

BAKER GIRLS BASKETBALL SEASON PREVIEW

Bulldogs seeking second state title

BY IAN CRAWFORD

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The Baker girls basketball team brought home a trophy from the Class 4A state tournament in March 2022.

But it wasn't the trophy that coach Jason Ramos' squad wanted.

This year, Ramos' second as head coach, the Bulldogs have aspirations to join the 2019 team as state champions.

"Our goal is to make it back this year and play for the title," Ramos said. "We had a successful summer ball season, and the expectations for this group coming into this season are high."

There's ample reason for optimism.

Baker returns most of its roster from last season's 22-6 team, including the players who combined to score all but one of the Bulldogs' points in their three games at the state tournament.

That group, all of whom were playing in their first state tournament, includes six seniors led by 6-foot post Jozie Ramos, reigning Greater Oregon League player of the year.

Ramos, who is the coach's daughter, led Baker in scoring, at 18 points per game, and rebounding, with an average of seven per contest as the Bulldogs went 6-0 in league play.

Jozie Ramos, who can also shoot from 3-point range, has worked to develop her overall game, Jason Ramos said.

Fellow seniors Rylee Elms and Macey Moore, who each averaged nine points per game, were first team all-league picks, while another senior, Brooklyn Jaca, who averaged six points per game, was a second team selection.

Elms, Moore, Ramos and Jaca combined to score 47 of Baker's 57 points in the Bulldogs' win over Marist Catholic in the fourth-place game at the 2022 state tournament.

Elms, who is 6-foot-1, is one of Baker's most versatile players, able to play in the post and step out and hit outside shots.

Moore, at 5-foot-8, is Baker's leading 3-point shooter and can play multiple positions, Jason Ramos said.

Jaca, 5-foot-11, who often guards the other team's best player, has improved her offensive game in the offseason, Ramos said.

He's also expecting major contributions again from senior Makenzie Flanagan and senior point guard Sydnee Pierce.

Flanagan is an "athletic slasher and solid defender" who "will be a key player this season," Ramos said.

Pierce, who averaged seven points per game last season, "will have an increased role this year at the point guard position," Ramos said.

Another senior, Makayla Rabbourne, rejoins the Bulldogs after missing last season.

Ramos said sophomore Ashlyn Dalton and junior Makea Robb, who move up from JV, "look to be valuable contributors."

Rounding out the varsity roster is Emma Llauro, an exchange student from Spain who plays guard.

"She has a solid skill set and will be able to contribute right away, as she adapts her game to our style of play," Ramos said.

In last year's state tournament, Baker rebounded from a 61-46 quarterfinal loss to Corbett to beat Cascade 50-39 in the con-



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald, File

Baker's Jozie Ramos scores 2 of her game-high 18 points in the Bulldogs' 51-32 win over Pendleton on Feb. 25, 2022, in the Baker gym.

Baker Girls Basketball Schedule

Thursday, Dec. 1, at Homedale, 6:30 p.m. PST

Friday, Dec. 2, vs. Mazama, 6 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 3, vs. Klamath Union, 11 a.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 6, at Fruitland, 6:30 p.m. PST

Thursday, Dec. 8, vs. Homedale, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 9, vs. Molalla, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 10, vs. Estacada, 2 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 13, vs. Fruitland, 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 28-Friday, Dec. 30, at SCTC Holiday Classic, Stayton (TBD)

Friday, Jan. 6, vs. Madras, 6 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 7, vs. Crook County, 11 a.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 11, vs. La Grande, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 17, at Vale, 6 p.m. PST

Friday, Jan. 20, at Ontario, 2 p.m. PST

Tuesday, Jan. 24, vs. Pendleton, 5:30 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 26, at Nyssa, 5 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 27, at La Grande, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 31, vs. Vale, 7 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 3, at Pendleton, 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 7, vs. Burns, 5:30 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 10, vs. Ontario, 6 p.m.

lation bracket, then beat Marist Catholic 57-48 in the fourth-place game.

This year's schedule includes a trip to Stayton in late December for a three-day tournament. Baker will open against Sweet Home on Dec. 28.

"We do have some quality non-league opponents on our schedule which will help us prepare for a strong finish," Ramos said. "We want to establish a high level of play early, utilizing our athleticism and experience to set the tone for the season."

Baker opens its season Thursday, Dec. 1 at Homedale, Idaho. The Bulldogs then play on two straight days in the Baker gym, Friday, Dec. 2 at 6 p.m. against Mazama, and Saturday, Dec. 3 at 11 a.m. against Klamath Union.

BAKER BOYS BASKETBALL SEASON PREVIEW

Bulldogs focusing on improving defense

Baker was the top-scoring Class 4A team last season

BY IAN CRAWFORD

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Baker boys basketball coach Jebron Jones has the Bulldogs practicing before dawn with a goal of playing after dusk three months from now.

And potentially with a state championship at stake.

With seven players, including five regular starters, returning from last year's 19-8 squad, which advanced to the eight-team state tournament, Jones sees great potential when the Bulldogs gather for 5:30 a.m. practices.

"We return seven players — Diego Quintela, Paul Hobson, Hudson Spike, Grant Gambleton, Jaron Long, Jaxon Logsdon, Isaiah Jones," Jebron Jones said. "We have high expectations this year as we have emphasized competing for everything. The young men are hungry."

The returning players are joined by juniors Nate Jensen and Giacomo Rigueiro, senior Michael Gentry, and freshman Rasean Jones.

(Rasean and his older brother, Isaiah, a sophomore, are Jebron Jones' sons.)

"I have many players who will play important roles this year," Jebron Jones said. "All 11 players have a chance to impact the game in some capacity so it's hard to say who is going to stand out. Isaiah Jones, Paul Hobson and Hudson Spike received first team all-league honors last year, and Jaron Long and Jaxon Logsdon received second team all-league honors."

Jones said he hasn't set a starting lineup yet.

"It changes almost on a daily basis which is good for competition purposes in practice," Jones said.

"Any of those players along with other returners and newcomers have a chance to play significant minutes this year. I'm excited."

Returning players scored all but one of Baker's points in the two games at the state tournament last season.

Emphasizing defense

Jones said he's focusing on improving the Bulldogs' defense this season.

Last year Baker was the highest scoring team in the Class 4A ranks, averaging 63.1 points per game.

But the Bulldogs gave up almost 53 points per contest. Greater Oregon League rival La Grande, which won two of the three games against Baker and claimed the league title, surrendered 44.9 points per game.

"We have placed a bigger emphasis on playing much better defense, rebounding and being more consistent on both ends of the floor," Jones said, noting that just a few more defensive stops in some games could have turned losses into wins.

After routing Sisters 61-



Ian Crawford/Baker City Herald

Jebron Jones is beginning his fifth season as boys varsity basketball coach at Baker High School.

"We have placed a bigger emphasis on playing much better defense, rebounding and being more consistent on both ends of the floor."

— Jebron Jones, Baker boys basketball coach

38 in a play-in game and dominating Gladstone 80-52 in a first-round playoff to advance to the state tournament, the Bulldogs lost 58-47 to Junction City and lost 67-60 to Philomath in the consolation bracket.

Baker will see a change in its league schedule this season, as Mac-Hi has dropped out of the GOL, replaced by former Class 5A school Pendleton.

The Bulldogs also have a challenging nonleague slate, including traveling to three tournaments, starting this weekend at Wilsonville.

Baker also will have a re-

match with Junction City on Jan. 14 on a neutral court at The Dalles.

"I love our schedule, everything about it," Jones said. "I love the fact we are playing good teams and on the road. It will give the players a chance to be uncomfortable playing in hostile environments, we need to learn how to be comfortable with being uncomfortable."

"Hopefully this schedule will help get to where we want to get — Forest Grove and the final eight."

The 2023 Class 4A state tournament will take place in March at Forest Grove.

After playing three games this weekend at Wilsonville, then traveling to Homedale, Idaho, on Dec. 8, Baker will open its home schedule Friday, Dec. 9 against Estacada at 7 p.m. The Bulldogs, again playing three games in three days, will also play host to Molalla on Saturday, Dec. 10 at 12:30 p.m.

Baker Boys Basketball Schedule

Friday, Dec. 2, vs. Crescent Valley at Wilsonville Invitational, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 3, at Wilsonville Invitational (TBD)

Sunday, Dec. 4, at Wilsonville Invitational (TBD)

Thursday, Dec. 8, at Homedale, 6:30 p.m. PST

Friday, Dec. 9, vs. Molalla, 8:30 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 10, vs. Estacada, 3:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 13, at Fruitland, 6:30 p.m. PST

Thursday, Dec. 15-Saturday, Dec. 17, at Pro Image Sports Holiday Classic, Meridian (TBD)

Wednesday, Dec. 28-Friday, Dec. 30, at SCTC Holiday Classic, Stayton (TBD)

Friday, Jan. 6, vs. Madras, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 7, vs. Crook County, 12:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 11, vs. La Grande, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 14, vs. Junction City at The Dalles (TBD)

Friday, Jan. 20, at Ontario, 6:30 p.m. PST

Tuesday, Jan. 24, vs. Pendleton, 7 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 26, at Nyssa, 6:30 p.m. PST

Friday, Jan. 27, at La Grande, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 31, at Vale, 6 p.m. PST

Friday, Feb. 3, at Pendleton, 7 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 10, vs. Ontario, 7:30 p.m.

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Baker City, OR 97814

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• Lunch provided

Mandatory meeting for parents/guardians and shooters at 11am
(Shooting begins after meeting)

Parent/guardian required to stay on premises

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