

**BOISE STATE FOOTBALL**



Darin Oswald/The Idaho Statesman

**Boise State cornerback Caleb Biggers, right, attempts to breakup a pass in the end zone to BYU wide receiver Puka Nacua late in the 4th quarter that turned out to be the game winning play, Saturday, Nov. 5, 2022, at Albertsons Stadium in Boise.**

# BYU nips Broncos with late touchdown

**BY RON COUNTS**

The Idaho Statesman

Boise State defensive coordinator Spencer Danielson is fond of talking about the razor's edge his unit must live on every week.

"On defense, you can play great for 20 plays and be off on three and give up 21 points, and everyone is like, 'What's wrong with the defense?'" Danielson said.

Boise State's defense toed that edge with expert precision for the better part of three quarters Saturday against BYU, but the Broncos slipped in the fourth quarter — and there was no stopping the bleeding.

To cap off huge nights for both of them, BYU quarterback Jaren Hall lofted a 6-yard pass into the end zone with 1:46 to play and wide receiver Puka Nacua made an acrobatic, twisting catch near the sideline to give the Cougars a 31-28 victory.

It marked only the second time in a series that dates back to 2003 that BYU knocked off the Broncos at Albertsons Stadium. The first was a 51-17 win in 2020 during the COVID-shortened season.

"We made plenty of mistakes, but we were able to overcome them because of our belief and trust in each other," said BYU coach Kalani Sitake, whose team had lost four straight. "It felt good to get a win and get back to our identity."

Nacua's TD catch was reviewed and upheld, and the Cougars escaped with a win in the final chapter of the rivalry series.

BYU and Boise State don't have any future games scheduled because the Cougars are adjusting their non-conference schedule before joining the Big 12 next year.

"I have been dreaming about making a catch like that since I was a little kid," said Nacua, who had 14 catches for 157 yards. "It wasn't the best look to throw that go ball, but they threw it up to me. It's my job to go out there and make plays, and I came down with it."

A game that was 7-7 at half-time turned into a track meet in the second half.

BYU (5-5) took a 17-14 lead on a 24-yard touchdown pass from Hall to Nacua in the closing seconds of the third quarter. The fourth quarter featured four lead changes, including Nacua's game-clinching grab.

"This game came down to more than just one play," Boise State coach Andy Avalos said.

"We didn't play four quarters of our best football with both sides of the ball clicking."

Boise State (6-3, 5-0 Mountain West), which had its four-game winning streak snapped,

regained the lead early in the fourth with a 12-play, 79-yard scoring drive that was capped by a 1-yard touchdown run from running back George Holani.

It was short-lived, though. On the ensuing drive, BYU running back Hinckley Ropati turned a screen pass into a 48-yard touchdown play to put the Cougars up 24-21.

The Broncos needed just four plays to get back into the end zone on their next drive. Quarterback Taylen Green moved the chains with passes to Stefan Cobbs and Eric McAllister, and picked up another first down on a scramble. Holani then had an 11-yard touchdown run, putting Boise State ahead 28-24 with a little more than six minutes to play.

"We saw what we see out of Taylen every day in practice," Boise State wide receiver Latrell Caples said. "We drove down the field multiple times and ended with scores. We just have to finish at the end."

BYU had one more scoring drive in it Saturday than did BSU. Hall completed three passes and picked up a first down with his legs before ending the Cougars' final drive with his go-ahead touchdown pass to Nacua on fourth down.

Hall completed 29-of-42 passes for 377 yards and three touchdowns, but also had two interceptions that killed drives in the first half. He targeted Nacua 19 times, and the junior snagged most of them.

"He's one of the best players in college football," Sitake said of Nacua. "He attracts so much attention that it opens things up for everyone else."

Green had a chance to engineer a game-winning drive when the Broncos got the ball back with 1:46 to play, but a holding penalty set them back and Green's fourth-down pass to Latrell Caples fell incomplete.

Green completed 17-of-23 passes for 220 yards and two touchdowns. His first TD pass was a 16-yard strike to Caples in the first quarter, and the second was an arching pass hauled in by McAllister for a 9-yard score, which gave the Broncos a 14-7 lead in the third.

Green, a 6-foot-6 redshirt freshman, didn't get to be the hero at the end, but he's going to learn from the experience, Avalos said.

"It's promising to see him respond and get going and get stronger in the second half," Avalos said. "Every time he steps on the field, every time he has a new drive, it's a new experience. He's going to grow from this."

Boise State jumps back into conference play on the road at Nevada on Saturday, Nov. 12.

**BAKER VOLLEYBALL AT STATE TOURNAMENT**

# Bulldogs bring home 5th-place trophy

Baker City Herald

SPRINGFIELD — Baker brought back more than just the fifth-place trophy from the Class 4A state volleyball tournament.

The Bulldogs had the highest finish ever for a Baker team, and were also the first squad to win a match at the state tournament.

Baker was seventh in the 2001 tournament.

"Fifth place is quite the accomplishment," Baker coach Ali Abrego said. "Bringing home a trophy and making school history."

The Bulldogs, who finished the season with an 18-7 record, opened this year's state tournament by beating Tillamook in four sets in a quarterfinal match on Friday morning, Nov. 4 at Springfield High School.

That moved Baker into the semifinal round and the daunting challenge of taking on top-seeded Marshfield on Friday evening.

Abrego said she told her young team making its first trip to state — half are sophomores — that any team, including Marshfield, is beatable.

The Bulldogs scored the first point on a kill from senior Jozie Ramos, who concluded her sterling high school career by earning second-team all-tournament honors.

Marshfield then scored eight of the next nine points to lead 8-2. Baker closed to within 8-4, but the Pirates scored three straight, prompting Abrego to call her first timeout.

Baker continued to struggle with Marshfield's array of serves, however, while the Bulldogs had multiple serve errors to give the Pirates free points.

After another timeout Baker scored four straight to get within 11-11, but Marshfield closed out the set, 25-12.

The Bulldogs scored the first point again in the second set and led 5-3 on another Ramos kill. Baker's last lead was 6-5.

Marshfield scored four straight to lead 9-6. Baker closed to within 11-9, but the Pirates scored the next eight points to take control and go on to win 25-12.

The Pirates dominated the third set, as Tatum Montiel served several aces during a 10-point run as Marshfield closed out the match, 25-4.

"We had a really off day and we were still able to compete with the number one team," Abrego said. "I feel like we could have performed better. We're a very young team. It was definitely a learning experience for us."

Marshfield advanced to the championship Saturday evening, where the Pirates swept Cascade to win the state title.

Baker played Mazama in the third-place match early Saturday afternoon.

The first set was close early. Baker senior Makenzie Flanagan had a kill to cut Mazama's lead to 8-7.

Baker was still within four points, at 14-10, when Mazama scored four straight points to go up 18-10. Baker didn't get closer than six points thereafter as Mazama won the first set, 25-17.

The Bulldogs, who rebounded from a first set loss to Tillamook on Friday, showed their resilience again.

Sofia Hanson had an ace serve to give Baker a 1-0 lead in the second set against Mazama, and after the Vikings went ahead 8-4, Baker rallied to take a 14-12 lead on Flanagan's kill. Mazama tied it at 14, but Baker took the lead for good with a four-point run that included another Hanson ace.

The Vikings got as close as 21-19, but Ramos had an ace to make it 23-19, and Taylor Churchfield had a kill to give Baker a set point at 24-20. Baker won the second set, 25-21.

Abrego said the Bulldogs "did everything right" in the second set.

And perhaps just as important, she said, the players had fun.

"Sometimes you're focusing so hard on trying to win that you forget to enjoy the moment," Abrego said. "It was nice to see the girls having fun."

In the third set Baker led 6-3 early thanks in part to a Ramos kill and an ace serve by Jayden Whitford. The teams exchanged the lead twice, and Mazama took the lead for good at 13-12



Tara Vanderwiele/Contributed Photos

**The Baker volleyball team had the school's best finish ever at the state tournament, bringing home the fifth-place trophy from Springfield High School. Coach Ali Abrego, center, with Bulldog seniors, from left, Makenzie Flanagan, Jozie Ramos, Campbell Vanderwiele and Taylor Dalton, and, in the front, Gio Piccinelli.**



**Left: Baker senior Campbell Vanderwiele goes up for a spike against Tillamook in the Class 4A state tournament on Friday, Nov. 4, 2022, while teammates Ashlyn Dalton, right, and Jozie Ramos, left, look on. Right: Baker senior Jozie Ramos goes for a kill against Marshfield on Friday, Nov. 4, 2022, at the Class 4A state volleyball tournament.**



**Powder Valley loses 2 matches at state**

REDMOND — Powder Valley's volleyball season ended with a five-set loss to Crane in the consolation bracket at the Class 1A state tournament at Ridgeview High School on Saturday morning, Nov. 5.

The Badgers won the first two sets, 25-18, 25-20, but couldn't hold off the Mustangs' rally as Crane won the final three sets, 25-21, 27-25, 15-9. Crane, the tournament's number two seed, was upset in five sets in the quarterfinals against North Douglas on Friday, Nov. 4.

Powder Valley opened the tournament Friday morning with a three-set loss to St. Paul, 25-17, 25-21, 25-21. The Badgers ended the season with a 24-9 record.

"State was a great experience," Powder coach Marji Lind said. "It was fun for the girls and fans to be back at the final site. The girls played some tight matches. Didn't turn out the way we had hoped, but they played hard and left it all out there on the court. Could not be prouder of this group of young ladies."

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