

BAKER BOYS BASKETBALL AT CLASS 4A STATE TOURNAMENT

Baker can't hold early lead, falls to top-seed Junction City

BY JAYSON JACOBY

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The Baker boys first state basketball tournament game in 15 years started about as well as the Bulldogs could have hoped for.

But their momentum didn't last.

Junction City, the tournament's top seed, recovered from a sluggish start and used a 16-0 run spanning parts of the first and second quarters to propel its 58-47 win in a quarterfinal game Thursday afternoon, March 10, at North Bend High School.

Baker led 13-4 on Isaiah Jones' 3-pointer, prompting Junction City coach Craig Rothenberger to call timeout with 3:29 left in the first quarter.

The Bulldogs didn't score again until well into the second period, by which time the Tigers had turned their 9-point deficit into a 7-point lead at 20-13.

But giving up 16 straight points wasn't Baker's only problem.

Just after the first-quarter timeout, starting guard Jaron Long injured his right knee while playing defense. He didn't return.

Baker coach Jebron Jones said Long's injury was crucial.

"I think it affected the players tremendously, and in a negative way," Jones said. "He does a lot for our team on offense and defense. It took a toll emotionally on the kids."

Jones said that although Long's injury was to the same knee he injured at La Grande on Jan. 28, forcing him to miss the next two games, the injury against Junction City was a different type. Jones didn't know Long's prognosis as of Thursday evening.

The Bulldogs, even without Long, who scored 20 points in Baker's playoff win at Gladstone on March 4, never let the game get away from them on Thursday.

Hudson Spike ended Junction City's 14-0 run with a pair of free throws, and he followed with a 3-pointer to cut the Tigers' lead to 20-18.

But every time Baker seemed poised to reverse the momentum, Junction City had an answer.

And most often the response came from the Tigers' 6-foot-2 junior wing, Kaleb Burnett.

Burnett had one of the best games in tournament history, making every one of his shots — 13 field goals and four free



Baker's Isaiah Jones goes to the basket against La Grande's Jace Schow in the GOL title game on Saturday, Feb. 19, 2022, in the Baker gym. Jones had 11 points to lead the Bulldogs in a 58-47 loss to Junction City at the Class 4A state tournament on Thursday, March 10, 2022.

throws — for a game-high 30 points.

Burnett scored the last six points of the half for Junction City and the Tigers led 29-23 at the break.

Jones said Burnett was a difficult player to deal with.

"He was crafty around the rim," Jones said. "He played a great game for sure."

Jones said Baker defenders also contributed to Burnett's big game, especially when he got the ball at the top of the key and had the option of either taking a quick jumper or driving the lane.

"We did not do a good job defending the dribble," Jones said.

Although Junction City never trailed in the second half, neither could the Tigers take complete control.

Isaiah Jones drove the lane for the first basket of the third quarter to get Baker to within 29-25, and, after yet another basket from Burnett, Jaxon Logsdon scored inside to cut the lead back to four, at 31-27.

But Baker's pressure defense, which has flustered so many opponents this season, was less effective against Junction City and couldn't create the series of turnovers and fastbreak baskets that the Bulldogs have thrived on in most of their 19 victories this season.

The Tigers ran an effective press break and used crisp, accurate passes to thwart the Bulldogs' fast hands. And when Baker double-teamed a Tiger, Burnett always seemed to be open for an easy basket.

"They do a wonderful job of protecting a lead," Jebron Jones said of the Tigers.

"They have a lot of players who make great decisions with the ball. They don't make many mistakes."

Baker scored 15 points over turnovers (as did Junction City), but six of those were in the first quarter while the Bulldogs were rolling to the early lead.

Junction City took its largest lead at 35-27 on Court Knabe's 15-footer with 5:08 left in the third quarter.

But Baker's Grant Gambleton, who played extended minutes in Long's absence, swished a 3-pointer from the left wing to get the Bulldogs back to within 35-30.

Burnett then scored 8 straight points for the Tigers as they pushed the advantage to 41-31.

Baker didn't wilt.

Paul Hobson made a 3-pointer and a free throw, sandwiched around Burnett's two free throws, and then Isaiah Jones hit a tough turnaround jumper from 10 feet



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Baker's Jaxon Logsdon battles for a loose ball against Sisters on Saturday, Feb. 26, 2022, in the Baker gym. Logsdon had 10 points in Baker's 58-47 loss to Junction City in the Class 4A state tournament on Thursday, March 10, 2022.

BAKER (47)

Logsdon 4 1-2 10, Gambleton 2 0-0 5, Quintela 0 0-0 0, Younger 0 0-0 0, Molina 0 0-0 0, Spike 3 2-2 10, Jones 5 0-0 11, Long 1 0-1 2, Hobson 3 1-2 9. Totals 18 4-7 47.

JUNCTION CITY (58)

Bodely 0 0-0 0, Farrald 0 0-0 0, Burnett 13 4-4 30, Riley 0 0-0 0, Harter 0 0-0 0, Ohman 1 0-0 3, Kister 1 0-0 3, Ward 0 0-0 0, Knabe 4 2-4 10, Dobi 0 0-0 0, Evans 4 4-6 12, Espinoza 0 0-0 0. Totals 23 10-14 58.

Baker	13	10	16	8—47
Junction City	15	14	16	13—58

to get Baker within 43-37 late in the quarter.

Jones scored the last basket of the third quarter and the first of the fourth to get Baker within 45-41.

After a Tiger basket, Gambleton twisted in a reverse layin to make it 47-43.

But Burnett, as always, stifled the Bulldogs' comeback bid.

He scored two straight inside baskets, and Knabe added a free throw during a key 5-0 run that boosted the Tigers' lead to 52-43 with 2:08 left in the game.

Baker went more than 2 minutes without a point during that decisive stretch.

The Bulldogs were forced to foul, and the Tigers made five free throws down the stretch

to extend the lead before Logsdon had a steal and layin for the final points.

Jebron Jones said he was proud of his team's resilience and effort as they tried to overcome Junction City's lead for the majority of the game.

"It was a tough one," Jones said. "The young men fought hard to the very end."

Jones said he felt badly for Long.

"I know he was bummed, after all the hard work he had put in to come back from the first injury," Jones said. "But he did a wonderful job cheering on his teammates"

Philomath rallies to eliminate Baker

A barrage of 3-pointers early and a rally late weren't quite enough to extend the Baker boys basketball team's stay at the Class 4A state tournament in Coos Bay as the Bulldogs lost 67-60 to Philomath Friday morning, March 11.

Coming off a 58-47 loss to Junction City in a quarterfinal game on Thursday, March 10, the Bulldogs returned to the court less than 24 hours later with torrid shooting in the first half against Philomath in a consolation semifinal game at Marshfield High School in Coos Bay.

With a berth in the fourth-place game Saturday morning and the potential to win a trophy at stake, the Bulldogs made 7 of 14 3-pointers in the first half. Paul Hobson was 4 for 6, Isaiah Jones 2 for 3 and Jaxon Logsdon 1 of 2.

Baker shot 13 of 25 overall from the field, and 6 of 9 from the free throw line to take a 39-26 lead at halftime.

Philomath was that close only because the Warriors shot at an even higher percentage — 12 for 19, 63%. But Philomath was just 1 of 5 from 3-point range, and 1 for 4 from the free throw line.

Baker extended its lead to 43-28 on Hudson Spike's layin early in the third quarter.

But Philomath dominated most of the rest of the way.

The Warriors had a 16-2 run to get within 45-44 with 1:44 left in the third quarter.

Jones and Hobson each made a 3-pointer in the final 1:24 to boost Baker's lead back to 51-46 entering the final period.

But the Warriors continued to shoot at a high rate at the start of the fourth quarter, and Baker couldn't keep pace. Cameron Ordway made consecutive 3-pointers to give Philomath its first lead, 54-53, with 6:32 left in the game. The Warriors extended the lead to 58-53, but Baker got as close as 58-56 on Spike's free throw with 4:58 left.

Turnovers proved costly for Baker down the stretch, however.

The long-range shooting went Philomath's way in the second half, as the Warriors made five 3-pointers while Baker cooled off, making just two.

Spike led Baker with 20 points. Jones had 19 and Hobson 17 as the Bulldogs finished the season with a 19-7 record.

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL LABOR DISPUTE ENDS

MLB players reach deal, salvage 162-game season

BY RONALD BLUM

AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK — Major League Baseball's players and owners ended their most bitter money fight in a quarter-century Thursday, March 10, when the players' association accepted management's offer to salvage a 162-game season that will start April 7.

The work stoppage ended at 7 p.m. sharp, closing an acrimonious 99-day lockout that delayed spring training and threatened to cancel regular-season games for the first time since 1995.

Training camps in Florida and Arizona opened Friday, March 11, with players mandated to report by Sunday, March 13. Opening day was pushed back just over a week from its March 31 date, but all that might be forgotten when the Yankees' Aaron Judge digs in against the rival Red Sox, or Shohei Ohtani eschews the new universal designated hitter and plays both ways for the Angels.

"I do want to start by apologizing to our fans," Commissioner Rob Manfred said, his voice quavering at times, later adding: "I hope that the players will see the effort we made to address their concerns in this agreement as an olive branch in terms of building a better relationship."

A frenzy of free-agency action was expected. A freeze on roster transactions was dissolved Thursday night, spurring a wave of speculation about new homes for Carlos Correa, Freddie Freeman and more than 100 other free

agents who had been kept in lockout limbo.

The deal brings major changes that include expansion of the DH to the National League, increasing the post-season from 10 teams to 12, advertisements on uniforms, a balanced schedule that reduces intradivision play starting in 2023 and measures aimed to incentivize competition and decrease rebuilding, such as an amateur draft lottery. Most of the labor fight, of course, centered on the game's core economics.

The players' executive board approved the five-year contract at about 3 p.m. in a 26-12 vote. Owners ratified the deal 30-0 just three hours later, and just like that, baseball's ninth work stoppage ended.

Not that all is resolved. Union head Tony Clark did not appear alongside Manfred and scheduled a separate news conference for Friday, a visible sign of the sport's factions.

"Our union endured the second-longest work stoppage in its history to achieve significant progress in key areas that will improve not just current players' rights and benefits, but those of generations to come," Clark said in a statement.

Manfred pledged "maybe to more regularly get to the bottom of player concerns so that they don't build up."

"I spoke to Tony after their ratification vote. I told him that I thought we had a great opportunity for the game in front of us," Manfred said. "One of the things that I'm supposed to do is promote a good relation-

ship with our players. I've tried to do that. I think that I have not been successful in that. I think that it begins with small steps."

Players' pictures that had been scrubbed from the league's website were restored. Teams tweeted videos and statements celebrating the lockout's end and sharing info about tickets for the new opening day.

The 184 games canceled by Manfred were instead postponed, and the regular season was extended by three days to Oct. 5. Approximately three games per team will be made up as part of doubleheaders.

With pitchers Max Scherzer and Andrew Miller taking prominent roles as union spokesmen, players let three management deadlines pass — Manfred called them "the art of collective bargaining" — before accepting an agreement before the fourth.

While the union's executive subcommittee voted 8-0 against the deal — all earned \$3.5 million or more last year — player representatives were in favor by 26-4.

"Time and economic leverage. No agreement comes together before those two things play out," Manfred said. "I think we made an agreement when it was possible to make an agreement."

After narrowing the economic gap this week, MLB made another offer Thursday afternoon, saying this was the absolute, final, last moment to preserve full salary and service time.

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