

BAKER BASEBALL DOUBLEHEADER AGAINST LA GRANDE

Tigers dominate Baker in twinbill

Baker falls to 4-2 in Greater Oregon League

BY JAYSON JACOBY

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About the time the skies opened up, so did the flood-gate of runs for the La Grande baseball team.

In a pivotal doubleheader pitting Baker against the Tigers, both sporting 4-0 records in the Greater Oregon League, La Grande turned a close first game into a rout with six runs in the soggy fifth inning on Wednesday, April 20.

The Tigers dominated thereafter, winning the first game 10-0 and the second game 16-0, both games ending after five innings, to take control of the league race on a chilly afternoon with occasional rain squalls and wind gusts buffeting the Baker Sports Complex.

The Bulldogs dropped to 4-2 in league play, 8-8 overall.

The Tigers, ranked fifth in the state in the Class 4A ratings, improved to 15-1 overall and 6-0 in the GOL.

La Grande hasn't allowed a run in its last four games.

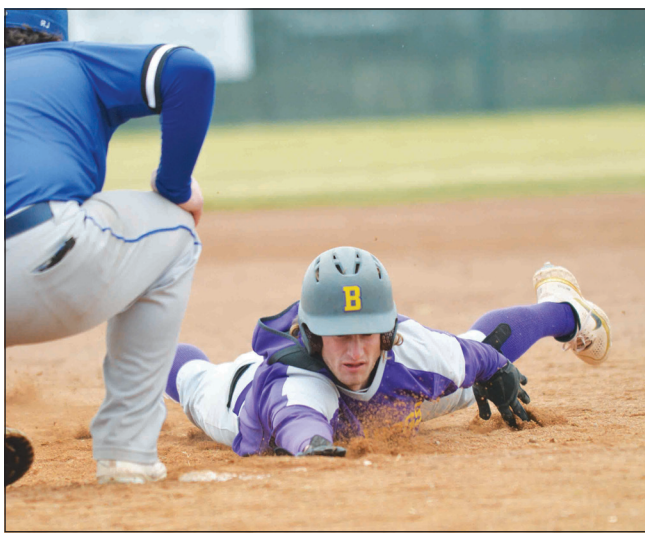
Baker managed two hits on Wednesday, one in each game.

"We had opportunities," Baker coach Tim Smith said. "Their pitchers had command of the strike zone and they kept us off balance. We had a few hard hits but we hit the ball up in the air a little too much. We kind of struggled at the plate."

The Tigers took a 4-0 lead with a pair of runs in each of the first two innings of the first game. La Grande scored three of those runs with two outs. Noah McIlmoil had the biggest hit, a two-run single with two outs in the top of the first.

Baker had a promising start in its first at bat, as leadoff hitter Hayden Younger singled, and advanced to second on Hudson Spike's sacrifice.

But Younger was stranded on second after La Grande starter Jace Schow induced a



Jayson Jacoby/Baker City Herald

Baker's Hayden Younger slides safely into first base after a pickoff attempt on Wednesday, April 20, 2022, at the Sports Complex.

fly out and finished the inning with a strikeout.

Baker pitcher Silas Carter held the Tigers scoreless in the third and fourth to keep the Bulldogs within reach.

The Baker defense make some key plays, including a 6-4-3 double play — Cole Hester to Younger to Kai Ogan — that ended the top of the third.

The fifth inning, though, was a mess — and not only due to the heavy rain shower that moved in from the south.

After a leadoff walk to Cole Jorgensen, Smith summoned Spike from center field to replace Carter on the mound.

Spike walked McIlmoil, and Nick Bornstedt followed with a single that scored Jorgensen and gave La Grande a 5-0 lead.

After a groundout, Jarrett Armstrong doubled down the left field line to score two more runs and boost the Tigers' lead to 7-0.

Another groundout put Baker one out from ending the rally, but La Grande had two more hits and also benefited from a hit batter, a walk and an error to score three more runs.

Baker, needing to score at least one run in the fifth to keep the game from ending by 10-run rule, went down in order.

Schow allowed only one hit — Younger's leadoff single — and struck out six while yielding only one walk.

"We certainly didn't threaten at any point of the game offensively," Smith said. "To score runs you have to have baserunners, and we didn't."

La Grande dominated the second game from the start.

Devin Bell got things started for the Tigers with a triple to deep right field that scored Schow, who led off with a walk.

La Grande scored two more runs, one on an error, one on a passed ball, to lead 3-0 after half an inning.

The Tigers extended their lead to 6-0 in the second, all with two outs.

Baker hit a few hard balls against La Grande's Sam Tsiatsos — notably Connor Chastain's line drive to deep center in the bottom of the second after Hester singled with two outs.

But La Grande center-fielder Cesar Rodriguez made an over the shoulder catch of Chastain's drive to end the inning and likely save a run. Had Chastain's hit been 10 feet to the right the ball likely would have bounced off the wall for a double or triple.

"Plays like that can change the momentum in a game," Smith said.

La Grande scored three more runs in the third and seven runs in the fourth.

Tsiatsos, like Schow in the

GAME ONE

La Grande 2 2 0 0 6 — 10
Baker 0 0 0 0 0 — 0
Schow and Jorgensen. Carter, Spike (5) and Logsdon.

GAME TWO

La Grande 3 3 3 7 0 — 16
Baker 0 0 0 0 0 — 0
Tsiatsos and Jorgensen. Capon, Chastain (3) and Logsdon.

first game, gave up a single hit and one walk. He struck out three.

Smith said Baker pitchers yielded too many "free passes" — walks and hit batters.

And although he was pleased with Baker's defense in the outfield, Smith said Baker infielders made too many mistakes for the Bulldogs to compete against a team as strong as La Grande.

"When our pitchers did throw ground balls we didn't make the plays," Smith said. "We have to play error-free defense and command the strike zone in order to keep it close against that team, and we didn't do either. A team like that is going to capitalize on mistakes."

Smith said the challenge for Baker's coaching staff is to bolster the team's mental strength.

He said the Bulldogs tend to get down on themselves after one mistake, letting a single error compound itself and lead to multiple miscues.

"We need to practice harder and with more focus," Smith said. "If you're not executing in practice you can't expect to perform in a game situation."

Baker will travel to La Grande on Saturday, April 23, for a nonleague game against Philomath at 2 p.m.

The Bulldogs then return to the Sports Complex on Monday, April 25 for another non-league game against Heppner/One with the first pitch at 5 p.m. Monday is Pink Night, with the Bulldogs wearing pink uniforms to raise awareness about breast cancer.

BAKER TENNIS

Baker tops Vale, competes at Parma

BY IAN CRAWFORD

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Baker's tennis teams won three of five boys matches, and four of five girls matches, against Vale on Friday morning, April 22, at the Ash Grove courts in Baker City.

The Bulldogs dominated the singles matches, winning all three boys and all three girls matches.

It was Baker's fourth match in five days.

Boys singles

Danny Cunningham beat Braxton Baire, 6-2, 6-4

Caleb Hills beat AJ Sigrah, 6-1, 6-1

Ashton LeTourneau beat Sam Mendieta, 6-2, 6-2

Boys doubles

Ethan Hills and Jayden Yencopal lost to Luke McGourty and John Wolfe, 6-1, 6-1

Noah Lien and Weston Downing lost to Kailey McGourty and Jessi Arriola, 6-3, 6-0

Girls singles

Sarah Plummer beat Ali Aldred, 6-1, 6-1

Isabel Cunningham beat Autumn Jones, 6-0, 6-0

Campbell Vanderwiele beat Livia Flynn, 6-3, 6-3

Girls doubles

Maya Smith and Olivia Jacoby lost to Brenda Ramirez and Elise Seals, 7-5, 7-5

Tristen Tritt and Riley Shaw beat Giselle Bahena and Autumn Jones, 0-6, 6-4, 12-10 (tiebreaker)

Two days earlier, on Wednesday, April 20, Baker traveled to Parma, Idaho, and came away with two match wins.

"Every match the kids improve," Baker coach Amy Younger said. "All the matches had great competition"

On the girls side, Isabel Cunningham beat Parma's Makayla Searle in straight sets, 6-2, 6-4.

In boys singles, Ashton LeTourneau beat Noah Enos, 6-0, 6-1.

On a day that Younger said was "beautiful" and "sunny" —

rarities this spring — Baker's top boys singles player, Danny Cunningham, lost the first set against Hayden Ankenbauer, 7-5, but rallied to win the second set 6-4 and force a third.

Ankenbauer prevailed in the decisive set, again by a 7-5 score.

Baker players also had a chance to "test the waters and play mixed doubles," Younger said.

Mixed doubles is a separate category for Idaho schools, but it's not an official division for now in Oregon, although some leagues have unofficial mixed doubles matches.

Results from other matches (names for Parma players not available for all matches):

Boys Singles

Caleb Hills lost to Bryant Sitts, 6-4, 6-1

Anthony Christopher lost to Colton Capistran, 6-2

Boys Doubles

Ethan Hills and Jayden Yencopal lost to Bronson Bells and Braden Hancock, 6-0, 6-1

Noah Lien and Weston Downing lost to Cade Grambo and Matt Mikelson, 6-2, 6-3

Lincoln Nemecek and Diego Jones-Bedolla lost in a pro set, 8-4

Girls Singles

Campbell Vanderwiele lost to Lexi Atkinson, 6-0, 6-0

Daphne Thomas lost 6-0

Girls Doubles

Maya Smith and Olivia Jacoby lost to Maryn Wagstaff and Julie Page, 6-2, 6-3

Tristen Tritt and Riley Shaw lost to Brooklyn Mann and Hailey Sitts, 6-0, 6-0

Campbell Vanderwiele and Ruby Warner lost in a pro set, 8-1

Mixed Doubles

Ethan Hills and Maya Smith lost to Evan Weber and Karli Hancock, 6-0, 6-0

Caleb Hills and Olivia Jacoby lost to Wyatt Jemmett and Abbi Searle, 6-0, 7-5



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