

TIGERS

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second half, winning a race to a loose ball in the box and covering it before the Molalla forward could take a shot.

Chamberlain attributed the second-half effort to her frustration about the goal Molalla did manage in the first half. She had turned away a free kick by Molalla, but the ball bounced away from her and Albright scored what at the time was the tying goal in the 31st minute.

"I just got really mad about the entire goal, and then my anger I put out on the other team," she said. "I said, 'You're not getting another goal.'"

La Grande immediately responded to the goal from Albright with Garlitz's second to take the 2-1 lead into the half.

The Tigers also caught a break with about 19 minutes to play, when Albright scored what appeared to be the game-tying goal, only to have it waved off by an offside call.

Garlitz put the game away

by completing her hat trick with 9:45 to play.

"They were tough. They never gave up," Garlitz said of Molalla. "I like that about them, giving us a challenge. (Our) team did really good. We did not give up. We kept going, and we were really strong in the second half."

The Tigers faced pressure from the Indians' offensive attack most of the night. La Grande took more shots — holding a 17-12 edge — but Molalla held the possession longer and kept the ball in its attacking third of the field.

The Indians, though, had a tough time breaking through against the La Grande back line, and what did get through was turned away by Chamberlain.

"We really had to work on playing confidently because we aren't used to teams pressuring us this hard, so it was a real shift in thinking with them all over us all the time," senior defender Lara Insko said.

Garlitz praised the effort the defense put on to keep the Tigers ahead.

"I gotta say good job to the defense. It was so tough back there," she said. "I'm proud of them for keeping it up, and Lexy (saved) so many goals."

Insko called Chamberlain the team's "lifesaver" on defense.

"She was our savior. They had one really strong player in the center (Albright) who had many goal scoring opportunities, and Lexy has no fear," Insko said. "She's willing to come out and tackle those girls. She did a great job tonight."

The win, La Grande's third in a row in the first round, sends the Tigers into a quarterfinal match at North Valley Saturday afternoon in Grants Pass.

"I think we can do it," Chamberlain said of the upcoming match. "If we play the way we played (today), we have a chance."



Ronald Bond/The Observer

La Grande goalkeeper Alexyss Chamberlain watches a shot come her way during the first half Tuesday. Chamberlain made eight saves in the Tigers' 3-1 win over Molalla.



Ronald Bond/The Observer

La Grande's Josie Higgins, right, works on defense against Molalla's Holly Rae Tuesday night.



Darcy Blackman photo

Reed, who is coming off a broken leg suffered during the wrestling season, has followed up last year's 1,261-yard season with 1,108 yards so far this season.

REED

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"I had some doubts in myself coming into the season off the broken leg," he said.

But Reed said any doubts he had dissipated on his 59-yard touchdown run on the Tigers' third play from scrimmage this season during La Grande's 36-14 season-opening win over Pendleton.

McIlmoil said he noticed apprehension in the running back during summer camps, but felt it was gone by the time the season began.

"There is a major (mental) block that happens to all athletes coming off an injury," the coach said. "As he worked on it and did some things mentally to improve himself and his mental game, (his confidence) started to come back. He took the bull by the horns, did what he needed to do and got to where he needed."

While Reed is largely noted for his rushing ability, McIlmoil said he is also a solid defender, adding Reed's play at middle linebacker

gets overlooked in the midst of offensive accolades.

"Defensively he's an animal," McIlmoil said.

He's also stayed healthy partly due to being pulled early in the blowout wins. He said he'd like to be on the field more but he understands the potential long-term benefit of limiting touches during the regular season in lieu of the playoffs, which begin Friday against Estacada.

"Last year at this time he was banged up (from the long season). This year he's healthy, (and) this is when we need him to be the most healthy," McIlmoil said.

Reed said he's entering the playoffs at 100%, and he feels he's in better condition than this time a year ago.

He said, too, he won't be satisfied with anything less than what the team set out for at the beginning of the season — a state championship.

"I've gotten second place enough. I'll be very disappointed if we don't win it as a team in football," he said.

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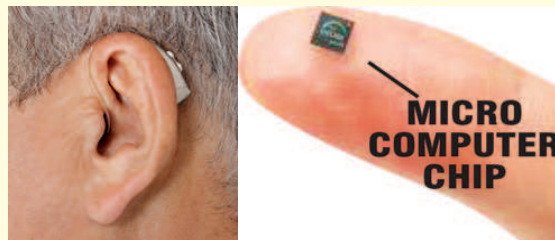
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