



NOELLE HARO-GOMEZ Tri-City Herald

Hanford's Jared Devine (11) is a key piece in one of the Mid-Columbia Conference's top offenses heading into Friday's game against Richland.

## PREP FOOTBALL PREVIEW | WEEK 9

# Playoff berths, seeds at risk as regular season winds down

BY JEFF MORROW  
Special to the Herald

Nothing like a little football playoff action before the actual playoffs begin.

That's what football fans get this weekend with the final week of regular-season play.

From Kamiakin traveling to Hermiston with a winner-to-regionals, loser-out type of situation; to a "who wants to host a 4A regional battle" matchup between Richland and Hanford; to a Saturday night fight between Ellensburg and Prosser for a state 2A berth.

Let's get to it:

**Richland (5-2 MCC, 6-2 overall) at Hanford (5-2, 6-2), Fran Rish Stadium, 7 p.m.**

While both teams have qualified for the 4A regionals, the winner here gets to host the Greater Spokane League No. 2 team, while the loser travels to play GSL No. 1 next week.

Richland comes in riding a six-game win streak, its last loss a 27-21 verdict to Hermiston on Sept. 7.

Hanford lost 42-35 in overtime last Friday to Hermiston in what has to be the best game in the Mid-Columbia Conference season to this point.

The Bombers' Dhaunye Guice is 26 yards shy of 1,000 rushing yards for the season. Richland QB Josh Fonner has a 13-to-1 TD pass-to-interception

ratio. And Bombers coach Mike Neidhold found another way for Cody Sanderson to get some of his 20-25 touches a game in: kickoff returns. Sanderson returned a kickoff against Kennewick last Friday for a 99-yard TD run.

Fun fact of the day: Hanford quarterback Garrett Horner has completed passes to 20 different Falcon receivers this season. Throw in running backs Jared DeVine (643 yards rushing) and Dylan McElderry (298), and Hanford has a devastating offense.

Side note: Mead played at Central Valley on Thursday night for a Greater Spokane League 4A regional berth. Gonzaga Prep and Lewis & Clark meet at Joe Albi Stadium at 7:30 p.m. Winner gets GSL No. 1 berth, but both teams are already qualified for postseason.

**Kamiakin (4-3 MCC, 4-4 overall) at Hermiston (5-2, 6-2), 7 p.m.**

Kamiakin has to find the end zone to have a chance to advance. The Braves haven't scored anything in the past six quarters. So QB Lucas Castilleja and RB Tuna Altahir need to get untracked.

Hermiston needs to defend its home turf. The Bulldogs will do that with the lethal 1-2 punch of RB Wyatt Noland (1,344 yards rushing, 22 TDs) and QB Andrew James (1,646

total yards offense, 10 TDs scored).

"We knew coming into the MCC it was gonna be like a playoff game every night," Hermiston head coach David Faeteete said after last week's win over Hanford.

Well, that's what this is.

Assuming Kennewick (4-3, 5-3) defeats last-place Southridge (0-7, 0-8) on Friday, the Kamiakin-Hermiston loser is out of the playoffs.

The Lions have defeated both Kamiakin and Hermiston this season and holds any tiebreaker.

If Hermiston wins, it becomes the top MCC to the 3A regionals.

**Ellensburg (4-3) vs Prosser (6-2), Lions Field, Moses Lake, 7 p.m. Saturday.**

This will be for an automatic berth to the 2A state playoffs.

The two teams met on Oct. 5, with host Ellensburg winning 26-14.

The question this time is will the Bulldogs be able to bounce back from having to win Monday night's CWAC North mini playoff over Othello?

Meanwhile, Will Weinmann and the rest of the Mustangs have been resting since last Friday's 84-7 win over Wapato, a game that had the Mustangs up 70-0 at the half.

**Royal (5-0 SCAC East, 8-0 overall) at College Place (2-3, 4-4), 7 p.m.**

Coach Wiley Allred's visiting Knights come into this SCAC East regular-season finale riding a state record 49-game win streak.

QB Sawyer Jenks and RB/LB Alonso Hernandez have been the leaders of one of Allred's best teams ever.

College Place needs a win to get into the postseason.

**Dayton-Waitsburg (2-4 EWAC, 2-6 overall) at Tri-Cities Prep (6-0, 8-0), Chiana High, 7 p.m.**

Last EWAC regular-season game for both teams.

Mainly, this is a set-the-tone game for the host Jaguars, who dive into regional play next week against whoever wins between Tonasket and Soap Lake.

### OTHER GAMES

**Connell (4-1 SCAC East, 5-2 overall) at River View (1-4, 3-5):** Visiting Eagles fine-tuning their game as they prepare for SCAC crossovers.

**Grandview (4-4) at East Valley-Yakima (3-5):** Visiting Greyhounds look to finish on a winning note in this battle between CWAC fourth-place division placers.

**Highland (2-6) at Wahluke (3-5):** Host Warriors try to snap 3-game losing skid in this non-leaguer.

**Kennewick (4-3 MCC, 5-3 overall) at Southridge (0-7, 0-8), Lampson Stadium:** If the Lions take care of business and win, they qualify for 3A regionals.

**Liberty Christian (4-2 EWAC, 5-2 overall) at Kittitas/Thorp (1-5, 1-6):** Visiting Pats' QB Curtis Morgan named a WIAA Athlete of the Week this week.

**Mabton (3-3 EWAC, 4-4 overall) at DeSales (3-3, 3-5):** Winner should get EWAC No. 4 regional playoff berth, loser No. 5.