

RICHLAND FOOTBALL

# 'Swiss Army Man' carves up Woodinville

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Serving as a wide receiver, cornerback, kicker and punt returner for the Richland High School football team, Adam Weissenfels doesn't take many plays off.

On Saturday, the senior utility man made his presence felt on seemingly every series, in all three phases, while helping lead the No. 2 Bombers to a 28-21 victory over No. 1 Woodinville in

the WIAA Class 4A championship game at the Tacoma Dome.

In the final game of his high school career, Weissenfels scored the game's first touchdown, tied a 4A finals record with three interceptions, forced a fumble, made all four of his extra-point attempts and returned three punts for 77 yards.

All in a day's work for the Swiss Army Man.

Now, after the Bombers have played 41 weeks of football over the past three

seasons, Weissenfels is ready for a little rest and relaxation.

"Oh, I'm tired," he said. "My hips and legs are dyin'. I'm not really ready for my career with Richland football to be over, but my body definitely needs it, and this is definitely the way I wanted to go out."

Time off is a rarity for Weissenfels. In addition to playing on Richland's football and baseball teams, he maintains a nearly perfect GPA in the classroom.

While he's still yet to make a decision on what college he'll attend next fall, the prospects are bountiful. Hoping to pursue a degree in aeronautical engineering,

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Richland's Adam Weissenfels intercepts a pass in the closing minutes to seal Saturday's state championship for the Bombers. It was one of Weissenfels' three interceptions on the day.

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he's already been accepted into the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), but could also wind up following in his father's footsteps at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md.

"He is a one-of-a-kind player. He's a once-in-a-lifetime kind of kid that comes through your program," Richland coach Mike Neidhold said. "He's a wonderful student, he's a kind young man, very caring and compassionate kid. There aren't enough words to describe the kind of impact he has on us and the game."

After moving to Richland from San Diego before the start of his freshman season, Weissenfels joined the Bombers' Class of 2018 that seemed destined for a state title. After falling to Gonzaga Prep in the state semifinals as sophomores in 2015, and to Camas in the championship game last year, he and his teammates are elated to be able to ride

off into the sunset.

"We were here to win a state championship," Weissenfels said. "We're not really worried about the fans, or the press or anything. We were here to win a football game, and that's what we did."

"The experience from last year's Camas game was huge, and what we were able to do today showed we were a little bit better prepared, and we got it done."

That desire showed up when Weissenfels answered the call every time his team needed a big play on Saturday. His first interception came on Woodinville's first possession, and halted a drive that began in Richland territory.

Then, after the defenses exchanged a few blows, he cracked the scoreboard when he took a screen pass from Cade Jensen and dashed 9 yards for what was technically the game-winning score — followed by his

first extra point of the day — with 2½ minutes left in the opening period.

"That was huge, because at the beginning of the game we were just going back and forth," he said. "We got that one play, and I ended up lunging for the end zone and got it, and that's kind of what sparked our big run in the first half."

That big run would eventually give the Bombers a 28-0 edge at halftime. But no lead is sacred in a state championship game, and the rest of Weissenfels' key plays would serve to preserve that lead.

His second interception was arguably his most important, as Woodinville, trailing 28-14 with 6 minutes remaining in the game, got the ball at Richland's 10-yard line because of a bad snap on a Bombers' punt. Falcons quarterback Jaden Sheffey tried to float a back-shoulder fade to his receiver in the end zone, but Weissenfels made a leaping grab to keep his team in front by two scores.

The final pick came on a desperation throw by Sheffey,

facing fourth-and-10 from his own 20 with under 2 minutes left and the Falcons down 28-21. He heaved a ball downfield, Weissenfels ran under it to make the easy interception, and he slid face first into the Tacoma Dome turf to clinch Richland's third state championship and first since 1999.

"We came out a little slow in the second half. I'm not really sure what happened with that," he said. "But it shows the adversity we're able to face on this team and what kind of winners we have. Because everything started going their way, but at the end of the day, we got our jobs done and did what we needed to do."

The three interceptions pushed Weissenfels' season total to a team-leading 11, and he also finished with 16 total touchdowns. He was named the All-MCC defensive player of the year, earning nods as a first team wide receiver and defensive back, and second team kicker.

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