

BAKER BOYS BASKETBALL

Bulldogs rout Outlaws, advance in playoffs

Baker will play Gladstone Friday, March 4, for berth in state tournament

BY JAYSON JACOBY

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Sisters won the opening tip off.

Baker won pretty much everything else.

Playing like a team whose season was in the balance, the Bulldogs dominated the Outlaws, 61-38, in a Class 4A boys play-in game Saturday afternoon, Feb. 26, in the Baker gym.

Baker's aggressive defense kept the Outlaws off balance from the start, and the Bulldogs mixed an array of inside baskets and 3-pointers to forge a big lead in the first half and then cruise to the win in an anticlimactic final two quarters.

The Bulldogs now will travel to Gladstone, southeast of Portland, for a playoff game on Friday, March 4, at 6 p.m.

The winner advances to the eight-team state tournament March 10-12 at Coos Bay.

"The kids did a great job," Baker coach Jebron Jones said. "They had a great week of practice and it translated to the game. I was real proud."

After Sisters' Max Palanuk tapped the opening tip to a teammate, Baker's Jaron Long stole the ball and streaked downcourt for a layin less than half a minute later for the game's first points.

Baker never trailed in improving its season record to 18-6.

Richard Huffman scored inside to tie the score at 2, but Long scored the next two baskets, one on a long outlet pass from Hudson Spike. Baker led 6-2, and Sisters coach Chad Rush called timeout with 5:40 left in the first quarter.

The brief break didn't interrupt Baker's momentum.

Isaiah Jones hit a 3-pointer, and after Palanuk's basket, Paul Hobson also made a 3-pointer to push Baker's lead to 12-4.

Hobson swished another long ball half a minute later and the Bulldogs were up 15-6 with 2:20 left in the first quarter.

He followed that with one of Baker's half dozen first quarter steals and a layin that boosted



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Jaron Long had a game-high 19 points in Baker's win over Sisters on Feb. 26, 2022, in the Baker gym.

Baker's lead to double digits, at 17-6, for the first time.

Sisters (9-15) closed the first quarter with a brief rally featuring Palanuk's inside basket and a 3-pointer by Mehyke Froelich that cut Baker's lead to 17-11 at the break.

But the Outlaws never got closer.

Long, who scored Baker's first basket in each of the first three quarters, had consecutive baskets, one layin and one acrobatic runner in the lane, to give Baker a 21-11 lead.

"I definitely felt like we played our game," said Long, who scored a game-high 19 points. "We shared the ball really well."

After Palanuk's inside hoop cut Baker's lead to 25-17, Baker ended the first half on a 13-2 run.

Jones and Grant Gambleton had consecutive 3-pointers, Long had two more baskets and Spike capped a 13-0 stretch with Baker's sixth 3-pointer of the half.

Huffman scored the final basket of the half, but Baker had already doubled up the Outlaws, 38-19.

There was no drama in the final 16 minutes.

Six Bulldogs scored in the third quarter as the lead swelled to as much as 27 points on Jones' 3-pointer with 3:56 left.

Hobson, who finished with 16 points, nailed consecutive 3-pointers to open the fourth quarter to give Baker its biggest lead at 61-31.

The Bulldogs had 11

3-pointers — four by Hobson, three by Jones. Sisters had just two.

But it was Baker's harassing defensive looks, including a fullcourt press and a halfcourt trap at times, that flustered Sisters and kept the Outlaws from establishing any offensive rhythm.

And when Sisters got into its halfcourt sets, Baker clogged the passing lanes and deflected multiple passes leading to steals and easy baskets in transition.

"I think our intensity on defense was there from the very beginning," Jebron Jones said. "We created a few turnovers and got some easy baskets and that changed the momentum in our favor early on."

Jones was also pleased with Baker's offensive efficiency.

"We attacked the paint early on and got some easy baskets and that opened things up outside," he said.

Although Jones said he always emphasizes to his players that they won't "live or die with the 3-pointer," neither does he discourage them from taking open shots when they've had a chance to set their feet and square their shoulders.

"When the kids are in rhythm they're pretty good shooters," Jones said.

It was a fast-paced game, due in part to a relative scarcity of fouls — just eight were called, six on Baker, in the first half. Baker shot just three free throws, and Sisters two.

Jones said he was happy to see the Bulldogs playing together and having fun. The

Baker vs. Gladstone comparison

Overall and league records

• Baker: 18-6, 5-1 (Greater Oregon League)

• Gladstone: 14-7, 8-2 (Tri-Valley Conference)

Record in last 10 games

• Baker: 7-3

• Gladstone: 8-2

Common opponents

Banks

• Baker won 85-81 on Dec. 4

• Gladstone lost 64-28 on Dec. 10

Estacada

• Baker won 77-66 on Dec. 10

• Gladstone won 67-45 on Jan. 18, won 44-38 on Feb. 4

Molalla

• Baker won 85-68 on Dec. 11

• Gladstone won 60-56 on Jan. 28, won 43-41 on Feb. 18

Madras

• Baker won 72-68 on Jan. 7

• Gladstone won 62-51 on Feb. 2, lost 64-59 on Feb. 21

SISTERS (38)

Maddox-Castle 0 0-0 0, Schwarts 0 0-0 0, Huffman 4 0-0 8, Scott 0 0-0 0, Gardner 0 0-0 0, Palanuk 7 1-1 18, Silva 0 0-0 0, Pittman 1 1-1 3, Martin 0 0-0 0, Merillo 2 0-0 4, Froelich 1 0-0 3, Scholl 1 0-0 2. Totals 17 2-2 38.

BAKER (61)

Logsdon 0 0-0 0, Harper 0 0-0 0, Gambleton 1 0-0 3, Quintela 1 0-0 3, Younger 0 0-0 0, Molina 1 0-0 2, Spike 2 2-2 7, Jones 4 0-0 11, Long 9 0-0 19, Hobson 6 0-0 16, Charbonneau 0 0-0 0, Mitchell 0 0-0 1. Totals 24 2-3 61.

Sisters 11 8 12 7 — 38
Baker 17 21 17 6 — 61

team's mentality was vastly different after the win over Sisters compared with the previous game, a loss to La Grande, also in the Baker gym, in the Greater Oregon League championship game on Feb. 19.

"Our body language tonight was completely different from a week ago, which was great to see," Jones said.

The challenge now, he said, is to maintain that momentum, and attitude, during practices this week in preparation for the game at Gladstone.



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Baker's Hayden Younger goes to the basket against Sisters' Richard Huffman (No. 11) on Saturday, Feb. 26, 2022, in the Baker gym.



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Baker's Lane Molina makes a pass against the defense of Richard Huffman (right) and Noah Pittman on Saturday, Feb. 26, 2022, in the Baker gym.

OREGON MEN'S BASKETBALL

Trojans edge Ducks on late 3-pointer

Loss dims Ducks' hopes for at-large bid to NCAA tournament

BY STEVE MIMS

Associated Press

EUGENE — Drew Peterson scored 20 points, including the game-winning 3-pointer with 11.5 seconds remaining, and No. 16 Southern California defeated Oregon 70-69 Saturday night, Feb. 26.

Isaiah Mobley added 17 points for the Trojans (25-4, 14-4 Pac-12), who set a school record for most wins in the regular season.

"Very proud of players, we played outstanding game," USC coach Andy Enfield said. "It was a hostile environment, a lot of energy in the building. It was a great crowd. Their students were swearing at our players and throwing things in the tunnel afterwards but we came through with a big road win."

Quincy Guerrier scored 15 points for Oregon (18-10, 11-6), while De'Vion Harmon added 13 points, N'Faly Dante had 12 and Jacob Young scored 11.

The Ducks shot 38.7% from the field, including 6 for 23 on 3-pointers.

"I thought we rushed a few of them," Oregon coach Dana Altman said of the 3-pointers. "I thought we were too aggressive at times. We got to be aggressive, but I thought we rushed a few."

Guerrier put the Ducks

ahead 69-67 on a 3-pointer with 23 seconds remaining before Peterson answered with a 3-pointer. Oregon's Will Richardson missed a shot at the buzzer.

"That was definitely cool," Peterson said. "We set a high ball screen and they went under it. I saw a bit of space and decided to pull up, thankfully it went in. Then we got a stop. We worked our butts off tonight. Everyone contributed and we won in a crazy environment."

With 3:04 left to play, Young beat the shot clock with a deep 3-pointer to put Oregon ahead 64-61 before Mobley made two free throws of the Trojans. Harmon then drove for an Oregon basket before Max Agbonkpolo answered with a bucket to get USC within 66-65 with 1:26 to play.

Mobley drove for a basket that put the Trojans up 67-66 with 41 seconds left, but Guerrier followed with a 3-pointer for the Ducks.

USC went up 51-45 on a dunk by Chavez Goodwin before Harmon followed with a 3-pointer for the Ducks. Kobe Johnson followed with a bucket for the Trojans before Oregon scored six straight points to take the lead on two free throws by Dante.

The Trojans went back into the lead on a 3-pointer by Mobley with 7:52 left in the game.

Oregon rallied from an 12-point deficit in the first half to take a 32-31 lead at the break.

The Ducks tied the game 17-17 on a bucket from Dante before USC followed with 11 points in a row. Drew Peterson scored seven points during the stretch before Goodwin made a couple free throws to put the Trojans ahead 28-17.

Reese Dixon-Waters made a 3-pointer to put USC ahead 31-19 with 4:57 left in the half before Oregon scored the final 13 points before halftime. Eric Williams Jr. dunked twice during that span before Harmon made a free throw to get the Ducks within 31-29.

Young added a free throw and Guerrier added two more free throws to put the Ducks into the lead at the break.

Big picture

USC: The Trojans are 25-4 to set a record for best start in school history. ... USC has won 72 games over the past three seasons, matching the school record set from 2016-18. ... Junior guard Boogie Ellis, who ranks third on the team in scoring at 12.9 points per game, returned to the starting lineup after missing Thursday's game at Oregon State due to an ankle injury.

Oregon: Oregon is 59-69 all-time against USC, but Altman is 15-7 against the Trojans during his time with the Ducks. ... Oregon sits alone in fourth place in the Pac-12 heading into the final week of the regular season as it looks to wrap up a first-round bye in the conference tournament.

MEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

St. Mary's upsets top-ranked Gonzaga

BY MICHAEL WAGAMAN

Associated Press

MORAGA, Calif. — Saint Mary's finally has its first perfect record at home — and a memorable win over top-ranked Gonzaga to go with it.

Tommy Kuhse had 14 points and six rebounds for No. 23 Saint Mary's, which beat No. 1 Gonzaga 67-57 on Saturday night, Feb. 26, to prevent the Bulldogs from completing another undefeated run in the West Coast Conference.

"That's really special," Gaels coach Randy Bennett said after his squad completed a 16-0 run at McKeon Pavilion. "It's been hard to get. We lost it one year to Loyola Marymount in our last home game. It's been something hard to get and we finally got it. Especially when it's against the No. 1 team in the country, it just makes it ... a night you'll never forget."

The top six teams in the AP poll all lost Saturday, and seven of the top nine; only No. 7 Duke won.

Saint Mary's ended Gonzaga's 17-game winning streak, beating a No. 1 team for the first time since knocking off the Bulldogs in the 2019 conference tournament title game.

"It's kind of life in late February and early March, especially on the road," Gonzaga coach Mark Few said. His team clinched the WCC regular-season title last weekend.

Fans poured onto the court in a wild celebration of the Gaels' 18th consecutive win at McKeon Pavilion dating to last season.

Matthias Tass added 13 points for the Gaels (24-6, 12-

3) and made a pivotal block with 1:15 remaining. Kyle Bowman made a pair of clutch 3-pointers after missing his first seven shots.

"I wanted to go in the middle of the circle and kiss the logo but people were running on the court so it was difficult," Tass said. "It was definitely a surreal moment."

Rasir Bolton scored 16 points for Gonzaga (24-3, 13-1). Drew Timme had six points and eight rebounds, but shot 2 of 10.

Saint Mary's had lost seven straight to its rivals from the Pacific Northwest, including five straight at home, before stunning the Bulldogs.

Gonzaga had beaten the Gaels handily two weeks earlier and had won 34 consecutive conference games, 33 by double-digits. But Saint Mary's never let Gonzaga get comfortable on Saturday, leading from start to finish while winning their fourth straight since that loss in Spokane.

"They were extremely more aggressive. They got after us and played us really really physical," Few said of Saint Mary's. "That was it. When you're the most aggressive team and most physical team, probably nine times out of 10 you're going to win."

Gonzaga trailed by 16 with 13 minutes remaining and got to 57-50 before Bowen buried a 3-pointer. The Bulldogs responded with four points, but Bowen made another 3 and Logan Johnson sank a pair of free throws.

The game drew a packed house at McKeon Pavilion, with scouts from the War-

riors, Knicks and Pistons in attendance.

Two nights after thumping San Francisco 89-73, Gonzaga appeared sluggish and out of sync. The Bulldogs shot 31% in the first half and were outscored 17-5 over the final seven minutes before the break.

Timme, who was taunted by Gaels fans before the game as he practiced shooting from midcourt, was smothered by defenders every time he got the ball in the paint. Gonzaga's leading scorer missed all eight shots he took in the first half, was called for a three-second violation in the key in the second half and nearly got a technical foul after inadvertently tossing the ball near a referee's head.

"He got his touches but after three or four bounces we had three guys surrounding him and knocking the ball out of his hands in the first half," Tass said. "That kind of ruined his rhythm. It was hard for him to bounce back from that."

Big picture

Gonzaga: Timme was a non-factor for most of the game, which put the Bulldogs into a big hole they never got out of. The final score was not indicative of how dominant St. Mary's was. Gonzaga is 0-3 this season when trailing at the half.

Saint Mary's: Bennett spent the week telling anyone who would listen that he liked his team's chances. He was rewarded with the Gaels' biggest win in more than three years, a victory Bennett called one of the most significant in program history.