Baker.

On Saturday, Shorts scored just three points.

Both teams struggled early to establish any offensive momentum in a first quarter marked more by fouls and turnovers.

La Grande committed its seventh foul with 51 seconds left in the quarter, ensuring Baker would shoot free throws

on most fouls for the rest of the half.

The Bulldogs took advantage, making nine of 11 free throws. Moore made four of her five free throws.

Baker led 12-8 late in the first quarter, but La Grande's Addy Dunlap swished a 15-footer at the buzzer, and the Tigers scored the first four points of the second quarter to take their first lead at 14-12 with 6:52 left in the half.

La Grande extended the lead to 18-14 on Shorts' free throw with 4:53 left, but Elms

POWDER VALLEY GIRLS BASKETBALL

Badgers finish second in OOL tournament

BY DAVIS CARBAUGH

The Observer

A valiant effort ultimately came up short for the Powder Valley girls basketball team, which finished as runners-up in the Old Oregon League district tournament.

The Badgers stayed within reach early, but a big second half propelled Nixyaawii to a 59-39 victory in the championship game on Saturday, Feb. 19, at Baker High School.

Powder Valley relied on its high defensive intensity early on, holding a high-octane Nixyaawii offense within check early on. The Badgers built up

a 5-1 lead through the first five minutes of action and slowed down the pace.

The Golden Eagles ran the press on defense early and often, fighting back to take a 9-7 lead at the end of the first quarter. Nixyaawii's Sistine Moses was steady offensively all game long, scoring six of her game-high 16 points in the first quarter.

The Badgers found themselves trailing for the ensuing three quarters, but the game was far from lost. Powder Valley cut the lead to 12-11 with 6:15 remaining in the second quarter — a packed house at Baker High School was loud

from start to finish. The Badgers trailed 24-18 at halftime and looked to be in contention for the district title.

The third quarter was an exchange of runs, which ultimately proved costly to Powder Valley. Nixyaawii jumped out to a 26-18 lead out of halftime, to which the Badgers answered with a 7-0 run of their own.

With Nixyaawii leading 28-25, the Golden Eagles completely tilted the scales in their favor. Nixyaawii rattled off a 16-0 run that extended into the fourth quarter and helped the Golden Eagles take a 44-25 lead.

Late in the game, Powder Valley fought back to bring the game within 11 — the Badgers trailed 50-39 with three minutes remaining. Nixyaawii closed out the game with a 9-0 run to cap off a 20-point victory in the

district title game.

Dallee Bingham was effective throughout the game for Powder Valley, scoring a team-high 10 points. Jacey Anderson and Maddy Leggett both scored nine points each.

The win for Nixyaawii clinches the team's spot at the top of the Old Oregon League in the state playoffs. Powder Valley, as runner-up, will play at home against Trout Lake (Washington) on Feb. 23.

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