

BAKER GIRLS AT CLASS 4A STATE BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

Bulldogs bring back a trophy

Baker holds off Marist for 4th-place

BY JAYSON JACOBY

jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

Fouls, a knee and an ankle conspired to nearly derail the Baker girls basketball team's bid for a trophy.

But the Bulldogs overcame those obstacles, and a pesky Marist Catholic squad, to claim a 57-48 win and the fourth-place trophy at the Class 4A state tournament on Saturday, March 12, at Marshfield High School in Coos Bay.

"Winning a game on Saturday at the state tournament is pretty special," Baker coach Jason Ramos said. "It was a great team effort."

And from a depleted team.

Baker, the defending state champion from 2019 (the 2020 and 2021 tournaments were canceled due to the pandemic), came to Coos Bay with a goal of playing for a trophy, Ramos said.

After a 61-46 loss to Corbett in a quarterfinal game on Thursday, March 10 (the Cardinals went on the finish second), Ramos said the Bulldogs, though no longer in contention for another state title, still had a trophy to play for.

After beating Cascade 50-39 on Friday, March 11, Baker was only one win away from realizing that goal.

But the Bulldogs faced challenges even before tipping off against Marist Catholic of Eugene.

Starting point guard Taylor Gyllenberg, who hurt her knee against Corbett, missed her second straight game.

That was only the start of the attrition.

In a tight game against the Spartans with the fourth-place trophy at stake, Skylar Roy twisted her ankle while dribbling in the lane during the third quarter. She finished the game on the bench with a bag of ice taped to her ankle.

Then came the pivotal fourth period.

Brooklyn Jaca, who had 12 points and was one of four Bulldogs in double figures, scored on a layin just 9 seconds into the quarter to give Baker a 36-34 lead.

It was a lead the Bulldogs wouldn't relinquish.

Marist tied the score at 36 on Madison Holmes' two free throws with 7:21 left in the game.

That was the start of the game-deciding stretch.

Baker scored the next 8 points, with four Bulldogs each getting 2 points.

Makenzie Flanagan hit a jumper with one foot on the 3-point line to break the tie and give Baker a 38-36 lead.

Then Rylee Elms, who matched Jaca with 12 points, scored off a nifty spin move in the key, and Baker led 40-36 with 6:15 left.

After a Marist timeout, Sydney Pierce whipped a pass to a wide open Jaca, who swished a



Baker's Jozie Ramos defends against Marist's Madison Holmes during the 4th-place game of the Class 4A state tournament on March 12, 2022, at Marshfield High School.

16-footer to boost Baker's lead to 42-36 with 5:46 left.

Macey Moore, who finished with 10 points, capped the key run with a 15-footer that gave Baker a commanding 44-36 lead with 5:06 remaining.

Marist's Page Doerr, who led all scorers with 21 points, ended the streak with a layin to make it 44-38. But after Elms grabbed a tough rebound on a Marist miss, Jaca nailed a 3-pointer to give the Bulldogs their biggest lead, at 47-38, with 4:03 left.

"We hit some big shots," Ramos said.

But he said it was Baker's play on the other end of the court that spurred the fourth-quarter rally.

"We had a really good defensive effort late in the game," Ramos said.

The Bulldogs didn't quite breeze through the final 4 minutes, however.

Baker's leading scorer, Jozie Ramos, had already spent considerable time on the bench after picking up her fourth foul with 5:32 left in the third quarter.

Ramos, who finished with a team-high 13 points, drew her fifth foul, against Doerr, with 2:09 left in the game.

Doerr made both free throws to cut Baker's lead to 50-44.

Flanagan also fouled out, with 1 minute left.

Jason Ramos said he has confidence in Baker's roster, so even with four players, including two starters, unavailable, he wasn't overly worried about the Bulldogs' ability to hold the lead.

Baker made five free throws in the final 2 minutes, including a pair each by Moore and Pierce, to thwart the Spartans' comeback bid.

Baker had one of its best games from the free throw line this season, making 14 of 19.

The Bulldogs also shot a season-high 60% from the field, 21 for 35, including a

torrid 65% (11 for 17) in the first half.

"We had a great offensive performance, especially in the fourth quarter," Jason Ramos said. "And we needed it."

With Gyllenberg unavailable, Pierce, who normally shares point guard duties, ended up playing 31 of the 32 minutes. Pierce had 6 points, 3 assists and 3 steals.

Elms also played 31 minutes in part due to Jozie Ramos missing 11 minutes of game time due to fouls.

Elms had a game-high 11 rebounds to go with her dozen points.

Elms, who is one of Baker's core group of juniors that also includes Flanagan, Pierce, Ramos, Jaca, Moore and Roy, said she hopes to build on what the Bulldogs accomplished this year.

"It inspired us as a group to step it up next season because being at the tournament and winning made us hungry to do better," Elms said.

Flanagan said the trophy was a welcome reward for a season that started in early December.

"I was so happy to have won something — that proves that we worked hard all season," she said.

Jozie Ramos, who was an all-tournament first team honoree, agreed.

"It's a reward for the hard work all of us have put in throughout the season," she said.

The fourth-place game was close most of the way.

Doerr had a conventional 3-point play to open the scoring, but Baker led 12-9 after one quarter. Elms and Jozie Ramos each had 4 points in the opening quarter.

Moore's two free throws gave Baker a 16-11 lead early in the second quarter, and the Bulldogs' lead reached 5 points two more times before Marist, led by Doerr, rallied to get within 28-27 at halftime.



Makenzie Flanagan scores a key layin in the fourth quarter of Baker's 57-48 win over Marist in the 4th-place game of the Class 4A state tournament on Saturday, March 12, 2022, at Marshfield High School.

MARIST (48)

Doerr 8 4-9 21, Williams 1 1-4 4, Randol 0 0-0 0, Fuller 4 1-4 9, Sydow 0 0-0 0, Blansett 0 0-0 0, Holmes 1 7-9 10, Delee 0 0-0 0, Henderson 2 0-0 4. Totals 15 13-29 48.

BAKER (57)

Elms 5 2-2 12, Flanagan 2 0-0 4, Wilde 0 0-2 0, Pierce 2 2-2 6, Ramos 5 3-4 13, Roy 0 0-0 0, Jaca 5 1-3 12, Moore 2 6-6 10. Totals 21 14-19 57.
Marist 9 18 7 14 — 48
Baker 12 16 6 23 — 57

Baker boys win a trophy, too

The Baker girls weren't alone in bringing a trophy back from the Class 4A state tournament.

The Bulldog boys, who lost 58-47 to Junction City in the quarterfinals and lost 67-60 to Philomath in the consolation bracket — after leading in both games — received the Sportsmanship Award for the tournament.

Baker coach Jebron Jones said the team, which returns all five starters next season, benefited from its first appearance in the state tournament since 2007.

"It was a great learning experience for sure," Jones said. "I'm glad we were here so we can see the top teams and compare and hopefully be better for next year."

the display case in the Baker gym.

"We've known the potential of this team coming into the season," Ramos said. "The girls just did a great job adapting to the changes. I'm so happy for the girls and proud of them. It was a great way to finish our season."

Baker should be a strong contender for another trophy

in 2023, after losing only one senior, Katie Wilde, from the varsity squad.



Come and see us for all of your vision needs

- A great selection of frames to choose to get the look you want.
- We carry both regular and prescription sunglasses.
- In house repairs and special packages starting at \$99

EAGLE OPTICAL

3705 Midway Drive • Baker City

541.523.2020



IT'S IN YOUR INBOX

before your mailbox

Subscribers can receive daily email updates and uninterrupted digital delivery on a computer, tablet and smartphone



Sign up for free digital access

Baker City Herald

Call 800-781-3214

BakerCityHerald.com