

BAKER BASEBALL ADVANCES TO CLASS 4A PLAYOFFS

Baker rallies to nip Estacada

Freshman Jaxon Logsdon has game-winning hit in eighth inning

Estacada 0 0 0 2 0 2 1 3 — 8
 Baker 4 0 0 0 1 0 4 — 9
 Johnson, Riedel (7) and Olsen.
 Capon, Carter (6), Spike (8) and Logsdon.

Baker, which improved to 16-11, seemed ready to advance to the playoffs relatively easily after scoring four runs in the first inning against Estacada.

“We came out and hit the ball well,” Smith said.

Cody Skidgel had a two-run single, and Connor Chastain and Kai Ogan each had an RBI in the first.

But Baker couldn’t maintain the offensive momentum.

“I think we got a little complacent when we put four on the board,” Smith said.

Baker went scoreless from the second through fifth innings.

Baker starting pitcher Logan Capon kept Estacada off the board through three innings, but the Rangers scored two runs in the top of the fourth, and two more in the top of the fifth to tie the score at 4.

Baker regained the lead at 5-4 on Logsdon’s RBI single in the bottom of the sixth, but Estacada scored a run in the top of the seventh, then held Baker scoreless to force an extra inning. Which started badly for Baker.

Estacada plated three runs in the top of the eighth to lead 8-5 and move Baker’s season to the brink.

Smith said he was ready with a brief motivational speech before Baker went to bat in the bottom of the eighth, but it turned out he didn’t really need it.

“I said we can roll over or we can fight to the end,” Smith said. “But the boys got themselves all fired up.”

Thomas Smithson led off by reaching first base on a dropped third strike.

Silas Carter followed by reaching on an outfield error, and Baker had runners at first and second with no outs.

“We capitalized on a couple of their miscues,” Smith said.

Hayden Younger grounded into a fielder’s choice, with Smithson forced out at third, leaving Baker with runners at first and second, this time with one out.

Spike doubled to center, driving in Carter, cutting Estacada’s lead to 8-6 and giving the Bulldogs runners at second and third with one out.

That brought up Logsdon, a freshman.

Despite his youth, Smith said Logsdon is “the guy that we would want in that situation. It couldn’t have worked out better.”

Logsdon took a strike and then fouled off a pitch for a second strike. After another foul ball, Logsdon watched a pitch go for a third ball to make it a full count.

Smith said Logsdon told him after the game that he expected Estacada pitcher Andrew Riedel would throw a fastball.

Logsdon was right. “He just crushed that ball,” Smith said. “It was a laser.”

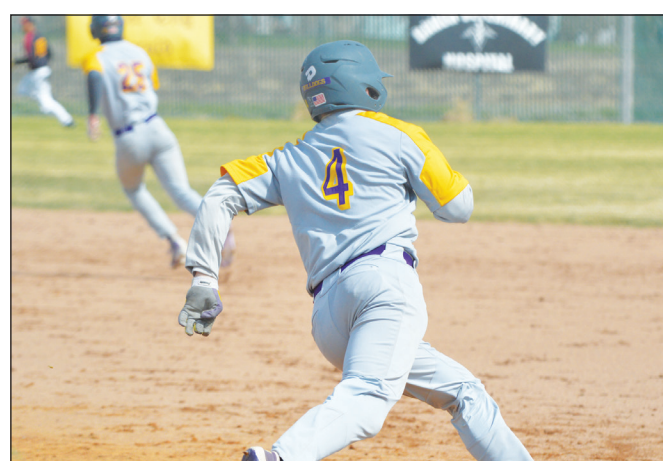
Logsdon said he anticipated a fastball because Riedel had thrown curveballs earlier in the at-bat and struggled to get that pitch across the plate.

Logsdon said he knew Riedel wouldn’t want to walk him and load the bases with one out.

When he made contact, Logsdon said he was certain the ball would get to the wall and allow Spike and Younger to score and tie the game.

Logsdon said he also was determined to try for a triple, figuring it was worth a risk, with one out, to potentially advance to third where a sacrifice fly would win the game.

As he slid headfirst into third, Logsdon said he saw that the Estacada third baseman, rather than waiting to tag him, was instead running for the fence near the Baker dugout. “Everybody was screaming



Ian Crawford/Baker City Herald

Baker’s Jaxon Logsdon rounds first base during the Bulldogs’ doubleheader sweep of Ontario on Friday, April 15, 2022, at the Sports Complex. Logsdon had the game-winning hit in the Bulldogs’ 9-8 come-from-behind win over Estacada in a Class 4A play-in game on Saturday, May 21, 2022.

and I just decided to go for home,” Logsdon said.

He scored easily, and the game was over.

Smith said he knew Spike and Younger would score on Logsdon’s smash.

He figured Logsdon would end up at second or third, leaving Baker with “work still to do” to win the game.

But the errant relay throw to third made that unnecessary.

Smith said that although he was disappointed with a few Baker errors that contributed to Estacada taking the lead, he was happy with the Bulldogs’ resilience.

“They did an outstanding job of rallying,” Smith said.

“They showed a lot of perseverance and grit.”

Logsdon said the Bulldogs were determined to not let their season end at home, especially after having twice led Estacada.

“We just stayed motivated,” he said. “We had so many things to motivate us to want to win that game.”

Now the Bulldogs face the daunting challenge of Hidden Valley, a team Smith compares with La Grande, which has shut out 12 straight opponents, including four wins over Baker.

“It’s going to be a test,” Smith said. “I don’t think they’re any better than La Grande. We will compete. They know what we’re up against.”

The winner of Wednesday’s game at Hidden Valley will advance to the Class 4A quarterfinals.

BAKER SOFTBALL HOSTS PHILOMATH IN PLAY-IN GAME

Bulldogs earn their first playoff berth in 4 years

Baker scores 11 runs in the fifth, then holds off a late Philomath rally

BY IAN CRAWFORD

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 Baker’s softball season has seen its share of big innings, and the Bulldogs had their most important inning of the season to take a 14-13 win over Philomath in a thrilling Class 4A play-in game under the lights on Friday, May 20, at the Baker Sports Complex.

Baker scored 11 of its 14 runs in the bottom of the fifth, then held off a last-inning rally from the Warriors.

The Bulldogs (9-13 overall) advanced to the first round of the playoffs for the first time since 2018. They will travel to Eugene to take on top-ranked Marist Catholic Wednesday, May 25 at 5 p.m.

The Spartans are 22-3 on the season and went 15-0 in league play.

“I am so proud of how hard

they fought for this win,” Baker coach Sonny Gulick said about the win over Philomath. “I look forward to our next opportunity at Marist.”

After Baker’s offensive explosion in the fifth turned an 8-3 deficit into a 14-8 lead, the Bulldogs had to hold on as Philomath rallied in the top of the seventh.

The Warriors scored five runs to cut the lead to 14-13, and had a runner on first with one out, but Baker pitcher Kaycee Cuzick, who threw a complete game, struck out the final two batters to preserve the win.

“It is hard to close out teams in the playoffs and the nerves got to us a bit,” Gulick said. “We found a way to finish them off. Cuzick and (Kaci) Anderson were great pitching and catching.”

Cuzick struck out 13 batters and had just two walks.

Both teams started strong, with Philomath (10-14 overall) scoring two runs in the top of the first, and Baker answering with three runs in the bottom of the inning.

Leadoff batter Kiley Jo Aldrich was hit by a pitch, and Brooklyn Rayl, who went 4 for 4 with three RBIs, followed with a single that scored Aldrich, who had stolen second and advanced to third on a wild pitch.

Makayla Rabourne doubled to move Rayl to third, and Rayl scored on Cuzick’s groundout. Rabourne later scored on a wild pitch to give Baker a 3-2 lead.

“The game started as I expected,” Gulick said. “I figured each team would score a few early as the girls worked through their playoff nerves.”

Philomath quickly regained the lead at 4-3 after two innings, and the War-

riors extended the advantage to 8-3 with three runs in the top of the fifth.

But then the “scoring floodgates opened for us,” Gulick said.

Baker sent 15 batters to the plate during the bottom of the fifth. The Bulldogs did most of the damage with two outs.

Rayl led off with a single. After a strikeout, Cuzick and Kaci Anderson both walked to load the bases. Candace Peterson singled to score two runs, and Baker trailed 8-5.

“Candace’s hit gave us a

great momentum boost,” Gulick said.

Although Peterson was thrown out trying to steal third for the second out, Baker continued to put pressure on the Warriors.

After Baker scored another run on an error, Te’yan Coley and Ashlyn Dalton hit consecutive doubles, with Dalton’s hit scoring Coley to cut Philomath’s lead to 8-7.

Emrie Osborn and Aldrich drew consecutive walks to load the bases again. Rayl hit a two-run single to give Baker the lead at 9-8.

Philomath 2 2 0 1 3 0 5 — 13
 Baker 3 0 0 1 1 0 x — 14
 Hiner, Hunter (6) and Kohler.
 Cuzick and K. Anderson.

Baker took advantage of a Philomath error to extend its lead to 11-8, and Cuzick and Kaci Anderson each had an RBI single to push the lead to 13-8.

Baker wrapped up the inning by scoring one more run on an error.

Cuzick and Peterson each had two RBIs.

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