

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

5 hot Mid-Columbia football games in store for Week 6

BY JEFF MORROW
Special to the Herald

This is one of those high school football weeks where, as a football fan, you wish you could clone yourself and be in about three or four places at once.

Personally, I'd like to be in about five places: Burbank, Pasco, Connell, Walla Walla and Prosser.

This is what happens when everyone kicks off at the same time — 7 p.m. Friday.

Every one of the Mid-Columbia's football leagues has at least one marquee game that could have an effect on the standings.

Here are this week's contests:

TRI-CITIES PREP AT COLUMBIA-BURBANK

Tri-Cities Prep (3-0 EWAC, 5-0 overall) at Columbia-Burbank (3-0, 5-0).

If I had to choose one game, it would be this 2B Eastern Washington Athletic Conference showdown.

The visiting Jaguars, despite losing a lot of players from last season to graduation, have dominated in EWAC play and came up with a 20-10 win last Thursday in Spokane against Class 3A Rogers.

But they had to do it without rushing star Davian Iniguez, who sprained his knee on the opening kickoff.

"Davian will be out a few weeks," said Jags coach Dan Whitsett. "(He'll) likely be back for post season. This puts us at 19 players suiting up Friday night. We are thin, and we know it and personnel has limited us to what we can and cannot do ..."

That means more passing from Prep QB Dante Maiuri, who had 60 throws last week against Rogers.

Whitsett has been impressed with what Burbank has done this season. For some reason, the Coyotes are not ranked in the AP state poll. Prep is third.

And while Abe Garcia has been dominant running the ball, there's more to this team than just him.

"Burbank has pieces in all position groups to make up a good team," said Whitsett. "To be successful you have to have that. To be a contender for the EWAC championship and to make a run in the post season you can't have a position group weakness. They do not have one and that is why they are where they are."

Burbank coach Trevor Curtis likes where his team is at right now.

"Our team continues to grow and gel as a unit," said Curtis. "We continue to get better week by week. Prep is a good disciplined team. They have shown the ability to run and throw the ball. They're well-coached and always dangerous."

"The keys for us is to play loose, fast and have fun. Stay disciplined and limit big plays and mistakes."

Have fun. That's what these big games are all about.

KENNEWICK AT PASCO

Kennewick (3-1 MCC, 4-1 overall) at Pasco (3-1, 3-2), Edgar Brown Stadium.

One of the longest storied football rivalries in the Tri-Cities, this is one of those years where both schools have top-notch teams.

The visiting Lions have been impressive after losing in Week 2 to Chiawana, reeling off three straight wins behind a large offensive line that controls the line of scrimmage, and a tough running back in Myles Mayovsky.

The host Bulldogs suffered their first MCC loss last Friday to Kamiakin 43-25. But the game was never settled until the final few minutes. That's because Pasco never let down and kept finding ways to come back.

Bulldogs QB Armani Reyes and WR Des Licon have been the junior leaders of this squad.

ROYAL AT CONNELL

Royal (2-0 SCAC East, 5-0 overall) at Connell (2-0, 3-2).

This annual battle always seems to determine the SCAC East's top spot. The visiting Knights boast QB Caleb Christensen, WR Cooper Christensen, and a defense that has given up just 7 total points in the last four weeks.

Meanwhile, after an 0-2 start, the host Eagles have won three straight games.

The Tuttle brothers, Jekoby and Jaxsen, have shared the football while rushing, dominating teams with a devastating 1-2 punch.

If anyone in the SCAC East can try to contain Royal's high-flying offense, it would be Connell.

The question is, can it?

OTHER GAMES

All kickoffs at 7 p.m. Friday unless otherwise noted

Chiawana (4-0 MCC, 4-1 overall) at Hermiston (1-4, 1-4). Each week, Gabe Schilz has gotten more impressive from the running back position for the visiting Riverhawks. Does the Bulldogs defense have enough to contain him?

Ellensburg (2-3) at Prosser (3-2), Fiker Stadium. While both teams are in the CWAC, they're in different divisions so this doesn't count as a conference game. QB Kaiden Rivera has been dominant lately for the host Mustangs.

Kamiakin (3-1 MCC, 4-1 overall) at Walla Walla (3-2, 3-2), Borleske Stadium. Tuna Altahir had 305 total yards of offense (218 rushing, 87 receiving) for the visiting Braves against Pasco. Dylan Ashbeck set a Blue Devils' school record last week with four touchdown catches against Richland.

Liberty Christian (0-2 EWAC, 1-4 overall) at Dayton-Waitsburg (0-2, 0-5). These two met two weeks ago in a non-league game, with the visiting Patriots winning 38-16. This one counts in the EWAC standings. Adjustments will be made.

Mabton (1-2 EWAC, 3-2 overall) at White Swan (2-0, 3-1). Visiting Vikings need this win to get up near top of the EWAC standings. Could be tough against the surprising Cougars, who ARE near the top of the EWAC standings.

Milton-Freewater (1-4) at Kiona-Benton (4-1). Independent Oregon team coming into host Bears' den to give Ki-Be some competition before Ken Noel's team gets into the meat of the SCAC East schedule against Royal and Connell in the next few weeks.

Othello (2-0 CWAC

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North, 3-2 overall) at East Valley-Yakima (0-1, 2-3). Looks like Roger Hoell's belief in playing tough, non-league opponents has paid off for the visiting Huskies.

Richland (1-3 MCC, 2-3 overall) at Southridge (0-5, 0-5), Lampson Stadium. While visiting Bombers have struggled in recent weeks, host Suns defense must come up with some answers on how to stop Richland QB Harrison Westover and WR Ben Fewel. No one has yet.

Sunnyside (4-1) at Hanford (2-3), Fran Rish Stadium. Visiting Grizzlies are back at Fran Rish — they lost a few weeks ago to Richland — sitting atop the Big Nine Conference standings. Host Falcons need to bounce back after rough loss to Chiawana last week.

Toppenish (2-0 CWAC South, 4-1 overall) at Grandview (0-1, 0-5). Visiting Wildcats have been playing well. But they can't overlook the scrappy Greyhounds when Prosser is looming on Oct. 18.

Wahluke (0-3 SCAC East, 2-3 overall) at River View (2-1, 4-1). Visiting Warriors have to find a way to keep Panthers' Tre Sakota and Robert Nunez in check.

Warden (0-2 SCAC East, 2-3 overall) at College Place (0-3, 2-3). Visiting Cougars and host Hawks must start winning if they hope to make the postseason crossovers against the SCAC West.

Jeff Morrow is former sports editor for the Tri-City Herald.