



NOELLE HARO-GOMEZ Tri-City Herald

Richland senior quarterback Cade Jensen, passing against Mead last Friday, has been a key cog for the 10-0 Bombers, who are in the state playoffs for the third season in a row. Jensen led the Mid-Columbia Conference with 2,563 passing yards and 35 TDs as the Bombers outscored opponents by a combined 455-90.

“THOSE TWO, IT’S LIKE A PITCHER AND A CATCHER IN A BASEBALL GAME WITH THEM GIVING SIGNALS TO EACH OTHER.”

*Richland coach Mike Neidhold, on communication between QB Cade Jensen and WR Josh Mendoza*

outstanding senior class, several of whom were significant contributors on the 2015 team that lost to Gonzaga Prep in the state semifinals, and last year’s squad that made it to the championship game, eventually falling to Camas.

The experience of that group has showed in all facets this season, but particularly in the master class of an offensive scheme run by the Mid-Columbia Conference champion and No. 2 Bombers.

“We’ve (Jensen and his receivers) been playing together for four years, so that helps a lot,” said Jensen, who led the MCC with 2,563 passing yards and 35 touchdowns despite missing the equivalent of nearly three games thanks to early exits in blowouts.

“They trust me and I trust them, and that’s really what it comes down to.”

That trust provided a jump-start for Richland in its 62-7 blowout win over Mead on Friday, which earned the team its third straight state berth.

After trading punts on the game’s opening possessions, the Bombers got a nice gain out to their 41-yard line. And then it happened.

Richland came to the line with a zone-blocking run

SEE FOOTBALL, 8B

4A STATE HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

# Jensen, Bombers ready to soar again

BY DUSTIN BRENNAN  
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Cade Jensen has waited a long time for this. He cut his teeth

playing Junior Bombers Youth Football. He waited in the wings for two years behind one of the top gun-slingers in program history. And when it was his turn, he led his team to a 10-0 start. Now, the senior quarter-



See a video at [tricityherald.com/video](http://tricityherald.com/video)

back will get his chance to start a state playoff game for the Richland High School

football team.

“It means a lot,” Jensen said. “I’ve grown up watching the Bombers my entire life. I’ve been playing football since I was 7 years old in the Richland system, so it’s a huge honor to be able

to be here with this team.

I’m just looking forward to making the Bomber alumni proud.”

Friday’s game against West Valley (Yakima) will be an important one for many members of the Bombers’

## Today’s state football glance

WEST VALLEY (YAKIMA) (7-2, NO. 2 CBBN)  
AT (2) RICHLAND (10-0, NO. 1 MCC 4A)

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

**Series history:** Bombers won both meetings, 56-7 in 2008, 21-13 in 2009.

**Key players:** WV—QB Brandon Battle (156-241-8—2354, 26TD; 71-359, 4TD rush); WR/DB Dallin Cluff (52-931, 13TD); WR/DB Cameron Willey (41-931, 11TD); WR/DB Jack Vanderblake (40-419, 2TD); WR/DB Reed Viveros (18-265, 1TD); RB Reggie Harris (134-761, 6TD); OL/DL Nick Haviland (6-foot-1, 303 pounds). Rich—QB Cade Jensen (170-269-10—2563, 35TD); WR/DB Josh Mendoza (16-484, 6TD; 4INT); RB Parker McCary (116-643, 9 total TD); RB Jared Whitby (67-362, 6TD); WR/DB/K Adam Weissenfels (35-412, 12 total TD, 54XP, 6INT; 17 PR, 244 yds (14.4 avg)); WR/DB Ryan Piper (24-363, 7TD); DL Jax Lee; DL Aric Davison; WR/DB Sammy Cervantes (31-393, 5TD); LB/RB Casey Perryman; LB Victor Strasser.

**Last week:** West Valley def. Wenatchee 32-7; Richland def. Mead 62-7

**Next week:** Winner plays at Gonzaga Prep-Moses Lake winner in quarterfinals

FREEMAN (7-3, NO. 3 1A NORTHEAST)  
AT (1) ROYAL (10-0, NO. 1 SCAC EAST)

**When, where:** 7 p.m., David Nielson Memorial Stadium

**Key players:** Fre—RB/DB Dylan Pavlischak (163-817, 6TD); QB/DB Desmond Parisotto (63-161-5—1001, 8TD); TE/LB Zach Trumble (23-443, 3TD); RB/LB Keegan Cottrell (79-391, 4TD); WR/DB Andrew McGill (13-234, 4TD). Roy—QB Sawyer Jenks; WR/CB Corbin Christensen; RB/MLB Alonso Hernandez; WR/FS Angel Farias; HB/LB CJ Quintero; RB/LB Isaac Ellis; RB/SS Lorenzo Myrick; WR/CB Juan Ojeda

**Last week:** Freeman def. Cashmere 35-19; Royal def. La Salle 48-7

**Next week:** Winner plays at Naches Valley-Okanogan winner in quarterfinals

ASOTIN (7-3, NO. 3 2B NORTHEAST)  
AT TRI-CITIES PREP (9-1, NO. 1 EWAC)

**When, where:** 6 p.m., Chiawana High School

**Key players:** Aso—QB Josh Wilkinson (73-154-7—1007, 14TD); FB/DE Colton Ball (156-1283, 23 total TD; 114 tot. tackles, 3FF, 2FR); WR/DB Hunter Landrus (29-267, 4TD); WR/DB Tanner Berzett (21-274, 2TD). TCP—QB/FS Kobe Singleton (59-106-9—770, 9TD pass; 129-1076, 12TD rush; 6INT, 7PD); RB/DB Bubba Valencia (170-1529, 17TD); Zerek Baker HB/LB (58-515, 5TD rush; 19-299, 5TD rec; 79 tot. tackles, 4INT, 2 fum recs); OL/LB Colton Tinnin (102 tot. tackles, 14TFL, 4 sacks); WR/DB Cole Hiatt (23-303, 4INT, 16PD)

**Last week:** Asotin def. Colfax 29-24; Tri-Cities Prep def. Brewster 38-3

**Next week:** Winner hosts Lake Roosevelt-Davenport winner in quarterfinals



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Richland’s Adam Weissenfels scores a touchdown during the Bombers’ 62-7 win over Mead last Friday. Weissenfels was one of five Bombers to catch a TD pass from Cade Jensen.

228 yards and hit five different receivers for touchdowns against Mead, getting pulled shortly after halftime because of the one-sided score. That’s common for the Bombers’ starters this season, as the team has outscored opponents by a combined 455-90.

A quarterback for the Bombers in the 1970s, Neidhold along with assistants Tyler Thomas and Tom Moore have molded two of the greatest signal callers in Richland’s history over the past three years: Jensen and two-year starter Paxton Stevens.

The graduation of Stevens, an All-MCC selection in 2015 and ’16, was tough for the Bombers coach, and he doesn’t imagine seeing Jensen go will be any easier.

“He’s such a great kid, I love him,” Neidhold said. “When we have to say goodbye to each other at the end of the season, there’s going to be some tears. But what a great kid, and what a bunch of great memories we have, and hopefully more to come.”

“But if it all ended this weekend, we could certainly say we had a good run at it.”

## SIZING UP WEST VALLEY

The Bombers take on the West Valley (Yakima) Rams (7-2, No. 2 Big 9) at 7 p.m. Friday at Edgar Brown Memorial Stadium.

Despite the proximity of the schools, the teams have only met twice before, with Richland winning both games, in 2008 and ’09.

Leading the Rams is second-year quarterback Brandon Battle, the most prolific passer in the Big Nine, by a wide margin, who has racked up 2,354 yards and 26 TDs in nine games while completing 64.7 percent of his passes. Like Jensen, Battle has a slew of dangerous receiving threats, highlighted by Big Nine leader Dallin Cluff (52 rec, 931 yds, 13TDs) and Cameron Willey (41 rec, 734 yds, 7TDs).

“I think we’ve gotta continue to play great defense, No. 1. They like to sling it around,” said Neidhold, whose defense is allowing just over 95 passing yards per game and had six interceptions (three pick-sixes) last week against Mead. “Just like us, they’re in jet personnel all the time, and they’ve got four wide

outs. Their quarterback likes to sling it, and when there’s nothing there he’ll take off and run it.

“That puts a lot of pressure on our back end guys, so they have to play well, our D-line’s gotta put pressure on that cat and coral him a bit, force him into some throws he’s uncomfortable with.”

Richland got a boost on the defensive side of the ball last week with linebacker Victor Strasser — a preseason All-State selection — returning to at least limited action for the first time since injuring his collarbone in the season opener. He should see even more action Friday.

Star defensive tackle Jax Lee, who injured his foot against Mead, was in a walking boot on Monday. However, Neidhold said that was just a preventative measure, and that the senior has been cleared too, and will play Friday.

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## FOOTBALL

called to the right, but senior receiver Josh Mendoza, split out wide left, signaled to Jensen that he was in single coverage. Jensen checked to a deep pass play, hit Mendoza on a streak route, and the wide out made one man miss and raced to the end zone for a 69-yard touchdown for the opening score.

Richland coach Mike Neidhold said it was almost the exact same series of events in Week 1 at Bellevue

that resulted in a 46-yard strike to Mendoza that eventually set up Parker McCary’s game-winning touchdown run in the 24-21 victory.

“Those two (Jensen and Mendoza), it’s like a pitcher and a catcher in a baseball game with them giving signals to each other,” Neidhold said. “If they think we can take a shot, then we’ll take a shot and see what happens.”

Jensen would throw for

SPORTS  
Richland QB  
Cade Jensen and  
the Bombers are  
ready to soar 7B

