BAKER GOLF TEAMS AT STATE

Baker boys tie for 2nd, matching best finish ever

Girls team takes 8th place

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Isaiah Jones had just helped lead the Baker boys golf team to a second-place tie at the Class 4A state tournament, but he couldn't help but think about three putts that didn't drop into the cup over the past two days.

Not three of his own specific putts.

Any three putts that he and his teammates didn't sink.

"Three strokes isn't that much," said Jones, a freshman who tied for fourth in the individual standings with Aaron Brown, a senior from Banks, after shooting consecutive rounds of 76 on Monday, May 16, and Tuesday, May 17.

But those three strokes separated Baker and Valley Catholic of Beaverton from team champion Banks.

Despite the lingering disappointment at what could have been, Jones said the Bulldogs were happy to match Baker's best finish in a state golf tournament.

"I thought everyone was happy with it, and excited," he said on Wednesday morning, May 18, several hours after the team returned from Quail Hollow Golf Course in Banks.

Baker also finished second in the 2013 state tournament.

"It was so close," said Baker coach Mike Long, who also guided the Bulldogs to the runner-up finish in 2013. "We had a couple of bad holes at the end. When it's that close, every single shot can make the difference."

Long said he wasn't surprised by the Bulldogs' performance, after they easily won the district tournament earlier this month and also dominated two earlier tournaments, including the Baker Invitational.

"I think the guys all think we could have been 20 strokes better" at state, Long said. "They all have those expectations of themselves, and that's why they got where they are."

Jones' fellow freshman, Jaxon Logsdon, placed 16th overall with rounds of 82 on Monday and 87 Tuesday.

Senior Jesse Maldonado was one stroke back, tied for 18th, after shaving six shots off his first round, going from an 88 Monday to 82 Tuesday.

Sophomore Kaden Conklin improved by nine shots, with an 84 Tuesday following a 93 on Monday. He tied for 29th.

Senior Gavin Stecher had rounds of 89 and 94 to finish 37th.

Each team's score is derived from its four best scores. Baker and Valley Catholic finished at 664 strokes, Banks at 661.

Jones said he was happy with how he hit the ball from tee to green. He said he struggled occasionally with his putter, trying to adjust to the Quail Hollow greens, which were faster than those at courses Baker played previously.

Jones said Baker's runner-up finish will serve as motivation for the team in the coming years.

"If everyone improves a little more, then we should have a better chance at winning (the state title)," he said.

Long, too, is looking forward to the next few years.

"I think the ceiling's pretty high for these guys," he said. "They all really enjoy golf."

Long said both Jones and Logsdon — the latter having won the district title by a single stroke over Jones — have shown the potential to compete for an individual state title as well as the prospect for a team championship.

Baker girls at state

The Baker girls placed eighth in the Class 4A/3A/2A/1A tournament at Eagle Crest near Redmond.

Junior Gretchen Morgan led Baker with a 27th-place finish after rounds of 102 and 110. Senior Caitlin Lien was 31st with two rounds of 107, freshman Lilly Wilson was 43rd with rounds of 104 and 130, and senior Makenna Shamion was 47th with rounds of 117 and 127.

Contributed Photo

The Baker girls golf team competed at the Class 4A/3A/2A/1A state tournament Monday and Tuesday, May 16 and 17, 2022, at Eagle Crest Resort near Redmond. From left, Caitlin Lien, Gretchen Morgan, Lilly Wilson, Makenna Shamion and assistant coach Colt Nudd.

Ian Crawford/Baker City Herald

Isaiah Jones hits his tee shot on the 15th hole at Quail Ridge Golf Course during the Baker Invitational on Monday, April 25, 2022. Jones tied for fourth at the Class 4A state tournament on May 16-17, 2022, leading Baker to a tie for second in the team standings.

Baker softball, baseball to host play-in games

Baker's baseball and softball teams will host Class 4A play-in games at the Baker Sports Complex.

The softball team will play Philomath on Friday, May 20, at 7 p.m.

The baseball team will play Estacada on Saturday, May 21. The game time had not been set on Wednesday, but it's likely to be either 1 p.m. or 2 p.m., said Buell Gonzales Jr., Baker School District athletic director.

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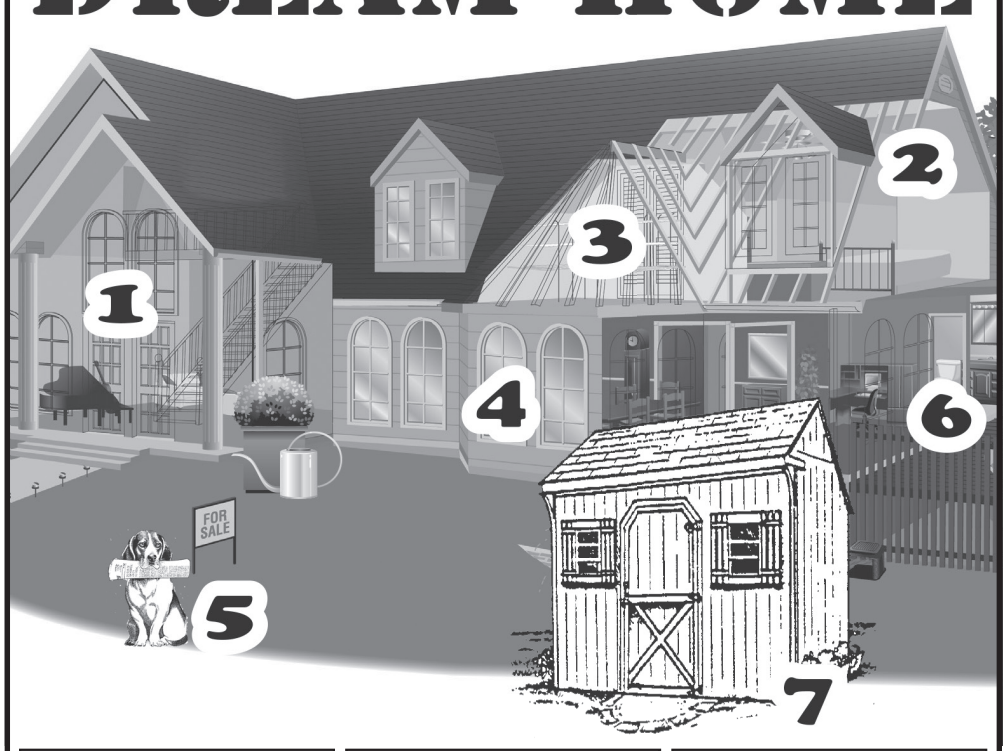

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