

## BAKER VOLLEYBALL

## Bulldogs sweep Nyssa to start season

Baker City Herald

Baker had little trouble with another bunch of Bulldogs, sweeping Nyssa in three sets in the season-opening volleyball match Thursday, Aug. 25 in a sweltering Baker gym.

Baker dominated each set, gaining a comfortable lead early and then quickly thwarting every Nyssa rally en route to a 25-14, 25-13, 25-12 win.

"I thought last night was an exceptional first game," Baker coach Ali Abrego said. "I thought the girls played well despite how hot it was in our gym."

In the first set Baker took a 6-2 lead, prompting Nyssa coach Maddie Speelman to call timeout.

But that interruption didn't affect Baker's momentum.

Jozie Ramos served four straight points to boost Baker's lead to 13-4, and a few minutes later fellow senior Makenzie Flanagan had a kill to give Baker a 15-5 advantage. After another Nyssa timeout, Nyssa scored four straight points on Morgan Johns' serve to get within 18-10, but Baker regained control to finish out the set.

In the second set Baker broke out from a 4-3 lead to go up 12-5, and Ramos later had consecutive kills to give Baker a 16-8 lead.

The final set played out similarly. Ramos had a kill followed by four straight service points and Baker led 11-4.

Nyssa had a brief rally but Baker went on to take a 20-11 lead.

Nyssa's 6-foot-5 hitter Gracie Johnson had a few powerful kills and stifling blocks, but Baker's defense was consistent.

"We looked good," Abrego said. "I think they executed what we had been working on all summer."

Baker won the JV match, 25-10, 25-13 and 25-12. Baker also won the JV2 match, 25-19, 25-13.

Baker traveled to La Grande on Saturday, Aug. 27 for a tournament.



**Above:** Baker senior Jozie Ramos had a strong match on Thursday, Aug. 25 as the Bulldogs opened the volleyball season by sweeping Nyssa in the Baker gym. **Left:** Baker senior Taylor Dalton makes a pass during the Bulldogs' season-opening sweep of Nyssa on Thursday, Aug. 25, 2022, in the Baker gym.

Photos by Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

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— Ali Abrego, Baker coach

## College football kicks off with big matchups

BY HANK KURZ JR.

Associated Press

The college football schedule offers a weekly selection of marquee games between top teams, and some will hit the ground running fast this year.

Two Sept. 3 showdowns could shuffle the preseason AP Top 25 quickly as No. 5 Notre Dame, with new coach Marcus Freeman, visits No. 2 Ohio State, and No. 3 Georgia — the defending national champion — plays No. 11 Oregon in Atlanta.

**No. 5 NOTRE DAME at No. 2 OHIO STATE, Sept. 3**

Freeman's debut against his alma mater will set the tone for both teams, of course, and it will see Heisman Trophy candidate C.J. Stroud under center for the Buckeyes. There will be nine preseason AP All-Americans on the field between the two teams. A bit of added intrigue: High school star edge rusher Keon Keeley could be among the 103,000 or so fans in attendance. Keeley previously committed to the Irish, then decommitted after the coaching change.

**No. 11 OREGON vs. No. 3 GEORGIA (Atlanta), Sept. 3**

The Bulldogs lost five first-round NFL draft choices from last year's team on defense, but they get QB Stetson Bennett back, potentially adding to his remarkable story as a former walk-on who was the MVP in a national championship game victory. The Bulldogs' tendencies, though, are well known by former defensive coordinator Dan Lanning, who will be making his debut as the Ducks' coach after Mario Cristobal left to take the job at Miami.

**No. 13 NORTH CAROLINA STATE at No. 4 CLEMSON, Oct. 1**

Last year, the Wolfpack ended an eight-game slide against the Tigers by prevailing 27-21 in double overtime. N.C. State held Clemson to just 214 yards, its lowest total of the season, and the loss eventually helped allow Wake Forest to end the Tigers' six-year stran-

glehold on the ACC's Atlantic Division title. The Wolfpack has 10 defensive starters back, so Clemson has its work cut out. The programs are picked to finish 1-2 in the division, with Clemson first.

**No. 6 TEXAS A&M at No. 1 ALABAMA, Oct. 8**

This SEC West showdown might as well be called the "Beef Bowl" after the spicy offseason comments over recruiting between Aggies coach Jimbo Fisher and Crimson Tide coach Nick Saban. More important, this could be the deciding game in the division race. The coaches say they've buried the hatchet, but the winner may give it a twist. Texas A&M last won the national championship in 1939; the Crimson Tide has six with Saban alone.

**No. 14 USC at No. 7 UTAH, Oct. 15**

The Trojans' ranking is likely more a tip of the cap to new coach Lincoln Riley after a 4-8 finish last season. Riley used the transfer portal hoping to rebuild the program quickly, bringing in 24 new players. The Utes are intent on seeing returning QB Cam Rising continue to push their ascent after their first Pac-12 title and Rose Bowl appearance. How quickly Riley's new systems take hold will be huge for USC.

**No. 12 OKLAHOMA STATE at No. 9 OKLAHOMA, Nov. 19**

The Cowboys return 10 offensive starters, including QB Spencer Sanders, to a team that came within an eyelash of the playoff last season. Defense has always seemed a strength and should remain so with Derek Mason taking over as coordinator for Jim Knowles, who took the same spot at Ohio State. The Sooners had their six-year grip on Big 12 titles end last season thanks to a loss to the Cowboys. They hope former Clemson defensive coordinator Brent Venables can get them back on top behind QB Dillon Gabriel, who passed for more than 8,000 yards and 70 touchdowns at Central Florida.



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