

Bulldogs ride the lightning to win

By ANNIE FOWLER

The Hermiston Bulldogs are for real.

Hermiston scored three touchdowns in the second quarter and waited through two lightning delays in the fourth quarter before beating Richland 27-21 on Friday at Fran Rish Stadium.

With the win, the Bulldogs improve to 2-0 in Mid-Columbia Conference play.

Playing from behind in the second quarter, the Bulldogs scored three unanswered touchdowns in the second quarter for a 21-14 lead at the half.

Trailing 14-0, the Bulldogs put together a 65-yard drive that ended with Andrew James hitting Jordan Ramirez with a 7-yard touchdown pass with 6:42 to play in the second quarter.

After forcing the Bombers (0-2) to punt on their ensuing possession — which went out of bounds at the Richland 28, Hermiston went back to work.

Six plays later, James connected with Cody Thacker for a 7-yard touchdown and a 14-14 ballgame with 3:33 remaining in the first half.

Richland was forced to punt once again, this time pinning Hermiston at its own 32.

No worries.

Wyatt Noland ran for 30 yards, James hit Garrett Walchli and Youbani Razon with passes of 15 and 13 yards and the Bulldogs were all the way down to the Bombers' 11-yard line.

Three plays later, James and Noland both had their hands on the ball as they powered their way across the goal line from 1 yard out. With no time on the clock, Juan Carlos Navarrete put the extra point through the uprights for a 21-14 lead.

Richland's Dhuanye Guice fumbled the ball late in the third quarter, which was picked up by Hermiston's Colton Duquette, to stall a drive, and Ryan Kriskovich mishandled a punt return to start the fourth quarter, giving the Bulldogs possession at the Bombers' 34 after Thacker recovered the ball.

Hermiston had second-and-goal on the Richland 13 when a distant lightning strike delayed the game for 30 minutes with just 8:59 remaining in the game.

The rest did the Bulldogs good. They came back out, and in two plays found the end zone as James hit a wide open Ramirez for a 9-yard score and a 27-14 lead.

The Bombers answered right back.

Cody Sanderson returned the kickoff to the Hermiston 30, then ran the ball in for a 22-yard touchdown three plays later to pull Richland within 27-21.

Richland blocked a Navarrete field goal with 2:44 to play, but could not sustain a drive.

Richland opened the scoring on an 38-yard touchdown pass from Drew Daves to Sanderson just 2 1/2 minutes into the game.

The Bombers extended their lead to 14-0 early in the second quarter as Daves connected with Kriskovich for a 26-yard score.