

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Richland blanks Hanford in Atomic Bowl, awaits playoff

BY JEFF MORROW
Special to the Herald

Now that the business of winning their third consecutive Mid-Columbia Conference regular-season football title is out of the way, the Richland Bombers can start to get really serious.

“Now we head into the tournament,” said Richland head coach Mike Neidhold after his team beat cross-town rival Hanford 50-0 to win the Atomic Bowl. “Now we play for Mondays.”

The Bombers (7-0 MCC, 9-0 overall) beat the Falcons (4-3, 5-4) in an almost

business-like fashion, rolling up 431 yards of offense, while defensively holding a good Hanford offense to just 130 yards.

Leading the way was senior quarterback Cade Jensen, who passed for 342 yards, five touchdowns, and ran in another score.

“Cade had a great game,” said Neidhold. “He’s like an extra coach out there for us. He knows exactly what he needs to do, and he takes care of the ball. I’m real proud of of him and how he’s matured.”

Neidhold said that Jensen, while a senior, has just nine games of varsity experience.

“I’ve improved so much since the start of the sea-

son,” said Jensen, who finishes the regular season with 2,124 passing yards, 27 TD passes, and just six interceptions. “It’s just about being comfortable with my receivers. I just need to get the guys the ball.”

On this night, Jensen connected with eight different receivers.

Leading the way was Ryan Piper, who caught four passes for 75 yards — including a 37-yard TD catch on the game’s opening drive.

“It’s just super fun playing with Cade,” said Piper.

“He’s my best friend, and he studies the game more than anyone else.”

And Jensen continued to teach the Falcons a few

things, tossing a 37-yard scoring strike to Cody Sanderson; a 36-yarder to Sammy Cervantes; scoring himself on a 1-yard run; a 17-yard TD pass to Cervantes; and a 5-yard TD strike to Adam Weissenfels.

Weissenfels finished the scoring barrage with a 96-yard pick-6 in the running clock fourth quarter.

Richland’s standout defensive lineman, Jax Lee, led the Bombers defensively with 5 tackles (2 for loss) and a quarterback sack.

Linebacker Casey Perryman added 4 tackles (1 for loss). In fact, the Bombers forced five turnovers that they turned into 22 points in the second half.

The victory gives Richland a 33-3 record over the past three seasons, in which they were crowned MCC champions in all three years.

“The guys honored the tradition of the program, taking care of winning the league title,” said Neidhold, who said part of the tradition is being good citizens.

But was he completely happy?

“No,” Neidhold said. “To Hanford’s credit, they drop-

ped eight guys back on defense. But we had a tough time running the football.”

In addition, Richland was called for 14 penalties worth 134 yards.

The Bombers must now await an opponent from the Greater Spokane League. Lewis & Clark, Mead and University are all tied for third in the GSL standings, and must play a tiebreaker on Tuesday — with the winner taking on Richland at Fran Rish Stadium either Friday or Saturday.

Hanford, meanwhile, can take solace that it’s playing in the postseason. The Falcons travel to Spokane on Friday to play Central Valley in a 4A regional playoff game.

“We just have to flush (this loss) and move on to the Central Valley game,” Hanford coach Brett Jay said. “We’ve just got to fix the negative (yardage) plays.”

It’s time to wipe the slate clean.

Jensen and Piper know that.

“This (the playoffs) is what we live for,” Jensen said.

Piper agreed.

“We have one big goal,” he said. “That’s to get back to the T-Dome.”

That would be the Tacoma Dome, where the state championship is played and where Richland finished second in state last year.

The journey for Neidhold and the Bombers begins on, fittingly, this Monday.

Richland	14	7	21	8	—50
Hanford	0	0	0	0	—0

SCORING PLAYS

Rich - Ryan Piper 37 pass from Cade Jensen (Adam Weissenfels kick)

Rich - Cody Sanderson 37 pass from Jensen (Weissenfels kick)

Rich - Sammy Cervantes 36 pass from Jensen (Weissenfels kick)

Rich - Jensen 1 run (Weissenfels kick)

Rich - Cervantes 17 pass from Jensen (Weissenfels kick)

Rich - Weissenfels 5 pass from Jensen (Weissenfels kick)

Rich - Weissenfels 96 interception return (Weissenfels run)

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING—Rich, Parker McCary 10-50, Jared Whitby 14-40, Tsega MacDuff 2-3, Taylor Johnson 1-minus 2, Jensen 2-minus 2, **Totals 29-89.** Han, Jared DeVine 16-46, Drezdyn O'Daol 3-11, Thomas Kitchens 1-minus 1, Garrett Horner 5-minus 6. **Totals 25-50.**

PASSING—Rich, Jensen 26-34-1-342, Johnson 0-1-1-0. Han, Horner 14-24-2-80.

RECEIVING—Rich, Piper 4-75, Cervantes 4-69, Weissenfels 8-67, Sanderson 2-48, Josh Mendoza 2-25, Connor Fauchaux 2-25, McCary 2-17, Ryan Kriskovich 2-16. Han, Moises Galindo 2-27, Dmetri Kennedy Woody 3-18, DeVine 3-13, Brett Cowan 2-10, Thomas Kitchens 3-9, O'Daol 1-3.

FUMBLES—Rich 1-9, Han 9. FUMBLES-LOST—Rich 0-0, Han 4-3. PENALTIES-YARDS—Rich 14-134, Han 1-5.