

BAKER BASEBALL TRAVELS TO THE OREGON COAST

Bulldogs drop 3 games on road trip

Bulldogs lose first game to Astoria on walkoff double

BY JAYSON JACOBY

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The Baker baseball team's hectic weekend started with a heartbreaker.

And it didn't get better.

The Bulldogs were one out away from winning the first of their three games on the Oregon Coast, leading Astoria 3-2 in the bottom of the seventh inning of the first game of a doubleheader against the Fishermen on Friday afternoon, April 1.

On the previous play, with runners at first and third, Baker second baseman Cole Hester caught Merrick Benesch's line drive and then threw to first baseman Kai Ogan to force out Connelly Fromwiller for the double play.

But the next batter, Teague Palmberg, hit a walkoff double to give Astoria a 4-3 win.

"We played a good game," Baker coach Tim Smith said. "I thought when we took the lead we were going to be in good shape to win that game."

Ultimately, though, Baker made too many mistakes — the Bulldogs committed five errors.

"We have to execute consistently better," Smith said. "We have to make plays when our pitchers are struggling, and we're just not doing it right now."

Smith said the Bulldogs hit the ball better during the coastal trip than they did during a spring break journey to Arizona, where Baker was 0-3-1.

"We certainly hit well enough to stay in games," he said.

But Baker has struggled on the mound and on defense since returning from the desert.

First game at Astoria

The contest was mainly a pitcher's duel between Baker's Silas Carter and Astoria's Niko Boudreau.

After Astoria scored a single run in the first, Carter held the Fishermen scoreless for the next five innings. He allowed just two hits, striking out nine and giving up five walks.

Boudreau, meanwhile, struck out 11 batters with only one walk.

Baker got on the board in the fifth when Connor Chastain scored on an error on Ogan's bunt.

The Bulldogs took a 3-1 lead with two runs in the sixth.

Jaxon Logsdon led off with a walk, and he advanced to second on a passed ball and then scored on an error.

After consecutive doubles by Logan Capon and Carter, Chastain scored Capon, who was at third, on a groundout. Smith said Carter had a



Baker's Jaxon Logsdon slides into second base against Seaside on Saturday, April 2, 2022.

Robert Hilson/Contributed Photo



Logan Capon pitches against Seaside on Saturday, April 2, 2022.

Robert Hilson/Contributed Photo

strong outing.

But three errors in the decisive seventh inning proved costly as the Fishermen rallied from the 3-1 deficit.

Second game at Astoria

Astoria didn't need any last-inning heroics in the second game of the doubleheader Friday evening.

The Fishermen scored 11 runs in the first inning, starting with five straight singles. Astoria scored runs in almost every possible way, including on hit

batters, walks and Baker errors.

Smith said the first inning exemplified the Bulldogs' struggles, which he considers mental rather than physical.

"We get our heads down pretty quick," he said.

A couple of errors or other miscues tend to lead to a flurry of similar mistakes, with the result being a big inning for the opponent. Baker gave up three or more runs in five innings during its three weekend games.

On the positive side of the



Baker's Cody Skidgel rips a double against Seaside on Saturday, April 2, 2022.

Robert Hilson/Contributed Photo

ledger, Smith said the Bulldogs also have shown a propensity for rallying after some of their worst innings.

The Bulldogs certainly made Friday's second game against Astoria more interesting than might have seemed likely after the 11-run first inning.

Baker got on the scoreboard in the top of the second with a pair of runs. Hayden Younger drew a bases loaded walk to score Capon, who led off the inning with a walk. Carter also drew a walk, and he scored on

Hester's walk.

Baker didn't rely solely on free passes to score five runs in the top of the third and briefly trim the Astoria lead to 11-7.

After Cody Skidgel reached on an error to start the inning, Capon and Carter had back-to-back singles to load the bases. Chastain drew a walk to score Skidgel.

Thomas Smithson followed with a two-run single.

Chastain scored on a passed ball, and Younger had a sacri-

At Astoria, Game 1

Baker 0 0 0 0 1 2 0 — 3
Astoria 1 0 0 0 0 0 3 — 4
Carter, Skidgel (7) and Logsdon. Boudreau, Fromwiller (6) and Palmberg.

At Astoria, Game 2

Baker 0 2 5 0 0 — 7
Astoria 11 0 4 0 0 — 15
Chastain, Skidgel (1) and Logsdon. Hawkins, Giles (2), Benesch (2) and Palmberg.

At Seaside

Baker 1 0 1 0 0 0 — 2
Seaside 1 1 2 0 3 6 — 13
Capon, Smithson (5) and Hester. Shulte, Tamamantez (6) and Varozza.

fice fly to make it 11-7.

The Fishermen quickly thwarted Baker's rally, though, scoring four runs in the bottom of the third.

Astoria again took advantage of Baker errors — three of the Bulldogs' four miscues were in the third.

Neither team scored in the final two innings.

Smithson was 3 for 3 with two RBIs. Younger also drove in two runs.

At Seaside

On Saturday the Bulldogs traveled a short distance south along Highway 101 to Seaside for a single game against the Seagulls.

Baker struggled on offense but starting pitcher Capon kept the game close, as Seaside led just 4-2 after three innings.

But the Seagulls scored nine runs in the final two innings to win 13-2.

Baker had six more errors in the game, and two more big innings again proved costly.

Baker actually outit the Seagulls, seven to six, but Seaside didn't commit any errors, and its pitchers yielded just two walks compared to seven for Baker.

Skidgel was 2 for 2 with an RBI.

Smith said the Baker coaches had a "heart to heart" talk with the team after the loss to Seaside, emphasizing the need for players to assert themselves as leaders and hold their teammates accountable to prevent one or two mistakes from turning into a big inning for the opponent.

"Things have to change," Smith said. "They have the ability, they just have to stay in it mentally."

Baker fell to 4-6-1 on the season.

The Bulldogs open Greater Oregon League play by traveling to Milton-Freewater on Wednesday, April 6, for a doubleheader against Mac-Hi. First pitch is set for 2 p.m.

Spurs top Blazers to strengthen play-in hopes

BY RAUL DOMINGUEZ

Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — Keldon Johnson scored 28 points and the San Antonio Spurs defeated the short-handed Portland Trail Blazers 113-92 on Sunday night, April 2, to strengthen their bid for a play-in berth.

Coupled with the Los Angeles Lakers' loss to Denver, San Antonio's magic number for clinching 10th place in the Western Conference is two games. The Spurs (33-45) also hold the tiebreaker over the Lakers (31-47) with a better conference record.

"If we don't win, it's different," Johnson said. "As long as we just take care of business and not really focus on any-

body else, just focus on ourselves each and every game, we'll be fine."

San Antonio won a two-game weekend series with Portland to complete a four-game sweep of the Trail Blazers. It was the sixth win in seven games for the resurgent Spurs.

Portland has lost seven straight as it limps to the close of the season.

The Blazers struggled to maintain any consistency offensively without Damian Lillard, Jusuf Nurkic, Josh Hart, Eric Bledsoe, Anfernee Simmons and several other injured players.

"Beating someone four times is tough no matter who is out there," said Spurs for-

ward Keita Bates-Diop, who finished with 12 points. "He obviously got into us at half-time to stay focused and stay to our principles."

Keon Johnson and Ben McLemore had 19 points each to lead Portland.

San Antonio's Zach Collins had 18 points and 13 rebounds for his first career double-double. Tre Jones added 18 points. The duo started in place of injured starters Dejounte Murray and Jakob Poeltl.

Collins finished 5 for 9 from the field while playing a season-high 31 minutes after missing the previous two seasons with ankle and shoulder injuries.

"He did an amazing job," Johnson said. "I'm glad to see

him playing well. Everybody is glad to see him playing well. He brings that toughness to the game. We needed somebody else to step up and he stepped up."

As they did Friday, the Trail Blazers took an early lead as the Spurs struggled to adjust without its missing starters.

The Blazers were 6 for 10 on 3-pointers in the second quarter and shot 52% overall in the period. Portland finished 16 for 44 on 3-pointers and shot 40% overall.

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