

## BAKER VOLLEYBALL

# Bulldogs sweep into state tournament

Baker routs Philomath, will play Tillamook in quarterfinals Friday at Springfield High School

BY JAYSON JACOBY

jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

They had to play volleyball in the wrong season, when the leaves were budding rather than falling.

Sometimes they had to wear masks, and sometimes they had to wave at their opponents from across the court rather than the customary hand slaps.

And then the Baker Bulldogs, even when they won, lost out on a chance to play in the state tournament.

But finally, after years of frustration during a pandemic over which they had no control, the Bulldogs achieved one of their most cherished goals.

Baker played one of its best matches of the season Saturday, Oct. 29 in the Baker gym, sweeping past Philomath to clinch a berth in the state tournament this coming weekend at Springfield High School.

The dominating 25-11, 25-15, 25-12 victory propelled Baker into a quarterfinal match against Tillamook on Friday, Nov. 4 at 8 a.m.

"It's just such a great feeling," Makenzie Flanagan, one of Baker's five seniors, said after Saturday's match.

Baker coach Ali Abrego said she's ecstatic that her players, and in particular the seniors, whose high school years were affected by the pandemic, will have a chance to play in a state tournament.

"They deserved to go last year," Abrego said. "It's great to see their hard work pay off."

A year ago Baker also was one of the final eight Class 4A teams playing.

But the Oregon School Activities Association limited the state tournament to four teams, rather than the usual eight.

So Baker's loss to Philomath, in a match at Baker almost a year ago to the day, on Oct. 30, 2021, cost the Bulldogs a trip to the tournament.

Abrego said one of the team's goals, from its first practice in August, was to fill that gap in its resumé, and on Saturday the Bulldogs played like a team with a mission to fulfill.

Sophomore Kayden Thomas had a kill, and fellow sophomore Sofia Hanson an ace serve to give Baker a 2-0 lead.

Philomath scored three straight to go up 3-2.

The Warriors wouldn't lead again. Baker scored five straight points, the



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Baker senior Jozie Ramos goes up for a kill against Philomath on Saturday, Oct. 29, 2022, in the Baker gym.

## Baker vs. Tillamook

Baker, 17-5 overall, will play Tillamook, 16-4, in a quarterfinal game Friday, Nov. 4 at 8 a.m. at Springfield High School.

The teams had no common opponents this season.

The Cheesemakers, who were 12-0 in the Cowapa League, have won eight straight matches, including a sweep of

Hidden Valley in a first-round playoff match on Saturday, Oct. 29.

If Baker beats Tillamook, the Bulldogs would play the winner of the Crook County-Marshfield match on Friday at 6:30 p.m. If Baker loses to Tillamook, the Bulldogs would play the loser of the Crook County-Marshfield match on Saturday, Nov. 5 at 8 a.m.

last on senior Taylor Dalton's ace, to lead 7-3. Philomath never got closer than three points after that.

Flanagan and Thomas combined on a block that boosted Baker's lead to 14-8 and prompted a Philomath timeout.

Thomas and senior Jozie Ramos combined on a block to give Baker an 18-10 lead, and another Warriors timeout couldn't stem Baker's momentum.

The Bulldogs scored seven straight points with Hanson serving, and breezed to the first set win. The second set followed a somewhat similar pattern.

Ramos had a powerful kill on a Philomath over pass for the first point, and after the score was tied at 5, 6 and 7, Baker scored five straight, the last on Flanagan's kill, leading to another Philomath timeout.

The Bulldogs extended the run to nine points, with sophomore Ashlyn Dalton serving, to take control.

The final set was anticlimactic, with Baker leading 5-1 early as Ramos had two straight kills on over passes.

Senior Campbell Vanderwiele had a kill to make it 6-1, and Baker led by as many as 12, at 16-4.

Philomath had a minor rally but the outcome was never in doubt.

Although Baker played well in all phases, its defense was particular stellar.

Philomath had relatively few kills, as the Bulldogs' back row was consistent in digging and the front line blockers thwarted multiple attacks. Baker also had several one hand saves to keep rallies going.

"The biggest thing for us today was we

were consistent," Abrego said. "Jozie had four blocks in one rally. You rarely see that. Our defense was phenomenal. We definitely showed that we have the potential to be a contender at state."

Although Baker has achieved its long sought after goal, Abrego said she's not concerned that the Bulldogs are satisfied and will no longer play with the same urgency they brought to the court against Philomath.

"We're in the top eight teams — that's incentive enough to want to keep it going," she said. "This is just the first step."

Flanagan agreed.

"This makes us hungrier," she said. "One step at a time."

Flanagan said she can feel that the Bulldogs have "new energy" this year. "I can tell how much growth we've had as a team," she said.

Abrego said she's proud of her team not only for their play, but also for their attitude.

Prior to Saturday's match, the Bulldogs received the Regional Sportsmanship Award for Class 1A, 2A and 4A schools in the area.

"This award is a tribute and a reflection of our girls and how they interact with each other, officials, and coaching staff," Abrego wrote in an email to parents.

## POWDER VALLEY VOLLEYBALL

## Badgers top South Wasco, advance to state tourney

Baker City Herald

NORTH POWDER — Powder Valley is returning to the Class 1A state volleyball tournament, and the Badgers had to battle to get there.

Powder Valley won a competitive, four-set match over South Wasco County on Saturday, Oct. 29 in the Badgers' gym.

Powder Valley won the first two sets, 25-21, 25-23, and after the Redsides rallied to win the third set, 25-22, the Badgers closed out the match 25-22 in the fourth set.

"We were able to overcome a solid Wasco County team in four close and hard-fought sets," Powder Valley coach Marji Lind said.

"We had moments of brilliance and some other moments we struggled to find a consistent rhythm, but in this team's true style and fashion, these girls showed their mental toughness and team unity and rallied. They compete as a true team and are successful because of it."

Powder Valley, 24-7 overall, will open the eight-team state tournament against St. Paul on Friday, Nov. 4 at 10 a.m. at Ridgeview High School in Redmond.

It's a rematch of the 2019 state tournament match, which St. Paul won in three sets.

If the Badgers beat St. Paul Friday, it would set up another possible rematch in the semifinals, this time with Crane, which plays North Douglas in a quarterfinal Friday.

Crane beat the Badgers in a quarterfinal match in 2021, denying Powder Valley a berth in the state tournament, which last year was limited to four teams instead of the usual eight.

"Could not be prouder of these young ladies and what they continue to accomplish together," Lind said. "We are very excited to make it to the Elite 8 and be numbered amongst the very best in Oregon 1A."

## SHANE ALDERSON FOR BAKER COUNTY COMMISSION CHAIR

My family has called Baker County home since 1935. We are enjoying raising our young daughter in this beautiful community surrounded by small town values.

I promise to work hard for all citizens, do the work that needs to be done and to provide the vital services taxpayer deserve.

I want to be your Baker County Commission Chair to mend the relationship between Baker County and Baker City and other small cities and jurisdictions.



### I pledge to:

- Work hard to to maximize fire and ambulance service throughout Baker County
- Continue to support local law enforcement agencies to reduce crime and hold offenders accountable for their actions
- Be a strong supporter for water issues and other matters facing our local agricultural producers
- Work to protect jobs at Ashgrove Cement and other mining entities
- Continue to work with all local entities (Chambers, Baker City Downtown, Interpretive Center, local Museums, Economic Development Committee, etc.) to provide resources to enhance our local tourism industry.
- Advocate and work with State and Federal agencies to provide affordable workforce housing in our community.
- Work hard to bring traded sector jobs to our County that provide family wage jobs for working families.
- Work with local entities to make sure that we have affordable day care for families with working parents

I am not beholden to any special interest groups and will bring honest and open communication to the County Commission. Please vote for Shane Alderson for Baker County Commission Chair.

Paid for by Committee to elect Shane Alderson

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