

Sports



NOELLE HARO-GOMEZ Tri-City Herald

Richland's Cade Jensen runs with the ball in Saturday's 42-10 win over Central Valley. The senior passed for 332 yards and five touchdowns.

Jensen in command against Central Valley

BY ANNIE FOWLER
afowler@tricityherald.com

Every time the Richland Bombers needed a big play Saturday, Cade Jensen was at the controls making things happen.

Richland's senior quarterback completed 18 of 25 passes for 332 yards and five touchdowns to lead the Bombers to a 42-10 victory over Central Valley in the Class 4A state semifinals at Edgar Brown Stadium in Pasco.

"He has been good all year about getting the ball out on time, on target and to the right guy,"

Richland coach Mike Neidhold said. "He understands our offense better than most high school kids ever would. He is a smart, intelligent kid. He has football intelligence. (Assistant coaches) Tom Moore, Josh Jelinek and Tyler Thomas have done a great job with him."

Jensen threw passes to six different receivers, and touchdowns to four, but it was when the Bombers had their backs to the wall that Jensen was at his finest.

"They aren't necessarily open," Jensen said. "We have eight all-star receivers on this team, and even when they aren't open, they

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Richland coach Mike Neidhold on Cade Jensen

are open. When they are covered, I trust they will go up and get the ball. And that's what they did today."

Neidhold just counts himself lucky that his quarterback has so many talented players to work with every game.

SEE JENSEN, 2D

FROM PAGE 1D

JENSEN

"That's just our receiver core," he said. "We have a good group of young kids and an old-guy mix and they make plays. The expectations of that group is, if the ball is in the air, they are going to get it. They are a very close-knit group, Cade and all of those guys. They love each other, they play for each other. When Cade puts it up, they expect to get it. Credit to the kids for all the work they put in."

Saturday, the magic started in the first quarter with the Bombers trailing 3-0.

Starting deep in their end, Jensen took the snap on second-and-32. He surveyed the field, then unleashed a 41-yard pass to Josh Mendoza. Moments later, he connected with Cody Sanderson on a 38-yard touchdown as the Bombers took the lead for good, 7-3.

"We've been in these situations a lot this year and that's really helped

us," Jensen said of struggling early in a game.

"Against Kamiakin, we didn't score a point on our first four possessions, and the final score was still 33-0. We have a lot of confidence in our team even when we struggle early, and we know how many weapons we have. We have a lot of them and we can make it happen at any point and time."

Once the Bombers got some points on the scoreboard, the Cade Jensen highlight reel just kept spinning.

Facing third-and-17 in the second quarter, Jensen dropped a 29-yard bomb between three defenders and into the hands of Adam Weissenfels in the middle of the field.

A few plays later, Jensen connected on a 24-yard pass play to Ryan Piper, who reeled in the ball with a spectacular one-handed catch for a touchdown and a 28-3 lead.

"It's amazing," Jensen said. "I am the luckiest quarterback ever. I get to throw to eight guys. I have complete trust in them at all times, and when you when you put in the linemen — they did a great job protecting me today — we got a full team here."

Jensen also had three carries for minus-10 yards, but it was a 12-yard carry in the third quarter that had visions of the NFL's Michael Vick flashing through people's minds.

Jensen got a nice block up front, went around the left end, spun out of the reach of Central Valley's Jase Edwards, outran 280-pound defensive lineman Wyatt Wickham, then got a block from Mendoza that kept defender Johnny Finn from landing on him as he slid for a first down.

"I've been told I play just like him (Vick)," Jensen with a laugh. "Being a quarterback, my team doesn't really like to credit me with being an athlete much, so I like to show them I can be a little bit. I know they trust me to run the ball sometimes, just not too much.

They were really excited and I was happy to see they were excited."

Annie Fowler: 509-582-1574, @TCHIceQueen



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Richland's Sammy Cervantes catches a touchdown pass from Cade Jensen as Central Valley's Josh Wilson defends. Cervantes had two fourth-quarter touchdown receptions to put the exclamation points on the Bombers' 42-10 victory.



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RICHLAND BOMBERS RETURN TO STATE FINALS

Richland High School's Ryan Piper, Josh Mendoza and Cade Jensen hop onto a bench and start firing up the crowd during their win against the Central Valley Bears on Saturday at Edgar Brown Memorial Stadium in Pasco. The Bombers won 42-10. **Sports, 1D.**