



NOELLE HARO-GOMEZ Tri-City Herald

Richland quarterback Josh Fonner is surrounded by Mead defenders Hunter Marler (1) and Nathan Puletasi (42) during Friday's regional playoff game between the Mid-Columbia Conference Bombers and Greater Spokane League Panthers. Richland dug itself a 14-0 hole in the first quarter and could never catch up, losing 35-21 to visiting Mead.

## PREP FOOTBALL | FRIDAY

# Richland's season ends with loss to Mead

BY JEFF MORROW  
Special to the Herald

Mike Neidhold has always looked forward to getting another Monday.

It meant that his Richland football would get to practice another week – that the team was still alive in the playoffs.

There are no more Mon-

days this season for the Bombers, though.

Richland dug itself a 14-0 hole in the first quarter and could never catch up, losing 35-21 to visiting Mead in a Class 4A regional playoff game at Lampson Stadium in Kennewick on Friday.

Mead (7-3) qualifies for the state playoffs, while Richland's season ends at

7-3.

“There’s an old saying in football: if they’re playing two high safeties and you still can’t run the ball, you’re in for a long night,” said Neidhold. “And we couldn’t.”

Indeed. Richland had 32 carries for 62 yards.

Meanwhile, Mead rushed 39 times for 205 yards, including 102 yards

on 19 carries by Cameron Crawford.

With a 20- to 30-mph wind blowing west to east, it hampered any offense trying to head into the gale.

In the first quarter, that was the Bombers. The team’s first four series were:

- A three-and-out with 4 yards of offense;
- A three-and-out with a failed fake punt that was smelled out from the get-go by the Panthers;
- A fumble by Cody Sanderson at the Richland 34 that Mead recovered;
- And two first downs before the drive bogged down and the Bombers were forced to punt.

Meanwhile, Mead scored on its second and third drives with relatively short fields: 20 yards on a 20-yard TD run by Isaiah Saldana; and 34 yards, with the 4-play drive culminating on a 2-yard Saldana score and a 14-0 Panther lead.

“That was a great start for us,” said Mead coach Benji Sonnichsen. “If you think about it, they beat us 62-7 the last time we played them (in last year’s regional playoffs). With a 14-0 lead, our guys got some confidence.”

Even when Richland came back in the second quarter, scoring on a 7-yard Sanderson run, Mead never lost control.

“We gave them those two early scores and we were still just one score down in the game at half-time,” said Neidhold. “I just told them at halftime to keep playing.”

But Mead came out in the second half and regained momentum, taking the opening drive and moving 62 yards on eight plays, culminating in a 34-yard Ryan Blair to Michael Workman TD pass.

In fact, Blair would toss three TD passes in the second half, including two to Workman.

The Bombers made a gallant effort in the final quarter, as QB Josh Fonner connected with Sanderson on a 66-yard TD pass, and hit Ben Fewel with an 18-yard scoring strike.

But it wasn’t enough, as Richland’s rally season – winning seven straight after dropping its first two games of the year – ended.

“I love them,” Neidhold said of his kids. “Some of these seniors made some history after winning the state title last year. We over-achieved a lot after we had some problems

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Mike Neidhold

early in the season.”

**NOTES:** Fonner finished with 209 yards passing. Sanderson caught seven of Fonner’s passes for 119 yards. ... Mead LB Syl Campbell had a big game defensively, with 10 tackles (1 for loss), two pass breakups, and a fumble recovery. LB Cayden Miller added 6 tackles (1 for loss), while CB Jonathan Baird had 5 tackles, a pass breakup and a cover. ... LB Garret Gillespie led the Bombers with 9 tackles, while LB teammate Camron Ball had 8 tackles.

## PANTHERS 35, BOMBERS 21

Mead	14	0	14	7	-35
Richland	0	7	0	14	-21

### SCORING PLAYS

M – Isaiah Saldana 20 run (Eli Eldridge kick)  
M – Saldana 2 run (Eldridge kick)  
R – Cody Sanderson 7 run (Joseph Weissenfels kick)  
M – Michael Workman 34 pass from Ryan Blair (Eldridge kick)  
M – Ryan Chan 6 pass from Blair (Eldridge kick)  
R – Sanderson 66 pass from Josh Fonner (Weissenfels kick)  
M – Workman 9 pass from Blair (Eldridge kick)  
R – Ben Fewel 18 pass from Fonner (Weissenfels kick)

### INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

**RUSHING** – M, Cameron Crawford 19-102, Saldana 12-71, Caleb Shawen 5-41, Blair 2-0, Team 1-minus 9, Totals 39-205. R, Dhaumye Guice 17-34, Sanderson 8-17, Fonner 5-14, Sam Stanfield 1-0, AJ Storms 1-minus 3, Totals 32-62.  
**PASSING** – M, Blair 12-20-1-133. R, Fonner 19-36-0-209.  
**RECEIVING** – M, Workman 4-56, Jonathan Baird 3-39, Saldana 2-25, Crawford 2-7, Chan 1-6. R, Sanderson 7-119, Ryan Kriskovich 6-52, Guice 2-23, Fewel 2-9, Jack Schuster 2-6.  
**FIRST DOWNS** – M 15, R 14. **FUMBLES-LOST** – M 0-0, R 2-1. **PENALTIES-YARDS** – M 10-85, R 2-15.