

Sports



PATRICK HAGERTY Special to the Herald

Richland's Adam Weissenfels, left, and Ryan Piper console each other after Saturday's 24-14 loss to Camas in the Class 4A state championship game Saturday at the Tacoma Dome.

4A FOOTBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIP | CAMAS 24, RICHLAND 14

Bombers title bid comes up short

BY DUSTIN BRENNAN
dbrennan@tricityherald.com

TACOMA

It was three years ago that a miracle finish denied the Camas Papermakers a state championship and opened the door for a team from the Tri-Cities, the Chiawana Riverhawks, to win the big prize.

On Saturday night, back

on that same Tacoma Dome turf, the Richland Bombers found themselves trailing Camas by a field goal late and needing another dramatic ending.

This time, it didn't come.

Camas quarterback Jack Colletto saw to it that his team wouldn't suffer the same fate, as he accounted for 272 yards and two touchdowns to lead the Papermakers to a 24-14 win over

Richland in a battle of Class 4A unbeatens. His 34-yard scoring run with 2:39 left in the game — Richland down 17-14 and trying desperately to get the ball back while the Papermakers were milking the clock — was the final blow.

For a Bombers team that had rolled through the state playoffs and survived a grueling Mid-Columbia Conference schedule with

an undefeated record, the loss was understandably hard to swallow.

"Heartbroken. My heart's broke," senior lineman Brigham Whitby said. "For not having the win, for ourselves, our team.

"I know a big part of it is for the people of Richland. Just wanting to bring a title back, I'm really heartbroken about that."

Richland was playing in its first state championship game since 1999, and expectations were at an all-time high that the Bombers (13-1) could complete the first undefeated season in school history.

"Maybe we were a little too cocky, but they're one hell of a team," Richland

SEE BOMBERS, 2B

FROM PAGE 1B

BOMBERS

quarterback Paxton Stevens said. "But I'm proud of our boys. We worked hard. They got the win, though."

The Papermakers (14-0), who lost a 13-point lead in the final minute and the state title to Chiawana in 2013, got off to a quick start.

Colletto hit on all three of his passes on the game's opening possession, including a 35-yard touchdown strike to Cooper McNatt, to lead Camas on a seven-play, 61-yard drive.

Richland's defense held strong for the rest of the half, but Camas' pass rush proved too intense for the Bombers to sustain any offense.

"We got a lot of pressure up front, coming in fast, and we weren't expecting that off the get-go," said Stevens, who was unable to complete a pass until midway through the second quarter. "That caught us off guard."

It looked as though the Bombers would go into the half scoreless when they got the ball at their own 18-yard line with 2:36 to go until halftime, but two personal foul penalties against the Papermakers put Richland past midfield for the first time. Ben Stanfield took the ball off left tackle, made one cut toward the sideline and raced 41 yards untouched to tie the score.

But the Bombers would give back those free yards in the form of two personal foul penalties of their own.

They keyed a lengthy Camas drive that ended with a 34-yard Michael Boyle field goal as time expired in the first half to give the Papermakers a 10-7 lead.

After some halftime inspiration, Richland quickly responded on the first drive of the second half. They went 81 yards in nine plays — led by Gaven Brasker's three catches for 49 yards — to score on a play that saw Stanfield fumble just short of the end zone and Parker McCary recover it for a touchdown to put the Bombers up 14-10. It was their first and only lead of the game.

Whitby said it was a change in the team's energy level that fueled that scoring drive, but the passion proved to be unsustainable.

"We came out firing, and then I don't know why, but we just lost it," Whitby said.

Camas wasted no time answering the challenge. The Papermakers took just 2:27 off the clock to drive 80 yards, capped by a Will Schultz 38-yard touchdown that gave Camas a 17-14 lead.

The Bombers still had a heartbeat with about four minutes to go, as they tried to stop the Camas offense and earn an extra possession down by three. But Colletto loaded up behind his burly offensive line, slipped a tackle at the line of scrimmage and dashed 34 yards for the score that gave Ca-

mas a 10-point advantage and put the game away.

"(Colletto) is just a tough, competitive kid — a big, strong kid," Richland coach Mike Neidhold said. "He had his way there a little bit, and he's got some big, fussy linemen. ... He's just a good player."

While it was tough to put fully in perspective a few minutes after the game, the ninth-year head coach and longtime Bomber was able to appreciate just how special the past 14 weeks have been for Richland.

"Everybody but one team in the state wanted to be us — those Camas guys. Everybody but Camas would trade places with us right now," Neidhold said. "I have a great amount of gratitude for our student section, our parents. I'm grateful for our time together.

"And I'll miss the seniors. I really will."

Camas	7	3	7	7	-	24
Richland	0	7	7	0	-	14

SCORING PLAYS

C — Cooper McNatt 35 pass from Jack Colletto (Michael Boyle kick)
R — Ben Stanfield 41 run (Adam Weissenfels kick)
C — FG Boyle 34
R — Parker McCary 0 fumble recovery (Weissenfels kick)

C — Will Schultz 38 run (Boyle kick)
C — Colletto 34 run (Boyle kick)

STATISTICS

RUSHING — C, Colletto 19-88; Schultz 2-51; Michael Matthews 11-18; Elias Bashir 2-6; Drake Owen 1-3. R, Stanfield 13-83; McCary 10-29; Paxton Stevens 5-26.

PASSING — C, Colletto 14-20-0-184. R, Stevens 15-25-2-175; Weissenfels 0-1-0-0.

RECEIVING — C, Owen 7-75; McNatt 4-66; Matthews 1-27; Christian Nghiem 1-11; Dylan Ingram 1-5. R, Gaven Brasker 4-55; Weissenfels 4-43; Stanfield 2-8; Cody Kjarmo 2-42; Ryan Piper 1-14; McCary 1-7; Alex Chapman 1-6.

Dustin Brennan:
509-582-1413,
@Tweet_By_Dustin

SPORTS

Bombers take on Camas for 4A football state title

Page 1D

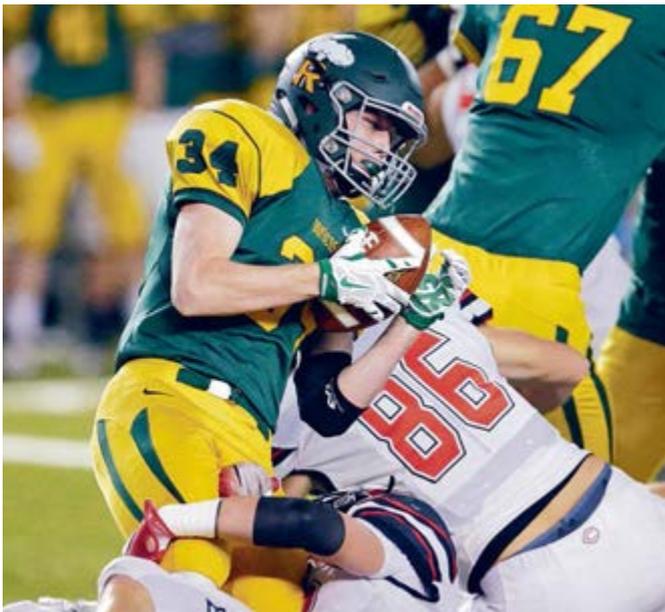


SUNDAY DECEMBER 4 2016
TRICITYHERALD.COM

Tri-City Herald

1D

Sports



Associated Press

Richland running back Ben Stanfield (34) is tackled as he rushes against Camas during the first half of Saturday night's Class 4A championship at the Tacoma Dome.

4A FOOTBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIP | CAMAS VS. RICHLAND

Bombers, Camas in classic battle for 4A championship

Tri-City Herald

With the last two undefeated Class 4A teams in the state facing off, Saturday night's battle between the Richland Bombers and Camas Papermakers was turning into a true classic.

The Bombers trailed 17-14 as the game headed into the fourth quarter. Ben Stanfield scored on a 41-yard run late in the first half for Richland, and Parker McCary fell on a fumble in the end zone early

in the second half to account for the Bombers' scoring.

Richland moved the ball smartly coming out of the half, going on an 81-yard drive to take a 14-10 lead.

Quarterback Paxton Stevens found Gaven Brasker on a trio of passes, two of which turned into solid gainers. Stanfield's 8-yard run got the Bombers down to the 6. Two plays later, Stanfield was powering toward the end zone when the ball slipped free and

bounded ahead to be covered by McCary for the touchdown.

Camas responded swiftly, with quarterback Jack Colletto running for a first down and throwing for two more before Will Schultz tore off a 38-yard TD run for a 17-14 edge.

The Bombers trailed 10-7 at the break and had little to show offensively in the first half until Stanfield got the edge on the left side and burst down the sideline for a 41-yard score with a minute

ONLINE

Saturday's 4A championship game was not completed by the Herald's print deadline. The full story is posted at tricityherald.com/sports, and full coverage will run in Monday's paper.

left in the second quarter.

It was the only sustained drive of the half for Richland, kept alive by a pair of 15-yard penalties on short running plays.

Camas, which moved swiftly down the field for a touchdown on its opening drive of the game, responded with a smart drive to close out the half, also taking advantage of a pair of 15-yard penalties to set up Michael Boyle for a 34-yard field goal.