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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Bombers, Jensen now set sights on Wenatchee

BY DUSTIN BRENNAN
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Any reservations Bombers fans had about first-year Richland High School quarterback Cade Jensen should have melted away last Friday.

The senior did it all in Richland's season-opening 24-21 victory over Bellevue, running the offense — often without a huddle — to a T, making all the throws and engineering a remarkable, 80-yard, game-winning touchdown drive.

When Jensen knelt down

to end the game, it capped a day where he completed 19 of 24 passes for 304 yards and a touchdown.

"You're gonna be a little nervous going into that first game, but I think it's good to be nervous," Jensen said. "It shows (that) you care about the game, you care

about the Bombers, the Bomber family. And it was a big atmosphere.

"I'd say it was after our first scoring drive (in the second quarter), we hit a few passes ... that just kind of calmed me down, and showed me we can do this. We can drive down the field

at will if we need to."

Senior Josh Mendoza caught four passes for 149 yards in the game, which included a 77-yard touch-down grab in the third quarter, and a 46-yard reception on a fade route that set up Parker McCary's 9-yard TD scamper that sealed the win. The wideout was thrilled the offense performed like it did with a new quarterback behind center.

"I was happy for him," Mendoza said. "With (now graduated quarterback) Paxton (Stevens) last year, there were big shoes to fill for Cade. But I think he exceeded expectations. He definitely has Richland

looking forward to a lot of things this year with him in the backfield."

Now the Bombers set their sights on Friday's home opener against Wenatchee, a team they dismantled 40-12 on the road last year, but one that also gave Southridge all it could handle last week, falling to the Suns 24-21 at the Apple Bowl.

As pleased as he was with the performance against Bellevue, Richland coach Mike Neidhold is looking for his team to improve a couple things this week, primarily fewer turnovers (lost two

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fumbles vs. Bellevue) but also a more efficient run game, which produced just 44 yards on 18 carries (2.4 avg.). He's hoping for a historically good Wenatchee team to bring its 'A' game and push the Bombers to be their best.

"Scott (Devereaux) is a great guy and a great coach, they've got a good coaching staff up there (at Wenatchee)," Neidhold said. "They're really trying to get it right up there. I know, from being an old guy, that they've got a long, proud history of football up in Wenatchee, and you can't look past any game you have around here ... and we're

not gonna do that."

The Bombers should be in good shape if the defense plays like it did last week. Facing Bellevue's antiquated but still dangerous Wing T offense, highlighted by star senior tailback Isaiah Ifanse, Richland bent, giving up 308 rushing yards, but very rarely broke, keeping the Wolverines off the scoreboard until the second half.

"You can't practice it," Neidhold said of defending against the Wing T. "Our scout team did the best job they could, but you can't replicate their speed and their pulls and their down blocks and kick outs and all

that. So it's hard to prepare, even though we knew it was coming.

"You knew their offense was going to figure it out. You have to remember it's their first game too, and they kind of got it going in the second half. It became a real dog fight, and our defense had to play really well."

Richland will face a very different looking attack against Wenatchee as quarterback Austin Blakney threw 45 passes against Southridge last week, completing just 19 of them for 214 yards and a touchdown. Darius Carlson caught 10 balls and racked up 95 yards from scrimmage.

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AREA SCHEDULE

FRIDAY

Football

Sunnyside at Southridge, 8 p.m.; Lewis and Clark at Kamiakin, 5 p.m.; Kennewick at Cleveland, 5 p.m.; Walla Walla at Eastmont, 7 p.m.; Wenatchee at Richland, 7 p.m.; Hanford at Moses Lake, 7 p.m.; West Valley (Yakima) at Chiawana, 7 p.m.; Connell at Ellensburg, 7 p.m.; Othello at Royal, 7 p.m.; River View at Grandview, 7 p.m.; Kiona-Benton at Wapato, 7 p.m.; Zillah at Prosser, 7 p.m.; Waitsburg at Columbia-Burbank, 7 p.m.; Goldendale at College Place, 7 p.m.; Warden at Mabton, 7 p.m.; Cle Elum-Roslyn at Wahluke, 7 p.m.; Tri-Cities Prep at Lyle-Wishram, 7 p.m.; Liberty Christian vs. Jenkins, TBA, 7 p.m.; DeSales at McLaughlin-Griswold, 7 p.m.; Touchet at Republic, 6 p.m.; Lewiston at Hermiston, 7 p.m.; Umatilla at Rainier, 7 p.m.

Soccer

Walla Walla vs. Adna (at YVCC), 2:30 p.m.