

## BAKER WRESTLING AT CLASS 4A STATE MEET

## Martin's state title leads Bulldogs to 5th place

BY JAYSON JACOBY

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For Baker wrestler Jaden Martin, all the hours of toil and sweat and pain came down to six minutes, and one opponent.

Martin, a senior competing in the final match of his final meet, stood on the mat Saturday evening, Feb. 26, at Cascade High School, facing Chris Woods of Hidden Valley.

The winner would claim the state title in the heavyweight division.

In the final two-minute period, with Martin leading 3-2, he got an armbar on Woods, turned him and got the pin.

And the state championship.

"I've been working for it the whole time I've been wrestling," Martin said in an interview on Sunday, Feb. 27. "That's something I've been thinking about for a while."

Martin not only took the final step after placing second at the 2021 state meet, but he led his Bulldog teammates to a fifth-place finish in the Class 4A meet, just one spot short of earning a trophy.

"Overall we competed very well and are very proud of how we finished," Baker coach Brandon Young said. "We were definitely within striking distance of a team trophy."

Baker, with 14 wrestlers competing, finished with 100 points, behind fourth-place Philomath at 118 points. La Grande won the team title with 275.5 points.

Martin admitted that he felt an extra dollop of pressure in his final high school match with so much at stake.

When the referee counted the final second, confirming Martin's victory, the anxiety was replaced by relief.

"I was glad that I was finally able to achieve the goal that I've been fighting for so long," he said.

His sense of pride was accompanied by gratitude for the unwavering support of his family over the years.

"My family has pushed me to be where I am today," Martin said. "I wouldn't have accomplished what I did without the support of my parents."

Young said a few colleges have talked to Martin about competing in wrestling, and he's looking strongly at Southern Oregon University in Ashland, where Young himself wrestled.



Andy Dieckhoff/Madras Pioneer

Baker's Gavin Stone (top) placed third at the regional tournament Feb. 12, 2022, to qualify for the state tournament, where he placed second.



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

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.

Martin said he was able to savor his achievement more the day after.

"It was nice to be able to appreciate it without the emotions running so high," he said.

Martin had wrestled Woods earlier in the season, winning by fall after trailing 2-0.

"He's not an easy guy to move," Martin said of Woods. "I enjoyed the chance to get to wrestle him again."

Martin advanced to the championship round with what he said was an even more difficult semifinal match against Joseph Choi of Philomath.

The Choi was tied at 2 after three periods, forcing overtime. Young, though, said that shouldn't have been necessary.

He believes Martin pinned Choi in the second period, but the referee ruled that Martin's knees were out of bounds. "There were several other

poor calls made, but minor compared to the one where Jaden had Choi pinned," Young said. "Wrestling is like life and we don't always get the right calls. Jaden didn't let it affect him and kept pushing."

Martin earned a takedown in the overtime to win 4-2.

Jaden pinned his first two opponents, Brett Highburger of Elmira, and Will Hoffman of Astoria.

Martin finished the season with a 42-4 record.

**Gavin Stone, 2nd place**

Another senior, Stone upset the number two seed, Benito Roman of Woodburn, in the quarterfinals after beating seventh-seeded Daniel Goodwin of Sweet Home 9-3.

Against Roman, Stone earned a takedown in the third period to win 6-5.

Stone said he could tell that Roman was breathing hard, and was able to get a hold on his leg and earn the takedown.

In the semifinals, Stone controlled the match against third-seeded Ryker Hartstook of Sweet Home, winning 7-3.

In the championship match Stone faced a familiar opponent, Braden Carson of La Grande, who has lost only one match this season.

Stone said he regrets choosing to be in the down position starting the second period, rather than standing.

"I think it would have been a different match if we had been on our feet," he said.

After Carson took a 10-0 lead, Stone said he got him in a cradle in the third period and did all he could to try to get Carson on his back.

Carson ended up with a 10-0 major decision.

"There's always things I could do better, but I'm pretty happy with the way I wrestled," Stone said.

"We knew he had a great shot to make it to the finals, and so did he," Young said of Stone.

Young said Stone plans to wrestle at Washington State University.

**Gauge Bloomer and Aldo Duran, 3rd place**

Bloomer, a senior, capped his career, which included a state championship in 2021, with a third-place finish at 195 pounds.

**Two Pine Eagle wrestlers state champs**

Pine Eagle seniors, and twin brothers, Coy Butner and Chase Butner won individual state championships at the Class 2A/1A wrestling meet Saturday, Feb. 26, at Culver High School.

At 132 pounds, Coy Butner finished his season with a record of 31-1. He defeated Reedsport's Aaron Solomon 7-2 in the state championship match.

At 138 pounds, Chase Butner defeated Culver's Reeden Arsenault 11-8 to claim the state title. Chase Butner was 29-1 on the season.

Two other Spartans also competed at the state tournament. Hunter Buck placed sixth at 106 pounds. Will Seggerman went 0-2 at 138 pounds.

*"I was glad that I was finally able to achieve the goal that I've been fighting for so long."*

— Baker senior wrestler Jaden Martin

Bloomer pinned his first two opponents, Ayden Rangel of Banks and David Steagull of Sweet Home, to advance to the quarterfinals against Marshfield's Miguel Velasquez.

After losing by fall, Bloomer rebounded to dominate Gladstone's Brodey Kitzmiller in the consolation semifinals. Bloomer then pinned Dayne Muller of Siu-slaw to claim third.

Young said Bloomer's response to his disappointing loss in the semifinals was typical of the senior's attitude.

"That can be a difficult thing to do in life, when you don't reach a goal that you have worked so hard for," Young said. "We call it character and it is a big thing in life. Gauge has this upbeat energy and positive mindset that is contagious for the rest of the team."

While Bloomer was finishing his high school career, teammate Duran, a freshman at 113 pounds, was competing in his first state tournament.

Duran entered the tournament as the number two seed, and pinned Cascade's Jason Hoffman in his first match.

In the quarterfinals against Josh Perdew of Tillamook, whom Duran had beaten 4-0 earlier in the season, Duran won 7-3 to advance to the semifinals against Jacob Landtroop of Sweet Home.

"Aldo wrestled a little tight and got caught," Young said. "After that he really got after it, but could not close the gap and lost 4-2 in a great match."

Landtroop went on to win the state title.

Like his older teammate, Bloomer, Duran shrugged off the defeat and beat Hayden Burk of Mazama 6-1 in the consolation semifinals to set up a rematch against Perdew for third place.

"Perdew came out as the aggressor and got a little fire out of Aldo," Young said. "This time Aldo hit another gear and earned the fall."

**Other Bulldogs at state**

Young said Baker's youth — just five of the 14 state qualifiers are seniors — was a factor with so many wrestlers competing in their first state meet.

"With an overall young crew, we wrestled a little tight, we could have definitely been more aggressive," Young said. "Next year those guys will have a little bit more experience and they got to see the big show as a freshman or sophomore."

• Joey Duncan, sophomore, 0-2 at 106 pounds.

• Marcus Chamberlain, sophomore, 1-2 at 113 pounds.

• Sage Darlington, sophomore, 0-2 at 120 pounds.

• Cole Hester, sophomore, 1-2 at 126 pounds.

• Samuel Nelson, freshman, 0-2 at 126 pounds.

• Riley Martin, sophomore, 0-2 at 132 pounds.

• Ryan Brown, junior, 0-2 at 160 pounds.

• Adrian Allen, senior, 1-2 at 182 pounds.

• Alex Ritter, senior, 2-2 at 220 pounds.

• Russell Walden, sophomore, 0-2 at 285 pounds.

## Denver Nuggets rout Portland Trail Blazers, 124-92

BY ANNE M. PETERSON

Associated Press

PORTLAND — JaMychal Green had 20 points and 10 rebounds off the bench and the Denver Nuggets pushed their winning streak to six games with a 124-92 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers on Sunday night, Feb. 27.

Nikola Jokic had 18 rebounds, 11 assists and eight points before sitting for good with 2:22 left in the third quarter.

DeMarcus Cousins, signed by the Nuggets for the rest of the season on Friday, added 19 points and eight rebounds, and Denver's bench finished with a season-high 76 points.

"We've got a lot of talented guys in that second unit," said Bryn Forbes, who finished with 17 points. "A lot of guys can come in and get hot, put up some points and help us win games."

Anfernee Simons had 16 points to lead the Trail Blaz-

ers, who were coming off a loss to the Warriors on Thursday that snapped a four-game winning streak.

Denver led by as many as 20 points. Although the Nuggets looked sluggish at times playing the second of a back-to-back, the smaller and less experienced Blazers' lineup couldn't match them.

"It was a tough one tonight, tough one," Blazers first-year coach Chauncey Billups said. "We had a couple of good moments, but we weren't able to sustain, for the most part. But we played hard, I'll give us that credit."

Justise Winslow, who started for the Blazers in a loss to Golden State on Thursday, did not play because of a sore Achilles. He was replaced in the starting lineup by Keon Johnson, a 19-year-old rookie acquired by the Trail Blazers in a trade with the Clippers on Feb. 4. He finished with four points in his first career start.

The Blazers also started Drew Eubanks, signed to a 10-day contract earlier in the week when Portland announced that center Jusuf Nurkic was battling plantar fasciitis.

Portland is still missing Damian Lillard, who is recovering from abdominal surgery. The Blazers announced Sunday that their six-time All-Star had progressed through the first phase of his recovery, and that he will be reevaluated in two to three weeks after a reconditioning protocol.

The Nuggets went on an 18-4 run to start the second quarter and pushed their lead to 50-31. The Blazers never threatened.

"We knew we were the better team tonight so we knew we had to put them away early and we did a great job of doing that," Green said.

Cousins, a 10-year NBA veteran, was first signed by the Nuggets on Jan. 21 to a 10-day contract. The former All-Star

has played 10 games with Denver this season after he was waived by the Bucks.

"He's just getting more and more comfortable. Signing

him for the rest of the season, he know he can just come in here and relax and play his game," Nuggets coach Michael Malone said. "He's really

getting comfortable with that second unit and they are really establishing an identity, getting chemistry and having continuity."



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