

Lukson: Pierson plays part in both Bomber state football titles as coach

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"Ryan is the best defensive player in the history of Richland football, Brooks said. "It was hard to see him not able to play, but it was a big lift for us that he could at least play offense."

After Kentwood scored with 4:34 left in the game to cut Richland's lead to three points, the Bombers were able to run out the clock and preserve the win.

Not surprisingly, both Lukson and Brooks were on the field when it happened.

"I knew that it wouldn't bother me as much on offense," Lukson said.

"My knee was kinda slipping and sliding around on me, but I had to keep going. This is a game that you don't miss — even if you have a broken leg."

The endurance of Brooks and the courage of Lukson are prime reasons why Richland was able to turn things around this season after an uncharacteristically poor one last year.

A year ago, the Bombers lost their first six games of the season and never were close to making the playoffs.

Since that time, they have won 16 of their past 17 — including the last 10.

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helped these guys today."

Pierson, who still is gaunt after recovering from surgery to remove a cancerous prostate, was back on the sidelines for the first time since he

went into the hospital four weeks ago.

He said he would have to wait awhile to enjoy the feeling of winning a state title.

"Right now, I am just exhausted," Pierson said. "Somebody is going to have to pinch me."

Pierson was the defensive coordinator under coach J.D. Covington when Richland last won the title in 1981.

Now, in 1999, the Bombers have beaten a Kentwood team from a Kent area community called Covington.

Some things are just meant to be.

■ Jim Riley can be reached at 582-1506 or via e-mail at jriley@tri-cityherald.com