

Sports Editor

David Heiling

(509) 664-7157

heiling@wenatcheeworld.com

Sunday, September 11, 2016

PANTHERS PUSHED ASIDE

Wenatchee falls to top-ranked Richland in home opener



World photo/Don Seabrook

Wenatchee's Gavin Patch is able to hold onto the foot of Richland's Ben Stanfield, tackling him in their football game Friday at the Apple Bowl. Richland defeated the Panthers 40-12. **For more photographs from Friday's game, please see a photo gallery at www.wenatcheeworld.com. For a full recap of the game, please see page B3.**

Sports

The Wenatchee World

Sunday, September 11, 2016

B3

Prep Focus: Richland at Wenatchee football

Wenatchee football team dropped by top-ranked Richland in home opener

BY DANIEL RUBENS

World sports writer

WENATCHEE — The Wenatchee football team started its home opener Friday night against Richland with a bang. After winning the coin toss, the Panthers chose to kick, and coach Scott Devereaux called an inside kick. Wenatchee recovered at the Bombers' 41-yard line to start the contest with terrific field position.

That was the last time they'd have the upper hand against the top-ranked 4A school in the state. The Panthers turned the ball over on the ensuing play and the visiting Bombers grabbed the momentum and never let go of it, cruising to a 40-12 win to solidify their hold on the top spot in the state rankings.

All night long, a big, physical Richland team controlled the line of scrimmage, rushing for 212 yards on 37 carries. The Bombers held the Panthers to -29 yards on the ground on 23 carries while sacking Wenatchee quarterback Rowan Parmenter nine times.

Despite the final score, Panthers coach Scott Devereaux said he saw some improvement in his team from last week's 32-18 road defeat to Southridge.

"Our goal was to improve us, not worry about the scoreboard," Devereaux said. "I told them I think we made strides in the right direction. There's definitely some things we've got to continue to work on. I didn't think we tackled very well tonight, but they're a pretty physical and strong team."

Parmenter was on the run throughout a first half that was dominated by Richland. He was sacked and had the ball stripped out of his hand on the first play from scrimmage, the first of seven first-half sacks credited to the Bombers.

Richland then took the ball down the field in five plays on the ensuing possession before Parker McCary ran it into the end zone from 22 yards out. A missed PAT kept the score at 6-0, where it remained through the end of the first quarter as Wenatchee's Tony Esquivel came



World photo/Don Seabrook

Wenatchee's quarterback Rowan Parmenter is tackled by Richland's Graden Powell in their football game Friday in the Apple Bowl. Richland defeated the Panthers 40-12. **BELOW:** Wenatchee's Tony Esquivel breaks up a pass intended for Richland's Ryan Piper on Friday night.

up with an interception and the Panthers tightened on defense.

That didn't last long, though, as Richland would go 59 yards in nine plays early in the second quarter to take a 14-0 lead. A passing touchdown from Paxton Stevens to Alex Chapman with one minute, 55 seconds left in the first half made it a three-touchdown Richland lead. Wenatchee would get its first three first downs on the final drive before the break, but ultimately couldn't score.

After Richland recovered another attempted Wenatchee inside kick to start the second half and added to their lead with another touchdown, the Panthers got onto the scoreboard for the first time. Two pass interference penalties on the Bombers put Wenatchee across midfield and Parmenter hit Esquivel down the

sideline for a 38-yard score.

"That's Tony," Devereaux said of Esquivel, who added another interception to his tally in the fourth quarter. "The guy's got great ball skills. He can catch things one-handed, he can do backflips. He's a stellar athlete."

Immediately after, the Bombers regained control of the contest. Richland's Gaven Brasker took the ensuing kick back 92 yards to the house, to make it 34-6. Richland would get one more score early in the fourth quarter on a six-yard run by Jared Whitby before the Panthers tackled on a final touchdown with 20 seconds to go as Parmenter hit Darius Carlson for a nine-yard touchdown pass.

While the final score wasn't ideal, Devereaux was pleased with the fight his team showed in continuing

to play hard until the final whistle.

"Our goal was to fix us, because the biggest improvements you make in a season are from Week 1 to Week 3," Devereaux said. "I'm proud of the heart that we showed. We battled until the very end."

The Panthers will now hope to take whatever momentum they gained from finishing strong into next week's contest against the Kelowna, British Columbia Owls, who will make the four-plus hour trip to the Apple Bowl for a 7 p.m. kickoff on Saturday.

Highlights: Wenatchee — Parmenter (18-26, 158, 2TD, 2INT passing), Esquivel (4-80, TD receiving; 2INT), Carlson (3-41 receiving, TD). Richland — Stevens (14-34, 176, 2TD, 2 INT passing), McCary (14-105, TD rushing), Ben Stanfield (14-87, TD rushing).



**Richland 40,
Wenatchee 12**

Friday

Next vs. Kelowna, BC
Saturday, 7 p.m.

Radio: KPQ