

BAKER SOFTBALL DOUBLEHEADER AGAINST LA GRANDE

Errors costly for Bulldogs in losses to La Grande

BY IAN CRAWFORD

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The Baker softball team seemed poised for a major upset against top-ranked La Grande on Friday, April 22, at the Baker Sports Complex.

But the Bulldogs, trailing just 2-1 after four innings in the first game of a double-header, couldn't overcome their defensive lapses and the Tigers, who had won seven straight games and scored at least 13 runs in six of those, went on to win 8-1.

La Grande dominated the second game, winning 22-1 in four innings.

"La Grande is a good team — you can't give them any extra opportunities," Baker coach Sonny Gulick said. "We were unable to do that on Friday. We gave them extra chances and they took advantage. We had our chances and couldn't capitalize."

On a sunny but windy afternoon, Baker stayed with the Tigers despite committing four errors in the first four innings. Kaycee Cuzick, who gave up just three hits over seven innings, striking out nine and walking none, pitched out of multiple jams to keep Baker close. All eight of La Grande's runs were unearned.

"Cuzick was great in the circle," Gulick said. "She had great control the entire game and kept the Tigers off balance. We will continue to work on our fielding. It has been an issue all season."

Gulick said Baker catcher Kaci Anderson "did a great job behind the plate."

La Grande scored the first run, in the top of the first, taking advantage of two Baker errors.

But Cuzick struck out two of the next three batters to limit the damage.

Baker reciprocated in the bottom of the first. Brooklyn Rayl singled with one out, advanced to second on Makayla Rabourne's walk and to third on a wild pitch. Rayl scored on Cuzick's groundout.

Rabourne later advanced to third but she was left stranded.



Baker first baseman Te'yan Coley stretches to get the out against La Grande on Friday, April 22, 2022.

Ian Crawford/Baker City Herald

La Grande took a 2-1 lead in the second inning, and again the run was unearned, resulting from an error.

La Grande pitcher Grace Neer was also dominant in the circle, allowing Baker only one baserunner from the second through fourth innings. Neer had 15 strikeouts and gave up just two hits.

The Tigers broke the game open in the top of the fifth, again due largely to Baker miscues.

Joscelin Hafer led off with a single, and the Tigers scored two runs following an error.

With two outs, Baker committed two more errors and La Grande scored twice to push its lead to 6-1.

Baker couldn't muster a rally in the final three innings. Kaci Anderson singled with two outs in the sixth, but she was the Bulldogs' only baserunner in that stretch.

La Grande added two insurance runs in the top of the

seventh as Baker committed four more errors.

Game two

The Tigers took control from the start, scoring four runs in the first inning and five more in the second.

Baker committed 11 errors in the second game and La Grande took full advantage.

Baker got one run back in the bottom of the first. Kiley Jo Aldrich singled with one out, and Rabourne followed with a double. Aldrich scored on a wild pitch.

From there the game turned into a hard lesson for the Bulldogs, as La Grande, already leading 9-1, added three runs in the third and 10 more in the fourth, including Neer's three-run home run.

Gulick said Rayl and Kaci Anderson had good days at the plate.

"We just weren't able to get going as a team offensively," he said. "Moving forward we need to minimize our errors in the field and our strikeouts at the plate."



Baker third baseman Brooklyn Rayl makes a play against La Grande on Friday, April 22, 2022.

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BAKER TENNIS

Bulldogs roll past Mac-Hi

Baker City Herald

Baker's tennis teams dominated Mac-Hi on Saturday, April 23, at the Ash Grove courts, winning seven of eight matches.

In boys singles, Baker's Danny Cunningham beat Connor Batchelor, 6-0, 6-1, and Caleb Hills beat Bryan Garcia in a pro set, 8-2.

Baker's No. 1 boys doubles team of Ethan Hills and Jayden Yencopal, avenged a loss on April 7 at Milton-Freewater to Jose Gomez and Sean Molina. The Mac-Hi duo won the earlier match, 7-6 (11-9) and 7-5.

But on Saturday at Baker, Hills and Yencopal won in straight sets, 6-1, 6-2.

In girls matches, Baker's Sarah Plummer beat Avery Lewis, 6-1, 6-3, Isabel Cunningham topped Laura Gomez, 6-3, 7-5, and Campbell Vanderwiele beat Nely Villegas 8-0 in a pro set.

In girls doubles, Baker's team of Maya Smith and Olivia Jacoby beat Brailyn Alexander and Kaylee Bower, 6-1, 6-1.

Baker's doubles team of Tristen Tritt and Daphne Thomas lost a pro set 8-4 to Coral Quist and Marta Domine.

Baker has another busy week, with home matches set for Monday, April 25, against La Grande, then a visit to La Grande on Tuesday, April 26, and back to the Ash Grove courts on Wednesday, April 27, starting at 4 p.m. against Four Rivers of Ontario, and Thursday, April 28, against Nyssa, also starting at 4 p.m.



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