

BAKER BASEBALL IN ARIZONA

Bulldogs rally to earn tie

BY JAYSON JACOBY

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Baker's baseball team had a chilly start to its road trip despite temperatures in the upper 70s.

On offense, anyway.

But the Bulldogs' bats eventually warmed amid the early spring heat in Phoenix, Arizona.

Baker rallied in each of its first two games on a four-game desert swing, a spring vacation tradition that was revived this year after being canceled due to the pandemic in 2020 and 2021.

The Bulldogs' two comebacks on Monday, March 21, yielded one loss, 11-5 to Doherty, Colorado, and a 13-13 tie with Manitou Springs, Colorado.

Baker had the day off on Tuesday, March 22, giving the players a chance to do some sightseeing with family members who also made the journey.

Baker coach Tim Smith said several players watched various Major League Baseball spring training games early in the day, before rejoining in the evening to watch a college baseball game between the Arizona State Sun Devils and Grand Canyon University, a 7-5 win for Grand Canyon.

"It's been a good trip overall," Smith said on Wednesday morning, March 23. "It's been fun."

But it's also a work trip, and he was eager to see the Bulldogs try to finish with a couple wins.

"We need to come out better early in the game, and jump on teams like they've been doing to us," Smith said. "On defense we need to make the plays we're supposed to make."

Baker struggled in both areas early in its first game, against Doherty.

Baker went scoreless for the first three innings.

Starting pitcher Connor Chastain kept Doherty off the scoreboard in the bottom of



Jayson Jacoby/Baker City Herald

Baker baseball player Jaxon Logsdon works on his hitting in the batting cages at the Baker Sports Complex on March 15, 2022.

the first, but then Baker's defense struggled.

The Bulldogs gave up six runs in the second inning and four more in the third, falling behind 10-0.

"We didn't make the plays we needed to make to get out of the inning," Smith said.

Baker rallied with three runs in the fourth and two more in the fifth to cut Doherty's lead to 11-5.

"We made a little charge at the end but it wasn't enough, and we ran out of time," Smith said.

Time isn't normally a factor in baseball games, but the Arizona tournament is an exception. Smith said games are limited to two hours, 15 minutes to ensure the tournament

is on schedule, so the game against Doherty ended after six innings rather than the usual seven.

Baker had just three hits.

The second game, on Monday afternoon against Manitou Springs, Colorado, had a somewhat similar start.

Manitou Springs led 6-4 after two innings and 11-6 after three.

But Baker dominated the next two innings, outscoring Manitou Springs 7-2, including five runs in the bottom of the fifth to tie the score at 13.

Again, though, the clock ran out on the Bulldogs.

"We battled back, and I like that," Smith said. "It would have been nice to finish that one. We had some momen-

Baker falls 4-1 to Buena Vista

The Baker baseball team's record on its Arizona road trip dropped to 0-2-1 with a 4-1 loss to Buena Vista, Colorado, on Wednesday morning, March 23. Baker coach Tim Smith said pitchers Silas Carter and Cody Skidgel threw well, but Baker struggled at the plate.

Baker 0 0 0 3 2 0—5
Doherty 0 6 4 1 0 x—11
Chastain, Crawford (2), Spike (3) and Logsdon. Crook, Corsi (5) and Weaver.
2B: Hester.
Manitou 3 3 5 1 1—13
Baker 1 3 2 2 5—13
Maloney, Thomson (3), McCaskey (5) and Cashdollar (Hettle). Capon, Smithson (2), Carter (4) and Logsdon.
2B: Skidgel. 3B: Spike.

tum, and I think we were set up to maybe win that thing."

Hudson Spike went 3 for 4 with a triple and two RBI. Cody Skidgel was 2 for 3 with an RBI, and Silas Carter 1 for 3 with an RBI. Jaxon Logsdon, Chastain, Kai Ogan and Cole Hester each had a hit.

Baker was 3-1-1 on the season after the Manitou Springs game.

The Bulldogs conclude their Arizona trip on Thursday, March 24, with a 3 p.m. game against Apollo, Arizona.

Lillard out for remainder of Trail Blazers' season

PORTLAND — Portland Trail Blazers star Damian Lillard has been ruled out for the rest of the season.

Lillard had abdominal surgery on Jan. 13, and it was widely expected he would not return. The Blazers made it official on Monday, March 21.

The team said that Lillard has "progressed well through the reconditioning phase of his rehab protocol" and has reached performance benchmarks. He will continue the rehab process.

Lillard said he had been

bothered by lower abdominal tendinopathy for several years, but it flared up during the Tokyo Olympics.

A six-time All-Star, Lillard averaged 24 points and 7.3 assists in 29 games this season for the Blazers.

Portland is 26-44 this season and in 12th place in the Western Conference. The Blazers are in a rebuilding phase after trading away three starters — including Lillard's backcourt teammate CJ McCollum — at the February deadline.

OREGON DUCKS BASEBALL

Ducks win fourth straight

BY JAMES CREPEA
oregonlive.com

Oregon baseball won its fourth straight, topping Gonzaga in a mid-week game.

Tanner Smith and Jacob Walsh each doubled and homered in a 9-5 win for the Ducks on Tuesday, March 22, in Spokane.

Oregon (14-6) took an early lead on an RBI walk by Josh Kasevich and Anthony Hall drove in a run to make it 2-0, but Gonzaga tied it at 2 after the first.

Smith hit a solo home run in the second and had an RBI double in the fourth, Hall hit a sacrifice fly in the third, Colby Shade drove in a run and Walsh hit a two-run single in the fourth as the Ducks built an 8-2 lead.

Gonzaga (14-5) got a run back in the fourth and two more in the seventh to run the gap to 8-5.

Walsh hit a solo home run in the eighth for the game's final margin.

Jacob Hughes allowed two runs on two hits and four walks over 1.2 innings in a no-decision. Logan Mercado picked up his third win of the season and allowed two hits and struck out three over 1.1 scoreless innings. Oregon used six other relievers, who combined to allow three runs, two earned, on seven hits and two walks with two strikeouts over the final 6.0 innings.

The Ducks return home to begin a three-game series with USC starting at 4 p.m. Friday, March 25.

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