

## HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

# Richland, Kamiakin set for another epic clash

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Anticipation for Friday night's clash between the undefeated Richland and Kamiakin high school football teams has probably only been matched in recent history by the thrill of their 2016 meeting, a 21-20 overtime Bombers' victory that was an instant classic.

With matching 5-0 records (3-0 in MCC play), the teams bring in two of

the most talented wide receiver/defensive back groups in the conference, touted front sevens and offensive lines, and two of the top quarterbacks in the league — Richland's Cade Jensen and Kamiakin's Payton Flynn.

"I hope Kamiakin plays a great game, because that's going to bring out the best in us, and I hope we do the same for them," Richland coach Mike Neidhold said. "We've gotta keep our eye on the ball and play a full 48-minute game, and be ready for a great Kamiakin team that will

play with a lot of spirit and will bring their fans."

But between two teams of this caliber (Richland ranked No. 4 in this week's Class 4A poll, Kamiakin No. 3 among 3A's), often a game is decided by a favorable bounce, a controversial call or a wild play that few could have anticipated.

That latter certainly was true last year, as a game-ending extra-point block quickly turned Richland's Adam Weissenfels from the game's

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BOB BRAWDY Herald file

Richland's Adam Weissenfels (7) runs with the ball during last year's game against Kamiakin. Weissenfels blocked an extra-point attempt in overtime, and the Bombers prevailed 21-20.

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goat into its hero.

The two plays that looked like they would define the then-junior's night came late in the fourth quarter. Weissenfels was responsible in coverage when Zach Borisch (now at Idaho) found Isaiah Brimmer (Idaho State) for a 4-yard touchdown that tied the game at 14-all, then missed a chance at redemption when he failed to convert a 30-yard field goal with 50 seconds remaining in regulation that likely would have won it.

"I kinda felt like I had let my team down almost, because I know they believed in me, and I believed in myself, so I felt like I let myself down too," Weissenfels said. "But I had full confidence in myself, in my team, so I almost felt like I had to prove myself, and fix

what I had done."

After Richland needed just three plays to score on its overtime possession — 22-yard pass from Paxton Stevens to Alex Chapman (both graduated), followed by a Weissenfels extra point — Kamiakin answered quickly, pulling within a point on a 4-yard hookup from Borisch to Darreon Moore. Garrett Paxton lined up for a kick that would tie the game and send it to a second overtime, and struck it pure. But Weissenfels came off the left edge of the Braves' line like he was shot out of a cannon, making a diving block that brought the game to a thrilling, unforeseen halt.

"Honestly, right after they scored the touchdown, I said to (fellow senior wide receiver/DB) Ryan Piper,

because he's right next to me on the field goal block, I said 'we're gonna block this one.'" Weissenfels said. "I kinda got the feeling down to time the snap during the game, and at that moment my adrenaline was rushing and I just told myself I was going to block it. And it worked out."

The rest is history, as that game — along with Richland's 21-14 win over Chiawana two weeks later — locked up the MCC crown for the Bombers, who went on to win their first 13 games of the season before falling to Camas in the state title game. The Braves, meanwhile, have won 13 games in a row since then, including a 14-7 win over O'Dea to capture the first state championship in school history.

### HOW THEY STACK UP

Unlike last year, both teams are undefeated heading into this week's contest

(Kamiakin was 4-1 after losing to Chiawana). Richland is beating its opponents by an average of 39.4 points per game, while Kamiakin is averaging a 32-point margin of victory.

As impressive as the last four blowouts have been — Week 1 was a gutsy 24-21 win at Bellevue — Neidhold and the Richland coaching staff are still hung up on the fact they haven't recorded a shutout yet this season.

"DJ (Search, defensive coordinator), he's been all fussy about it," Neidhold said. "He's a grumpy Gus; he wants a shutout."

It's not likely to come this week. The Braves feature the No. 2 scoring and yardage offense in the MCC — behind Richland — led by Flynn, their senior first-year QB who has thrown for 1,062 yards and 16 touchdowns, seven of which have gone to senior wide out Champ Grayson.

For the Bombers, it's been an endless rotation of dynamic backs and receivers, epitomized in last week's 63-7 win over Pasco when 12 players caught passes and seven scored touchdowns. The beneficiary of the bottomless depth has been Jensen, who leads the league in touchdown passes (18) and completion percentage (65.6), and is second in passing yards with 1,320.

Both signal callers, however, could be under siege, with linebacker Dillon Crawford and linemen Parker Larson and Chase Kissell getting after it for Kamiakin, and linemen Jax Lee and Aric Davison leading the charge for Richland.

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## MCC FOOTBALL MATCHUPS

### Kamiakin (5-0, 3-0) at Richland (5-0, 3-0)

When, where: 7 p.m., Fran Rish Stadium

Series history: Richland leads the all-time series 26-21, but the teams are both 4-4 since 2009

Team offense: Kam—745 rush (2nd in MCC), 1063 pass (3rd), 361.6/game total (2nd), 199 points (2nd). Rich—611 rush (5th), 1356 pass (2nd), 393.4/game total (1st), 249 points (1st)

Team defense: Kam—541 rush (T-3), 609 pass (2nd), 230/game total (2nd), 39 points (1st). Rich—456 rush (1st), 415 pass (1st), 174.2/game total (1st), 57 points (2nd)

Key players: Kam—QB Payton Flynn (74-144-7—1062, 16TD); WR/DB Champ Grayson (23-410, 7TD, 2INT); WR/DB Colten Chelin (21-262, 2TD); WR/DB Benson Smith (21-297, 7 total TD); RB/LB Talmage Jacobson (80-414, 6 total TD); RB Tuna Altahir (35-217, 3TD); LB Dillon Crawford; DE Chase Kissell; K Kaden Shymanski (23XP, 1FG). Rich—QB Cade Jensen (84-128-1—18, 18TDs); WR/DB Josh Mendoza (9-309, 5TD); RB Jarred Whitby (27-159, 4TD); RB Parker McCary (31-208, 8 total TD); WR/DB/K Adam Weissenfels (16-192, 4 total TDs, 28 XP, 2INT); DL Jax Lee; OL/DL Aric Davison; WR/DB Sammy Cervantes (17-203, 2TD).

Last week: Kamiakin def. Hanford 30-0; Richland def. Pasco 63-7

### Next week: Kennewick at Kamiakin; Richland at Walla Walla Chiawana (4-1, 2-1) at Southridge (3-2, 2-1)

When, where: 8 p.m., Lampson Stadium

Last year: Chiawana 48, Southridge 0

Team offense: Chi—933 rush (1st in MCC), 689 pass (5th), 324.4/game total (3rd), 141 points (3rd). SR—236 rush (last), 1373 pass (1st), 321.8/game total (4th), 115 points (4th).

Team defense: Chi—475 rush (2nd), 828 pass (5th), 260.6/game total (4th), 69 points (3rd). SR—782 rush (last), 839 pass (6th), 324.2/game total (7th), 153 points (7th).

Key players: SR—QB Mason Perez (106-195-8—1366, 13TD); WR/DB Peyton Monson (49-565, 6TD); WR/DB/P Eric Stayrook (24-424, 5TD); RB/DB Jake Newbry (53-147); C/LS Flynn McPheron; DT Sergio Midilli; LB Hayden Brimberry. Chi—RB Tayden Jenkins (71-510, 9TD); QB Enoch Vargas (66-104-2—698, 4TD); RB Ethan Garcia (77-425, 4TD); WR Daylen Storaci (23-203, 1TD); DB/WR Riley Cissne (5INT); WR/DB Tavin Blair; DB Jose Cruz (3INT); K Ryan Lowry (15XP, 4FG); OL/DL Ford Powers; OL/DL Josh Alvarez; OL/DL Julian Benitez; OL/DL Joey Aikala; DL Nelson Cardenas.

Last week: Chiawana def. Kennewick 41-10; Southridge def. Walla Walla 18-14

Next week: Southridge at Hanford; Pasco at Chiawana

### Hanford (2-3, 1-2) at Kennewick (1-4, 0-3)

When, where: 5 p.m., Lampson Stadium

Last year: Hanford 26, Kennewick 21

Team offense: Han—705 rush (3rd), 888 pass (4th), 318.6/game total (5th), 97 points (5th); Ken—343 rush (last), 300 pass (7th), 128.6/game total (last), 79 points (6th)

Team defense: Han—558 rush (5th), 660 pass (3rd), 243.6/game total (3rd), 93 points (4th); Ken—663 rush (6th), 674 pass (4th), 267.4/game total (5th), 137 points (6th)

Key players: Han—QB Garrett Horner (84-140-3—887, 9TD); RB Jared DeVine (86-480, 2TD Rush; 19-150 rec); WR/DB Thomas Kitchens (21-300, 2TD); RB/LB Drezdyn O'Daol-Lyons (40-234, 1TD); LB/FB AJ Wiegand; WR/DB Dimitri Kennedy-Woody (4 total TD); DB Colton Bozich (2INT). Ken—QB Tim Gee (33-78-6—266, 2TD); RB Cedric Riel (43-188, 1TD); DE/TE Moses McAninch; RB/LB/P Isaac Ruiz; WR/DB Talon LaFontaine; WR/DB Tucker Newman; WR/DB Emilio Ramos (2INT).

Last week: Kamiakin def. Hanford 30-0; Chiawana def. Kennewick 41-10

Next week: Southridge at Hanford; Kennewick at Kamiakin

### Walla Walla (1-4, 1-2) at Pasco (0-5, 0-3)

When, where: 7 p.m., Edgar Brown Memorial Stadium

Last year: Walla Walla 42, Pasco 8

Team offense: WW—416 rush (6th in MCC), 1138 pass (1st), 388.5/game total (1st), 191 points (1st). Pas—462 rush (5th), 438 pass (6th), 225/game total (6th), 53 points (7th).

Team defense: WW—430 rush (4th), 370 pass (1st), 200/game total (1st), 50 points (2nd). Pas—537 rush (7th), 901 pass (last), 359.5/game total (T-7th), 164 points (last).

Key players: WW—QB Nickolas Zehner (26-61-7—192; 60-216, TD rush; 2INT); RB Darin Ongers (29-137, 1TD); LB Jahmal Mangarero; WR Mason Knowles; WR Dalton Thompson. Pas—RB/LB/P Efrain Farias (78-354, 6 total TD); QB Kathon Tate (47-109-7—483, 3TD); WR Isaiah Gomez (18-242); Davison Pruitt OL/DL; WR Brandon Scott; WR Matt Millet.

Last week: Southridge def. Walla Walla 18-14; Richland def. Pasco 63-7

Next week: Richland at Walla Walla; Pasco at Chiawana

## SPORTS

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