

SUMMER LEAGUE BASEBALL

Baker sweeps La Grande

BY IAN CRAWFORD

icrawford@bakercityherald.com
Baker improved to 3-0 in its summer league baseball schedule by sweeping La Grande in a doubleheader on Friday, June 17 at the Sports Complex.

Baker won the opener 11-1. Raphaël Tisca, an exchange student from France, pitched a complete game one-hitter to lead Baker. Tisca struck out seven.

The Bulldogs, coached by Jared Rogers and Tim Smith, scored six runs in the first inning and five more in the second. The game went five innings.

Tisca, along with Kai Ogan and Talon Van Cleave, each went 2 for 2.

Ogan drove in two runs. Ethan Fletcher and John Garcia both had two RBIs.

The second game wasn't as smooth, as Baker committed three of its four errors in the first inning as La Grande took a 3-0 lead. The Tigers led 5-1 after two innings, but Baker then rallied with three runs in the third and fourth innings to take a 7-5 lead.

Baker scored six more runs in the next two innings, while Van Cleave, who relieved



Ian Crawford/Baker City Herald

French exchange student Raphaël Tisca pitches for Baker's summer league baseball team on June 17.

starting pitcher Aldo Duran after two innings, was stifling the La Grande lineup. The Tigers scored only one run in the final five innings, and Baker went on to win 13-6.

Duran and Van Cleave each

had two RBIs.

Sage Joseph, Zane Morgan, John Garcia, Alex Brown and Hugo Lacaille each drove in one run. Lacaille is also an exchange student from France. Baker opened the season

June 14 by beating Walla Walla, Washington, 8-6.

Baker will play Spokane in a single game Thursday, June 23 at Walla Walla, Washington, then play at Boise on Friday, June 24.

NFL

Gronkowski retires from Buccaneers

BY ROB MAADDI

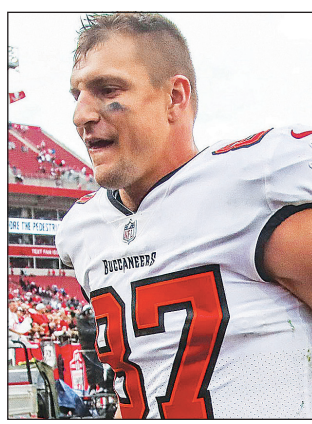
AP Pro Football Writer

TAMPA, Fla. — Rob Gronkowski won't be joining Tom Brady for a third season with the Buccaneers.

The four-time All-Pro tight end announced his retirement for the second time in three years on Tuesday, June 21. In an Instagram post, Gronkowski thanked his teammates and coaches over the years and said he's going back to "chilling out."

Gronkowski won four Super Bowls with Brady, including three in New England.

"I want to thank the whole entire first class Buccaneers organization for an amazing ride, trusting me to come back to play and help build a championship team," Gronkowski wrote on Instagram. "I will now be going back into my retirement home, walking away from football again with my head held high knowing I gave it everything I had, good or bad, every time I stepped out on the field. The friendships and relationships I have made will last forever, and I appreciate every single one of my teammates and coaches



Dirk Shadd/Tampa Bay Times-TNS, File
Rob Gronkowski announced his retirement on Tuesday.

for giving everything they had as well."

The 33-year-old retired in 2019 after nine seasons with the Patriots, but returned in 2020 when Brady went to the Buccaneers. The close friends teamed up to help Tampa beat the Kansas City Chiefs in the Super Bowl in February 2021. Gronkowski caught two touchdown passes in that game.

"Love you as a man, teammate and friend," Brady wrote on Gronkowski's post. "One of a kind in every way."

The Buccaneers and Brady were hoping Gronkowski would play another season. But Tampa prepared for his departure in the draft by selecting tight ends Cade Otton in the fourth round and Ko Kieft in the sixth round. Veteran tight end Cameron Brate also remains with the Buccaneers.

"Rob is a true professional who left it all on the field for us the past two seasons and helped establish a championship culture in our building," Buccaneers general manager Jason Licht said in a statement. "It is always difficult to see a great player walk away from the game when he is still enjoying that kind of success, but the overwhelming emotions I feel today are gratitude and respect for one of the greatest tight ends who ever played the game."

The fun-loving Gronkowski will be tough to replace. He was not only one of the league's best pass-catching tight ends but also among the best blockers at his position. Gronk was known for his toughness, playing physical and through injuries.

His jovial personality made

him one of the league's most popular players and a natural for a broadcasting job.

Gronkowski's agent, Drew Rosenhaus, told ESPN it wouldn't surprise him if Brady called and talked him out of retirement at some point during the season. Brady himself ended a 40-day retirement in March to play his 23rd season.

But for now, Gronk has spiked his last football in an NFL game.

He ends his career — again — with 621 catches for 9,286 yards and 92 touchdowns in the regular season. He had 98 receptions for 1,389 yards and 15 TDs in the postseason.

NBA

Duren, Williams, Kessler top list of draft's big men

BY AARON BEARD

AP Basketball Writer

Memphis' Jalen Duren, Duke's Mark Williams and Auburn's Walker Kessler are the headliners among big men in the NBA draft Thursday, June 23.

Each is a mobile big man with the ability to finish above the rim, with Duren and Williams as potential lottery picks, along with Kessler as a first-round prospect. Here is a look at the top bigs in the draft:

DUREN

The 6-11, 250-pound freshman is just 18 years old but has impressive athleticism and strength.

STRENGTHS: Duren has the solidly built frame to bang for position and the athleticism to finish lobs above the rim, making him ESPN's No. 10 overall draft prospect. He averaged 12.0 points and 8.1 rebounds, proving effective in attacking the rim and running the floor.

Duren also showed flashes of relentless rebounding ability by pulling down 20 rebounds against UCF in the American Athletic Conference Tournament and 19 against Western Kentucky in November. And he averaged 2.1 blocks.

CONCERNS: He didn't shoot well in either of the team's NCAA Tournament games, including a 3-for-11 showing against potential No. 1 overall draft prospect Chet Holmgren of Gonzaga while being limited by foul trouble. His offensive game is still developing beyond the rim-running lobs and it's unclear what type of range he'll have. He also shot just 62.5% from the foul line.

WILLIAMS

The 7-2, 242-pound sophomore is an elite rim protec-

tor with mobility and an improving offensive game.

STRENGTHS: Williams offers incredible length, from a 9-9 standing reach to a wingspan of better than 7-6. That helped him rank 12th in Division I at 2.82 blocks per game while altering plenty more shots, so much so that now-retired Hall of Fame coach Mike Krzyzewski compared him to a hockey goalie during the NCAA Tournament.

Krzyzewski had also noted that Williams — ranked as the No. 14 overall draft prospect by ESPN — had improved his lateral movement, giving him a better chance to handle switches and ballscreens.

On the offensive end, he averaged 11.2 points with the ability to go up and get lobs for easy finishes.

CONCERNS: The 20-year-old's offensive game is still in development. He showed more back-to-the-basket improvements last year, but there's still room to grow. He could also improve as a rebounder after averaging 7.4 boards with double-figure outputs in only 12 of 39 games despite his size.

KESSLER

The 7-1, 256-pound sophomore is another elite shot blocker and top defender with mobility.

STRENGTHS: ESPN's No. 26 overall draft prospect was named national defensive player of the year by Naismith and the National Association of Basketball Coaches after ranking second in Division I by blocking 4.56 shots per game, including nine games with at least seven blocks.

Kessler offers length (9-5 standing reach, better than 7-4 wingspan) and has shown mobility to pursue the ball and switch on perimeter.

GOLF

Koepka joins Saudi-backed series

BY DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

CROMWELL, Conn. — Brooks Koepka, one of the first players to denounce a rival league for only 48 players, is the latest LIV Golf player to sign on with Saudi-funded LIV Golf series, The Associated Press has learned.

A person briefed on Koepka's decision told the AP he still would be able to compete on the PGA Tour until he hits a shot on the LIV Golf circuit. The person spoke on condition of anonymity without authorization to speak on behalf of the tour.

The Daily Telegraph in the UK first reported Koepka's decision.

It was another step — and a big name with his four major championships — that added to the roster of the LIV Golf series that invariably will lead to no space for some of the lesser-known players in the inaugural event outside London two weeks ago.

Koepka remained in the field for the Travelers Championship, though he was not at a player meeting Tuesday morning, June 21 at the TPC River Highlands. The next LIV Golf event starts June 30 outside Portland, Oregon.

Koepka was the second player, behind Rory McIlroy, to speak out against a rival league in March 2020 when he told the AP, "I have a hard time believing golf should be about just 48 players."

"Money isn't going to change my life," Koepka said at the time.

The proposed rival league was different from LIV Golf, presented as the "Premier Golf League" though still relying on Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund. Greg Norman and LIV

Golf took the idea of 48-man fields, no cuts with a team component.

LIV Golf has not announced Koepka's signing amid speculation that a few others were soon to join. One was Abraham Ancer of Mexico, the No. 20 in the world who won a World Golf Championship last year in a playoff, along with the Australian Open in 2018.

Ancer said his decision was not taken lightly and that joining LIV would allow him to give back to the game by helping it grow in Mexico. "I never could have imagined being in this position today," he said on Twitter.

The development came as the PGA Tour held a player meeting at the Travelers Championship, during which Commissioner Jay Monahan spoke of the tour's position and plans to reshape the season and its tournaments.

According to two players in the meeting, the PGA Tour plans to return to a calendar season that would start in January and the FedEx Cup playoffs would be eligible for only for the top 70 players. They spoke on condition of anonymity because the meeting was for players.

Currently, the top 125 make the postseason, with the top 70 advancing to the second playoff event and the top 30 to the Tour Championship. The new plan is for the top 70 at the start, then top 50 and top 30.

The fall would be used for players beyond 70th to secure cards for the following year, although research showed most inside the top 100 would be safe. The tour was still looking at three fall events for limited fields, part of eight tournaments during the year that would offer \$20 million in prize money.



Tires LES SCHWAB

Celebrating 70 Years!

GET THERE

Safely

STOP BY OR SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT ONLINE
LesSchwab.com



Lew Brothers Tire Service

541-523-3679

210 Bridge St. Baker City, OR



"Give us a break, we'll fix it."

541-523-5839 Baker City • 541-963-0832 La Grande