



April 21, 2007

Team-car ride was great ...

A sportswriter faces the threat of being stranded on Brasstown Bald

By Mallory Carra
Staff Writer

BRASSTOWN BALD MOUNTAIN, Ga. — Floyd Landis was once defeated on it. Tom Danielson named a strong, bitter coffee flavor after it. I am stranded on it.

I am on Brasstown Bald Mountain without a way down — or back to Chattanooga. But as the highest point in Georgia at 4,784 feet above sea level, it offers the most gorgeous view of rolling mountains in the clouds. It almost makes the uphill 1-kilometer hike from the parking lot, not to mention being stranded, worth it.

The view I got of the Tour de Georgia's fifth stage on the way to Brasstown Bald was just as unique. I had the pleasure of riding from the stage start in a team car with directors of the Toyota-United Pro Cycling team. The ride started out with Harm Jansen and Kirk Willett doing radio checks with riders during the neutral lap around downtown Dalton. Then Tour de Georgia staff did a team radio check in English and, for some teams, in French.

All team and race communication is done via two-way radios, especially since cell phone service is nonexistent on the King of the Mountain climbs. Tour de Georgia officials transmit continual updates about race progress in English and, again, French. During the first climb, Jansen and Willett checked on rider Henk Vogels, who dropped behind the peloton and struggled on the ascent. They offered words of encouragement, water and energy bars.

With 5 kilometers to the summit of the climb, Toyota-United's Chris Baldwin was one of 18 riders in the breakaway. Jansen and Willett decided to focus on Baldwin for the remainder of the race after much discussion about his climbing skills and how much riders are holding back for the Brasstown climb.

The car pulled over at the designated feed zone to trade tires and equipment with another Toyota-United car, and we zoomed to the four-minute gap between the 18 leaders and the peloton. Liquids and energy bars became crucial during the next two climbs.

"Keep eating and drinking," Jansen kept advising Baldwin.

Team cars are numbered and are expected to stay in order while following the race. However, they are allowed to approach the leaders if their rider requests "feeding." And

that became the car's focus: feeding Baldwin. We zoomed up whenever he needed water, then pulled back in order when bottles were handed off to him.

With 20 kilometers to go, we reached the start of the Brasstown Bald climb. The road was lined with tons of fans, amazingly, considering there was only one way up to the finish line and the race was using it.

Team cars started swerving out of order to get to their riders and trying to share the road with cyclists struggling up the steep climb. Jansen pulled up to each of Toyota-United's riders to encourage and congratulate them on their good job for the day.

Jansen dropped me off at the mountain's parking area, located a kilometer from the finish line. The rest I had to walk myself, and I have a new respect for Levi Leipheimer, Danielson and all of the cyclists who can make it up here. I walked some of the race path, where fans even began to cheer me on to get to the top. Around one of the curves, I found a trail to the top, but it wasn't any easier. I struggled. I whined. I cursed under my breath.

But as hard of a climb as it is, it's hard not to love Brasstown Bald Mountain. I can't stop staring at the view. Landis signed autographs and appeared on the stage at the summit of the mountain that caused him to lose the 2005 Tour de Georgia. After the race, reporters asked how Danielson's Brasstown Bald coffee blend, produced by Durango Coffee Company, compared to the actual mountain.

"I love this stage and truly I feel this mountain has launched my career," he said. "It was the first opportunity I had to show myself at a high level and my climbing skills. The strength of the climb is the strength of the coffee blend, so Brasstown is the strongest. I definitely had some this morning."

I could use some of that coffee myself. I could also use a way home.

Editor's Note: Several hours and one late-night change of transportation later, Mallory finally made her way safely back from her adventure on Brasstown Bald. Her co-workers are happy to have her back home — even though they fear she may never leave the office to go on assignment again.

E-mail Mallory Carra at mcarra@timesfreepress.com



Duluth, Ga., resident Neal Rainin leads the peloton Friday during the neutral lap at the start of Stage 5 of the Tour de Georgia in downtown Duluth.

Team-car ride was great ...

A sportswriter faces the threat of being stranded on Brasstown Bald

By MALLORY CARRA

Four Hours
BRASSTOWN BALD MOUNTAIN, Ga. — Floyd Landis was once debated on it. Tom Davis is named a strong climber who never after it. I am stranded on it.

I am on Brasstown Bald Mountain without a way down — or back to Chattanooga. The air is highest point in Georgia at 4,784 feet above sea level. It offers the most gorgeous view of rolling mountains in the clouds. It takes me the uphill 1.6-kilometer hike from the parking lot, not to mention being stranded, worth it.

The view I got of the Tour de Georgia's fifth stage as the way to Brasstown Bald was just as unique. I had the pleasure of riding from the stage start in a team car with direction of the Toyota-United Pro Cycling team. The ride started out with Steve Lintz and Kirk Willett doing radio checks with riders during the neutral lap around downtown Duluth. Then Tour de Georgia staff did a team mid-check in English and, for some reason, in French.

All team mid-checks are done on two-way radio, especially since cell phone service is nonexistent on the Day of the Mountain climb. Tour de Georgia officials made me continue to speak about my progress in English and, again, French. During the first climb, James and Willett checked on rider Frank Vignia, who dropped behind the peloton and struggled on the ascent. They offered words of encouragement, water and energy bars.

With 20 kilometers to go, we reached the start of the Brasstown Bald climb. The road was lined with fans of the team, many considering there was only one way up to the finish line and the rest was waiting. Teams can stand overlooking out of order to get to their riders and trying to share the road with cyclists struggling up the steep climb. James radioed to each of Toyota-United's riders to encourage and congratulate them on their good job for the day.

James dropped me off at the mountain's parking area, located a kilometer from the finish line. The rest I had to walk myself and I have a new respect for Levi Leipheimer, Davidson and all of the cyclists who can make it up here. I walked some of the race path, where fans even get to cheer me on to get to the top. Around one of the curves, I found a



Health Net presented by Maxxis cyclist Tyler Hamilton is the first to cross the intermediate split line in Ellijay, Ga., as Navigators Insurance Cycling Team's Ben Day follows in second place during Stage 5 of the Tour de Georgia.

"Keep eating and drinking." James kept advising Baldwin. "Team cars are numbered and are expected to stay in order while following the race. However, they are allowed to approach the leaders if their rider requests 'feeding.' And that because the car's focus is feeding Baldwin, we moved up whenever he needed water that pulled back in order when bikes were loaded off to him.

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fan. "I love this stage and truly I find this mountain has launched my career," he said. "It was the first opportunity I had to show myself at a high level and my climbing skills. The strength of the climb is the strength of the coffee brand, so Brasstown is the strongest. I definitely had some this morning."

I could see some of the coffee myself. I could also see a way back.

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E-mail: Mallory.Carra@timesfreepress.com

Tour

Continued from Page D1
Danilec rode with Leipheimer, while Brankovic fought off team captain Christian Vande Wiele, who finished ninth. Wade Wiele trails Brankovic in the overall standings by 12 seconds.

Though Brankovic remains in the lead, he's not ready to declare himself — and Discovery Channel — the winner of the race yet.

"For now, we kept the jersey," he said. "But there are two stages more to do. Until the race is over, we cannot say I have won the race. We'll have to wait for the next couple of days, but we're in a good way

STAGE 5 RESULTS

Rank	Name	Time
1	Brankovic	05:02:00
2	Leipheimer	05:02:00
3	Wiele	05:02:00
4	Wade Wiele	05:02:00
5	Brankovic	05:02:00
6	Leipheimer	05:02:00
7	Wiele	05:02:00
8	Wade Wiele	05:02:00
9	Brankovic	05:02:00
10	Leipheimer	05:02:00

It's very, very difficult and the spectators can come see firsthand real high-speed climbing. What you saw today were the best climbers in the world, and that's what I think makes it so special.

"Because the climb is so steep, it really makes it magical because you can see as spectators would suffer on their training ride. They can look into our eyes and see the agony that we're in and watch us battle. It's like no other climb."

The 2006 champion and controversial Tour de France winner, Floyd Landis, signed autographs and appeared on stage.

E-mail: Mallory.Carra@timesfreepress.com



The Jittery Joe's Pro Cycling Team leads the peloton as they attempt to chase down a breakaway while riding over Ellijay River during Stage 5 of the 2007 Tour de Georgia.

Landis:

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some strongly resisted their organization's ethics.

"I think every organization should be subjected to public scrutiny, but we're not here to hammer checks. We're here to reduce pain that makes sports fun for everyone."

Said Yggert: "We're not out to get anyone. We're out to get the truth."

Landis did not test positively for a banned substance but had up to an 11-to-12-month-to-epitomeous level. Most runners have roughly an equal mix, and the highest ratio allowed by WADA is 4-1-1.

But the new protocol rates between 4-9-to-10 1:44, slightly higher in the frame of the Floyd Palmer Fund, an organization designed to explain the situation, money for Landis' defense.

The Floyd Palmer Fund was in Atlanta on Wednesday

for a town hall-style meeting during question-and-answer sessions with Landis, Baker and executive director Michael Henson.

"Our analysis is that they performed the test so poorly that any result cannot be taken seriously," Baker said. "If you weigh yourself on a scale, and you get 49 pounds one time and 112 pounds another time ... and also, you're not using the scale properly then you don't have any results that are credible."

Baker said his 12-year relationship with Landis "doesn't change science." Baker said he didn't respond to several media

requests for comments on the test for "five or six weeks" after they were announced, when he received documentation. He said he offered to help Landis "problem" shortly thereafter.

"It's not medicine, it would be malpractice," Baker said. "As someone who has known Floyd for a long time, I would like to bring justice to this situation. As a scientist, I am bothered because they don't have science. They have science fiction."

"This lowers people's perception of science and science is supposed to be truth. This is not truth."

Landis, who has an arbitration

Official wants tainted cyclists excluded from Tour de France

The Associated Press

PARIS — The director of the Tour de France is asking cycling teams to exclude riders who were implicated in the Spanish doping investigation.

Christian Prudhomme told a French sports daily he had already contacted with some team managers. He said he would raise the issue with other teams like the Fleche Wallonne next week.

"The Tour was called last year," Prudhomme said in Friday's edition of L'Equipe. "It won't happen again."

At the 2006 Tour, a urine sample from champion Floyd Landis was found to contain elevated testosterone to epinephrine levels. The 28-year-old cyclist from Iowa was later found to be the first rider to be stripped of the title if the doping allegations are upheld.

More than 50 cyclists were implicated in the Spanish probe before the 2006 Tour started, leading to pre-race favorites Jan Ullrich and Ivan Basso, along with seven other

riders, being excluded from the race.

Ullrich's DNA was recently matched to blood bags seized in the Spanish investigation last May at a Madrid clinic. The clinic is suspected of providing doping services to more than 10 cyclists.

Ullrich, the 1997 Tour winner who retired in February, has denied using any banned substances. Basso also has denied doping.

Prudhomme said he talked to Hansi Discovery Channel team about pulling the rider. He said he had explained to the team "what seemed right and even necessary for the future of cycling," and officials had promised to get back to him.

In the Spanish probe, known as Operation Puerto, sports physician Eufemiano Fuentes, coach Manolo Saiz and six other suspects were arrested.

A Spanish judge threw the case out, ruling that he could not charge anyone because the country's law said doping law was not in force when the case broke.

hearing scheduled for May in California, will be the first champion in the Tour de France's 104-year history to be stripped of his title if he isn't exonerated.

Landis said he has spent more than \$1 million to clear his name. He said USAID and WADA were "equally absolutely unreasonable."

"They will go out of their way to convict anyone they can to make it look like they're doing something so they can collect more tax money," he said. "Obviously I'm dealing with USAID right now, but it would be hard to pick a worse one. They're both equally bad."

"For a while in the beginning, I tried to give them the benefit of the doubt, but now it appears as though they actually have had evidence. I no longer think that they're in any way objective."

Hewman said the French lab is among the 10 International Olympic Committee-accredited labs WADA inherited when it was formed in 1999.

"They had all been established in major sporting events, such as the Olympics," he said. "They are allowed sometimes a year — and would be suspended if they didn't get it right."

E-mail: Willie.Risher@wstar.com



Jan. 20, 2008

Watching words

High school coaches must guard against inappropriate talk

By Mallory Carra
Staff Writer

Swearing. Cussing. Fourletter words. Expressions that can't be printed in the Times Free Press.

That doesn't mean they can't be said on high school sidelines or in locker rooms. Or can they? High school coaches are finding what they say can get them into trouble — if deemed inappropriate.

The Hamilton County Department of Education ruled Friday to transfer former Hixson basketball coach Bill Eller to another school after a 10-day suspension without pay amid allegations of inappropriate language and conduct. Since his suspension began Jan. 4, more than 20 students were involved in the investigation into 19 allegations involving Eller.

Last year, Ooltewah basketball coach Ron Baker resigned after the school board suspended him for using a racial slur in a postgame meeting with his players.

Knox County reprimanded and reassigned former Powell High School girls' soccer coach Harvey Halcott last month for using inappropriate language and sexual remarks to his players. In Germantown, near Memphis, Houston High girls' soccer coach Mike Irby resigned in December amid allegations of making "demeaning" remarks to his players.

Similar incidents were reported throughout the country in 2007, including at high schools in Oregon, New Hampshire and Ohio.

"INAPPROPRIATE" MEANING

The Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association has jurisdiction over incidents that occur during sporting events, while local school systems or private school boards handle cases that happen off the field and in practice.

"There is no place for profanity and inappropriate language anywhere in high school sports," TSSAA executive director Ronnie Carter said. "Our coaches in sports are doing the very same thing as English teachers are doing in the classroom. High school athletics exist as part of a total education program."

The Hamilton County Department of Education determines “inappropriate language” on a case-by-case basis.

“It’s all subjective and we have to look into each individual case, talk with the students and the coach and determine whether it was unprofessional conduct or if the language was demeaning to the student,” spokesperson Danielle Clark said.

In a survey conducted by the Times Free Press sports staff, 78.2 percent of the 23 high school athletes and coaches responding defined “inappropriate language” as words and phrases such as taking the Lord’s name in vain and those censored during primetime television. Words and phrases of sexual nature and racial slurs were considered inappropriate by 91.3 percent of respondents.

Coaches said the use of profanity and its acceptance in sports has changed over time, but sexual remarks and racial slurs should never be uttered.

In the survey, 4.3 percent of respondents said inappropriate language is used “very often” while coaching, while 60.9 percent said “not often” and 34.8 percent said it occurred “somewhat often.”

Most public schools and private schools have policies against using profanity at school overall. The Arts & Sciences athletic department forbids swearing by coaches and players, and it’s a policy that is strictly enforced, athletic director and boys’ basketball coach Mark Dragoo said.

“We’ve dismissed coaches for using inappropriate and profane language before, years ago,” Dragoo said. “It goes back to us being an example, and part of that is self-control in language, which would most likely lead to self-control in a heated athletic event — and that’s the goal.”

EFFECTS

If the goal with strong language is to motivate, that is counterproductive when the strong words are deemed inappropriate — or simply overly negative — according to 48.8% of the coaches and athletes reponding to the TFP survey.

Too much negative and inappropriate language can cause an athlete’s performance to reflect fear rather than motivation, said Dr. Patrick Cohn, a sports psychologist and founder of Peak Performance Sports in Orlando, Fla.

“If coaches are swearing and using negative language, that’s only going to heighten the athletes’ fear,” he said. “I work with many athletes that one of their main issues is, ‘I don’t want to get chewed out by the coach if I make an error or do something wrong.’ So they go through playing the game, half of their mind is focused on what they need to do in the game and the other half is, ‘Let’s not make errors, let’s not screw up, let’s not get chewed out, let’s not disappoint the coach.’”

If coaches focus on what their young athletes are doing well, the players are more likely to respond positively, Cohn said. At Peak Performance Sports, he helps parents and athletes notice the signs of good and bad coaching, because even high school coaches have emerged as public figures in recent years.

“Coaches are now under greater and greater scrutiny,” Cohn said. “Now they’re getting in the public eye and there’s more and more coaching education that’s coming on. Arming parents with that information, having parents understand the difference between positive and negative reinforcement — that empowers parents to speak out to the coach.”

PARENTS AND KIDS

When coaches make unfortunate slips, they hope their athletes realize they’re not perfect and understand that heated competition brings a lot of heated emotions.

In the Times Free Press survey, 30.3 percent of respondents believed the use of inappropriate language was generally conscious, while 52.2 percent responded “maybe.”

“They only do it when they’re frustrated, and it’s not out of anger. Sometimes it’s just out of the heat of the moment,” said Brainerd basketball player Latisha Smith, who also has played on AAU teams for 10 years. “Coaches are going to get mad, and they have a reason when we play bad and they think we can play better.”

Because coaches spend a lot of time with their athletes, parents consider them role models for their children. Dana Ramseur of Hixson has a daughter, Lundyn Howard, who plays basketball at Tyner Academy. Ramseur said she believed coaches have served as role models for her children about 75 percent of the time, because so much time is spent with them.

“I think coaches should be responsible for what they say to the kids, but also have room to coach,” Ramseur said. “As coaches and teachers, they should take responsibility when they use the language they feel they need to use. They need to find a way to talk and teach and do what they need to do without offending anyone.”

And when it does happen, apologizing is what most area coaches find is the most effective remedy.

“It’s important when dealing with young kids that they understand that no one is perfect,” Chattanooga Christian girls’ basketball coach Pam Hindman said. “When you’re dealing with strong competitors and trying to motivate, sometimes it’s frustrating, but apologizing to the kids makes me think of next time.”

Assistant sports editor Stephen Hargis contributed to this report.



May 22, 2007

Stretching it out

State tennis event a day longer to reduce cramping

By Mallory Carra
Staff Writer

Baylor's Bo Seal collapsed onto the court during the 2006 TSSAA Division II state team tennis championship match. Then teammate Orlando Lourenco followed.

Seal's opponent, Charlie Ramsay of McCallie, started feeling pain in his legs, too. Then the ambulances arrived.

The players suffered from cramping and severe dehydration after enduring a full day of tennis that continued late into the night — the state semifinals during the day and the final in the evening. Almost four hours after McCallie wrapped up its marathon victory, GPS won its state title at midnight after switching courts.

Those events last year at Murfreesboro forced the TSSAA to schedule the team semifinals and finals on two days in each classification for the first time in the 13 year-history of the Spring Fling, extending the state tennis tournament to four days from three.

The GPS, McCallie and Baylor girls' teams play in Division II semifinal matches today at Murfreesboro's Old Fort Park. The Chattanooga Christian girls' and boys' teams play in semifinals today at Middle Tennessee State University. Winners advance to the finals Wednesday at MTSU.

TSSAA tennis representative Trina Melton and executive director Ronnie Carter decided on the adjustment in January after much discussion of last year's event, though it may not be a permanent change.

"We looked at ideas and comments from a lot of the coaches," Melton said. "The team matches are very intense, and they've been going so long that kids get dehydrated and we have some matches going into the night. We took all of that into account and thought to change it into two days."

"We'll see how this year goes, and if it works well with this format, we will continue to do it this way as long as we have the courts available."

McCallie's Eric Voges recalled that cramping in the one-day event has played a part in many state-title matches during his 20 years as coach.

“It’s a good change because it helps eliminate the good-draw/ bad-draw syndrome,” Voges said. “Last year, we got the easier first match and Baylor got the tough one (against Memphis University School), so when we played it was harder on them. It was a change that was needed, so the outcome will be a little bit more determined on the court than the luck of the draw.”

The change aligns with the NCAA rules, which has college teams play only one match per day. The past theory was that many players competing for state titles are already used to playing two matches daily in USTA junior tournaments. But players said competing with a team takes more energy because they’re emotionally invested in all their teammates’ matches.

“I love the way they’re doing it this year, because playing two in one day starts to wear down on your body,” said Brandi Cordell, a senior who plays No. 1 for Baylor. “In team matches, everyone’s so pumped up and cheering your teammates on by the fence.”

The forecast in Murfreesboro this week is sunny with temperatures in the high 80s. Last year, Baylor won a four-hour semifinal match 4-3 over MUS that was determined by doubles, meaning most of the Red Raiders played in two matches each, before losing 4-2 to McCallie in another four-hour marathon for the state championship.

“We see a lot of cramping because someone is dehydrated a lot more in early season and in hot weather,” said Dr. Todd Bell, an orthopedic surgeon at the Center for Sports Medicine. “Everybody has their own limit. Any one individual’s limit can change due to several factors: how well they’re conditioned and how hot it is. The best treatment is to be well-conditioned and stay hydrated. Water is good, but fluids with electrolytes are sometimes better, like Gatorade or anything that’s a little more than just fluid.”

Coaches noticed that male players tend to cramp more often than female players, but Bell said that has not been medically proven. Though it may affect boys’ teams more, the girls’ teams are also pleased with the new format.

GPS won its state title in a four-hour match against Knoxville Webb that was clinched 4-3 by a doubles match that ended at 1 a.m. Eastern time.

“The players’ safety is the major thing, so last year was not a good situation and it’s really good that the TSSAA split it into two days,” GPS coach Sue Bartlett said. “Last year wasn’t even that hot, but the year before in Memphis was so hot, and you can’t ever prepare for that much tennis. Now you have a mental break. It’s kind of nice to take a little more time.”

E-mail Mallory Carra at mcarra@timesfreepress.com



May 16, 2008

Wofford names Hangstefer

By Mallory Carra
Staff Writer

Chattanooga native Katie Hangstefer knew it since she played tennis in college: She wanted to coach a college team one day.

This week, Wofford College named the former University of Tennessee at Chattanooga player as its head women's tennis coach.

Hangstefer joined the Terriers' coaching staff last September as an assistant to head coach Rod Ray, overseeing the women's program. Ray will now solely coach the men's team.

This season, she helped direct the Lady Terriers to an impressive 11-2 record and a first-round bye in the Southern Conference tournament.

"This season was a lot of fun and a lot of work," Hangstefer said. "We got off to a great start at 11-2. If I didn't have the players I had, we wouldn't have been able to do that, and they responded well to me coming in."

In 2007, Hangstefer served as men's and women's head coach during the inaugural year of Covenant College's tennis programs. She worked as a tennis instructor around Chattanooga after graduating from UTC in 2002 with a degree in a business management with concentrations in general management and human resource management.

Ray, who just finished his eighth year as head coach, knew Hangstefer when she played for UTC and knew her family through USTA junior tennis.

"We knew we were going to make the switch to have someone else coach the women's team, and we hired Katie knowing she was going to do a great job," Ray said. "We were able to make that promotion happen. She's been acting as head women's coach this season, and she's a natural at coaching. We're fortunate to have her at Wofford."

Hangstefer shared a year on the UTC squad with brothers John, who earned a master's degree in 2005, and Michael, a 2007 alum. Her youngest sister, Emily, recently signed scholarship papers to play for the Lady Mocs in 2008-09.

"When I was playing in college, it was great experience and I was sad when my career ended," Katie Hangstefer said. "I thought it would be fun to coach. I worked for four

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years and then got back into coaching, getting a great start at Covenant and Wofford. It's been everything I imagined and more.”

E-mail Mallory Carra at mcarra@timesfreepress.com.



May 4, 2007

Howard wins in overtime

By Mallory Carra
Staff Writer

DECATUR, Tenn. — Howard's Tremaine Hudson remembered exactly how it felt to lose at Meigs County in overtime two years ago.

And the senior running back made sure the Hustlin' Tigers didn't go home the same way Friday night. Hudson scored the winning touchdown in Howard's 20-14 overtime win over Meigs in a Region 3-3A matchup.

Hudson was Howard's sole rusher, running the ball for 218 yards on 29 carries, including a TD on a 10-yard run in overtime that gave Howard (7-1, 6-0) the victory.

"A couple of years ago, we lost this game the same way we just won it," Hustlin' Tigers coach Alvin Tarver said. "We knew it was going to be an extremely tough game. We were going to run (Hudson) until he dropped. He's been our workhorse all year."

Meigs (5-3, 4-3) held a 14-6 lead in the first half. Meigs County's Dylan Neely scored on a 1-yard run and running back Tyler Mobriant ran for a two-point conversion in the first quarter.

Howard's Jahron Reynolds took a pass from quarterback Michael Bryant 43 yards and into the end zone. Mobriant ran for a 17-yard TD up the middle just before halftime.

In the second half, Howard's defense held Mobriant to 43 rushing yards and Hudson rushed for 140 of his yards for Howard. Howard quarterback Darrian Jones tied the score at 14, scoring on a 4-yard run with 10 minutes to go in the game.

Meigs got Mobriant as close as the 3-yard line in its overtime possession but failed to score. Mobriant rushed for 147 yards on 34 carries. Reynolds had 69 yards on four catches.

"We lost this same game here in OT two years ago, and we seniors didn't want that same feeling again," Hudson said. "Our defense definitely put up some key plays tonight, and we wanted it more. This win sparks a new beginning for us after losing last week. We're growing more and more every week."

E-mail Mallory Carra at mcarra@timesfreepress.com