

# Papermakers vs. Bombers: A battle of legendary logos

The Camas High School football team has advanced to the Class 4A state championship game, which is awesome.

On Saturday night in the Tacoma Dome, Camas will face Richland for the state title, which is doubly awesome, and I'll explain why.

It's a matchup of the Papermakers vs. the Bombers — two of the most iconic school mascot logos in the state, if not the nation.

A few years back, the website Mental Floss ran a list of the best high school mascot/logo combinations

in the country.

Included in that list were: Avon (Conn.) Old Farms Winged Beavers, Blooming Prairie (Minn.) Awesome Blossoms, Poca (W.V.) Dots, Orofino (Idaho) Maniacs, Williamsport (Penn.) Millionaires, Kaukauna (Wisc.) Galloping Ghosts, Johnson Atom Smashers of Savannah Ga., Hoopston Area (Ill.) Cornjerkers, Frankfort (Ind.) Hot Dogs, Wa-



**Tim Martinez**  
High Schools

tersmeet (Mich.) Nimrods, Vintage Crushers of Napa, Calif., Chattanooga (Tenn.) Central Purple Pounders.

Also on the list were the Camas Papermakers and Richland Bombers. Oh, and also the Ridgefield Spud-ders.

The Papermakers were also listed among the strangest mascots by USA Today a couple of years back saying the school's mascot, The Mean

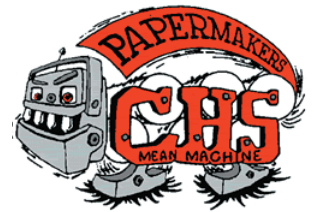
Machine, is "a humanized mechanical paper-rolling machine, which commemorates the town's founding industry, the production of paper goods at the Georgia Pacific paper mill."

And while you may be familiar with the national renown of the Camas' mascot, you may be unaware that they are not the only Papermaker in high school sports.

Wisconsin has two high schools that are also Papermakers — Kimberly and Nekoosa. In fact, the Camas Papermaker football

team isn't the most successful Papermaker football team in the country. That title goes to the Kimberly Papermakers, who captured their fourth consecutive Wisconsin Division I state championship earlier this month. Those Papermakers' 56-game winning streak is the longest active winning streak in high school football in the nation.

Oh, and the governing body of high school sports in Wisconsin is the WIAA. I've learned that on more



MARTINEZ, Page B2

## Martinez

From Page B1

than one occasion over the years.

And then there's Richland High School, which opened in 1910 as Columbia High School. The school name was changed to Richland High School in the 1980s because the school wanted to identify with the city it resided in and because the profusion of Columbia High Schools in the state (i.e. Columbia-White Salmon, Columbia-Burbank, Columbia-Hunters). The school went through several mascots — Colts, Broncs, Beavers — until right after World War II when the Bombers nickname was adopted.

The nickname was said to have been derived from the role the region played in producing the plutonium used in the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki. A logo was developed featuring a mushroom cloud sprouting, no exploding, out of a Richland R. There are stories that during the height of the Cold War, Richland supporters could be heard to chant "Nuke 'em till they glow."

In 1988, amidst visits by NBC News' Tom Brokaw and a Japanese delegation,

a vote was taken to keep the Bombers mascot, with its mushroom cloud logo. It won.

Then in the early 1990s, as many people became more uncomfortable with the nickname and logo, another story behind the mascot arose. Local newspapers reported that the nickname came from the B-17 bomber called "A Day's Pay" that Hanford workers donated a day's pay to purchase for the war effort. In 1993, a mural of the B-17 was painted on a wall outside the high school.

Many alumni were outraged at what they saw as an attempt to revise history to meet with more modern sensitivities.

And in the two decades since, while discussions have ensued, the Bombers nickname remains, as does the R-and-mushroom-cloud logo, which emblazon the football team's helmet today.

So if nothing else, it makes for an interesting backdrop to what should be a classic matchup on the gridiron for the state championship.

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