

BAKER FOOTBALL

Bulldogs take on Ontario, La Grande in jamboree

BY IAN CRAWFORD

icrawford@bakercityherald.com

The results don't count officially, but Baker football coach Jason Ramos was happy to have the Bulldogs take the field against La Grande and Ontario during a jamboree on Friday, Aug. 26 at La Grande.

"We needed reps against someone other than ourselves," Ramos said. "We had a lot of good outcomes, but realize we still have more work to do."

Baker will play both Ontario and La Grande in regular four-quarter games later this season. The Sept. 23 game at Ontario is a nonleague contest, as the Tigers have dropped out of the Greater Oregon League for football.

But the rivalry game against La Grande, on Sept. 30, will be the Bulldogs' first league game.

"Against Ontario we executed really well on offense, we matched really well," Ramos said of Friday's jamboree, which was limited to 15 minutes or 18 plays against each opponent. "Defensively, these guys are flying around and playing fast."

La Grande posed a greater challenge. "La Grande is obviously a good team, good matchup, pretty even," Ramos said.

The Tigers stopped Baker at the 1-foot line, and La Grande scored a couple times when they had the ball.

"Disappointed we couldn't punch it into the end zone," Ramos said.

"Our first group is pretty solid, they're going to be a handful going forward," he said. "The JV team competed really well, almost all freshman, some sophomores, for the most part we got a really good larger freshman class."

One of those newcomers, Rasean Jones, will be a starting receiver on the varsity squad, Ramos said.

"We've got a good plan moving forward with what we want to do, we'll make our usual week to week adjustments, though," he said.

"We don't have the numbers other teams have, so we're going to have to rely on our upperclassmen playing both sides of the football."

Baker opens its regular season schedule Saturday, Sept. 3, traveling across the state to Turner, near Salem, for a rematch against Cascade, which beat the Bulldogs 35-0 in the 2021 season opener. Kickoff is set for 2 p.m.

Baker's first home game is set for Friday, Sept. 9 at 7 p.m. against Homedale, Idaho, at Baker Bulldog Memorial Stadium.

BAKER CROSS-COUNTRY OPENS SEASON

Baker boys 1st, girls 3rd at Vale

BY IAN CRAWFORD

icrawford@bakercityherald.com

Baker High School's cross-country teams are off to a strong start as the boys finished first and the girls third at the Vale Splash and Dash, the year's first invitational, on Thursday, Aug. 25.

"This meet is always a great way to start the season," Baker coach Suzy Cole said. "It is a 2-mile time trial type of meet, and then we swim afterwards, which was really nice given that it was 96 degrees."

In the boys meet, Baker's Thaddeus Pepera finished second in 10:54.91 and teammate Daniel Brown was third at 11:10.72 to lead the Bulldogs to the team title.

On the girls side, Sofie Kaaen clocked a 14:04.08 to place third in the individual results. The Baker girls finished behind Burns and Nampa Christian in the team standings.

"Thaddeus ran a personal best from last year, as did Daniel on the boys side and Sofia looked strong on the girls side," Cole said.

A large freshman class has bolstered Baker's ranks, Cole said.

"We also have a lot of new runners to our program," she said. "That was really exciting to see where they are. Tyler Gressley ran great as did Hunter Bingham and Angel De Arcos."



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald, File

Baker's Thaddeus Pepera competes at the Baker Invitational on Oct. 1, 2021. Pepera, a senior, placed 2nd in the season-opening Vale Splash and Dash meet on Thursday, Aug. 25, 2022.

- 35. Richard Engstrom, 14:04.73
- 41. Tanner Lucas, 14:21.27
- 43. Sam Nelson, 14:26.59
- 46. Kegan Bott, 14:52.20
- 52. Gideon Farber, 15:23.51
- 57. Tristan Mulkey, 17:23.41

Boys team results

- 1. Baker, 30; 2. Burns, 51; 3. Nampa Christian, 71; 4. Vale, 102; 5. Nyssa, 110

Baker girls individual results

- 3. Sofia Kaaen, 14:04.08
- 6. Emma Timm, 14:15.91
- 13. Tyler Gressley, 15:37.83
- 16. Paige Marlia, 16:15.07
- 25. Gwen Rasmussen, 17:38.00
- 28. Sage Cuzick, 17:55.39
- 30. Riley Hurliman, 18:17.50
- 34. Avery Collier, 18:46.92
- 38. Lilly Collins, 20:43.55

Girls team results

- 1. Burns, 41; 2. Nampa Christian, 51; 3. Baker, 53; 4. Vale, 75

VOLLEYBALL

Baker wins Hanna Cashell tournament

BY IAN CRAWFORD

icrawford@bakercityherald.com

Baker's volleyball team remained unbeaten by winning the championship at the Hanna Cashell Memorial Tournament in La Grande on Saturday, Aug. 26.

The Bulldogs swept multiple opponents in pool play then beat La Grande and Imbler in bracket play, winning both matches 2 sets to 0, to claim the title.

"We played well overall yesterday," Baker coach Ali Abrego said on Sunday, Aug. 27.

Baker opened the season by beating Nyssa 3-0 on Thursday, Aug. 25 in the Baker gym.

Abrego said she was especially pleased with the Bulldogs' performance on Saturday against La Grande, a Greater Oregon League opponent.

"La Grande made a good effort," she said. "We typically have a mental block when we play La Grande, and I was glad to see us rise above that to become victorious."

"We had some great hustle plays, overall," Abrego said. "Everyone worked until the very end of the day which can be hard when you're working hard, and are tired."

Although Baker's wins in pool play don't count toward rankings by the Oregon School Activities Association, the Bulldogs' wins over La Grande and Imbler do count, Abrego said.

Baker returns to its home court Tuesday, Aug. 30 with nonleague matches against Fruitland, Idaho, and Vale.

The Baker JV team also won the championship at the Hanna Cashell Memorial Tournament on Saturday.

Baker went 7-1 in pool play, its only loss against La Grande. Baker beat Imbler, Union, Nyssa, Mac-Hi, Ontario and the Baker and La Grande JV2 teams.

The Bulldogs avenged the loss to La Grande by winning two straight sets over the Tigers in the championship match.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFFS

Will the Ducks make it?

BY RALPH D. RUSSO

AP College Football Writer

Sometimes a prediction can feel right even though it ends up wrong. And vice versa.

Last season, this column projected both Ohio State and Alabama to miss the College Football Playoff. Bold? Dumb? The line is fine.

One out of two isn't bad, but in some ways the one that ended up being wrong felt more right.

While the Buckeyes did turn out to be vulnerable, the pick here to win the Big Ten and reach the playoff for the first time was ... Wisconsin. The Badgers went 9-4 last season and didn't even win their division. The Buckeyes lost to Oregon early and Michigan late.

As for Alabama, the theory behind the Crimson Tide missing the CFP was that it would lose a regular-season game — most likely at Texas A&M — and then Georgia would eliminate Nick Saban's team by winning the SEC title game.

That looked like a good call when the unbeaten and favored Bulldogs went up 10-0 in the second quarter in Atlanta. Then Bryce Young carved up Georgia's vaunted defense and it became yet another example of the perils of picking against 'Bama.

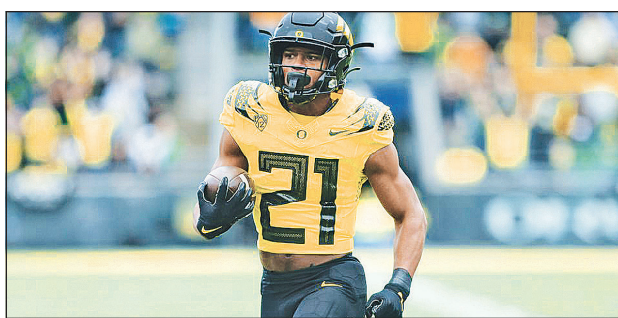
Some redemption came in the CFP title game, when Georgia — as predicted here in the preseason — won the national title.

While it's cool to be right, predictions are mostly made for fun. Straight chalk is boring, but last season's volatility that included Ohio State, Clemson and Oklahoma having long conference championship streaks snapped might be tough to repeat. With all that in mind:

UNDERACHIEVERS/ OVERACHIEVERS

Three teams that will start the season ranked in the AP Top 25 but finish unranked:

- No. 12 Oklahoma State. The super seniors and coordinator that pow-



Sean Meagher/The Oregonian, File

Oregon running back Byron Cardwell breaks off a long run against Colorado on Oct. 30, 2021.

ered one of the best defenses in the country are gone and the Big 12 is always unpredictable.

• No. 16 Miami. Hurricanes haters get one more year of mocking how the U. is Back! Might want to get it out of your system, though, because Miami under Mario Cristobal is not likely to be mediocre for much longer.

• No. 19 Arkansas. The SEC West is a gauntlet and somebody is going to be disappointed. You're it, Razorbacks.

Three teams that will start the season unranked but finish ranked:

• Penn State. On the way to building toward something big in 2023, James Franklin and the Nittany Lions bounce back from two lackluster seasons.

• Kansas State. The Adrian Martinez redemption tour.

• UCF. The Knights have been usurped by Cincinnati as kings of the AAC and Houston is the buzzy G5 team heading into this season. But UCF looks loaded in Year 2 under Gus Malzahn.

COACHING CAROUSEL

Nebraska gets off to an encouraging start in coach Scott Frost's make-or-break season, but stumbles down the stretch against a difficult closing schedule (Minnesota, at Michigan, Wisconsin and at Iowa). The school parts ways with the hometown hero. Next up for the Cornhuskers? How about Matt Campbell from Iowa State?

NEW YEAR'S SIX BOWLS

- Rose Bowl — Michigan vs. USC.
- Sugar Bowl — Georgia vs. Kansas State.
- Cotton Bowl — Houston vs. Oklahoma.
- Orange Bowl — North Car-

olina State vs. Texas A&M.

PLAYOFF

Fiesta Bowl (semifinals) — No. 2 Ohio State vs. No. 3 Clemson.

Peach Bowl (semifinals) — No. 1 Alabama vs. No. 4 Oregon.

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Ohio State over Alabama. The Buckeyes win a rematch of the 2020 CFP championship game, with C.J. Stroud outdueling Bryce Young.



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



GARAGE DOORS



With Thermospan™ doors, you have your choice of styles, colors and customizing options.

NE-HI ENTERPRISES CCB#155399
2122 10th • Baker City • 541-523-6008