

# BHS has new wrestling and swimming coaches

BY IAN CRAWFORD

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Baker High School has hired three new coaches for the upcoming winter sports season, which starts with practices on Monday, Nov. 14.

The Bulldogs will have two new wrestling coaches, one to guide the boys program and one for the girls, and a new boys/girls swimming coach.

Buell Gonzales Jr., the Baker School District's athletic director, said he had been seeking to fill those coaching positions since the school year started.

Katelynne Raley will coach the Baker swimming teams.

Jeris Stephens will coach boys wrestling, while Josh Anderson oversees the girls wrestling program.

Stephens and Anderson replace Brandon Young, who has been coaching at Baker for 14 years and also coached the BHS girls wrestling team that started in 2019.

During Young's tenure, Baker had 52 wrestlers qualify for the state tournament, including seven state champions and four runners-up.

In a post on the Baker/Powder Valley Wrestling Facebook page in October, Young wrote that he was stepping down to spend more time with his family.

"The time commitment that I expect out of myself in order to make our program as good as it can be takes a lot of precious time away from my daughter Siena of 2 1/2 years & my son Emmett who turns 8 soon," Young wrote, "as well as my wife Jessica of 13 years!"

"I met with (the team

and I just said 'I'm still here for you.' I know all those guys, I'm still running the Baker Mat Club."

Young is a teacher at Baker Middle School.

As for basketball, Jebron Jones returns as boys coach, and Jason Ramos as girls coach.

Both teams advanced to the Class 4A state tournament in March.

## Katelynne Raley — boys/girls swimming

Raley, a BHS alumnus and Baker native, takes up the clipboard of head swim-

ming coach this year, managing boys and girls rosters for the Bulldogs.

Raley said that after working in Idaho she moved back to her hometown in 2021.

"I have been looking for a way to get involved in the community since," she said. "Swimming was my primary sport throughout childhood and during high school, so I am beyond excited to have the opportunity to share my experience and passion for the sport with Baker High School athletes."

During her high school years, Raley qualified for the state swimming meet in 2013.

Starting Monday she'll have Baker swimmers taking their first laps at Sam-O Swim Center.

"I'm hoping for a good turnout this year, and I'm looking forward to continuing to grow the program in the coming years,"

she said.

"If you are interested, I highly encourage you to come join a practice at the Sam-O-Swim Center," Raley said.

Practices are currently scheduled for weekdays, 3:45 p.m. to 5 p.m.

## Jeris Stephens — boys wrestling

Taking up the Bulldog mantle is 1999



Stephens



Anderson

BHS graduate Jeris Stephens, who wrestled on the same team as Young when he returned for his senior year. Young was confident in Stephens' quality as a coach, and went out of his way to assure the team as well.

"Originally from Northwest Montana, moved here when I was 6 with my family," Stephens said. "I've been wrestling since I was 4, grew up wrestling in the Mat Club here."

Stephens was head wrestling coach for Baker Middle School several years ago, and he's eager to reconnect with a group of wrestlers he tutored at the middle school.

"A bunch of seventh and eighth graders ended up qualifying, that year we ended up qualifying more kids than any other team had ever done for state and finished higher than any other team had in the school's history," Stephens said. "Some of those kids went on to wrestle in college, one of them's wrestling in Washington State right now."

"I love the sport," he said. "It's who I am, it's part of me, I'll never get rid of it. If you want to be part of a championship program that's going to win titles, sign up for wrestling."

## Josh Anderson — girls wrestling

Anderson's daughters have competed in wrestling, and Gonzales said the girls program, which started with a handful of competitors three years ago, is gaining traction. He's anticipating a dozen or more wrestlers this winter.

"We are just building on the girls wrestling team, we just wanted to continue that and grow that program," Anderson said. "We have a lot of opportunities for girls-only tournaments."

Anderson, who grew up in Southern Idaho, said he wrestled in high school and college. He's been a volunteer wrestling coach in Baker for the past six or seven years.

"We need girls to come out and try the sport," he said. "I really feel like it will help them grow, and train them to be physically and mentally prepared for the rest of their life. We'll surely welcome as many as will try, hopefully we get 16 to 20. That's my goal."

## BAKER VOLLEYBALL



Tara Vanderwiele/Contributed Photo

Baker senior Jozie Ramos goes for a kill against Marshfield on Friday, Nov. 4, 2022, at the Class 4A state volleyball tournament. Ramos was named the Greater Oregon League player of the year for the second straight season.

## Ramos, Abrego repeat as coach, player of the year

Baker City Herald

For the second straight season, the Baker volleyball team dominated the individual awards for the Greater Oregon League.

Senior Jozie Ramos repeated as GOL player of the year, and Baker coach Ali Abrego won her second consecutive coach of the year award.

Baker completed its second consecutive 6-0 record in league play. The Bulldogs advanced to the Class 4A state tournament on Nov. 4-5, placing fifth.

Two of Ramos' senior teammates joined her on the GOL first team — Taylor Dalton

and Makenzie Flanagan.

Baker also had three players on the second team — senior Campbell Vanderwiele and sophomores Sofia Hanson and Kaydence Thomas.

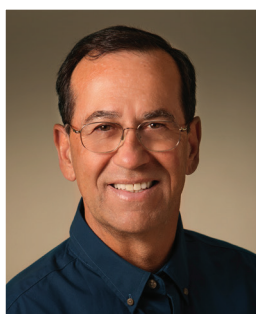
Other players on the GOL first team are La Grande seniors Makenna Shorts and Ari Myer, Pendleton sophomore Josie Jenness and Pendleton senior Keirsen Spencer, and Ontario senior Angelina Herrera.

The rest of the second team: Pendleton junior Avery Krigbaum and Pendleton sophomore Lexie Willman, Ontario junior Kira Evans, La Grande senior Addy Dunlap and La Grande junior Rylan Mellinger.



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