

# Kamiakin and Richland battle Friday night in big MCC showdown

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Special to the Herald

The high school football season is two weeks old, and it's become clear that any contest involving four Mid-Columbia Conference teams — Chiawana, Kamiakin, Kennewick and Richland — is going to be box-office level fun.

That's six games between these four teams.

Last week, we saw Kamiakin forced three turn-

overs in the third quarter to outscore Chiawana 19-0 in the period — blowing open a close 20-17 contest at halftime into a 46-24 Braves win.

Now comes round 2, with Kamiakin (2-0) visiting Richland (2-0) at Fran Rish Stadium. Kick-off is 7 p.m. Sept. 17.

Scott Biglin's Braves — who also routed Hermiston in Week 1 by a 46-10 score — have shown very few signs of weakness in their first two games, displaying a top-level offense and a

stout defense.

Quarterback Henry Mercado has been flinging the ball all over the lot to various receivers.

On defense, linebackers E.J. Hawkins and Kale Crawford have been leading the team in tackles so far.

And Payton Graham has shown he can play anywhere. He's been a quarterback, receiver, defensive back, and he kicks punts and returns punts. Dangerous player.

Mike Neidhold's Rich-

land Bombers have been equally impressive so far, routing Pasco 56-0 and Hanford 51-0.

Richland quarterback Cameron Kitchens has been leading the Bombers offense, and he's shown equal ability to either pass the ball to a receiver for a score, or run it in himself.

Elijah Rodriguez and Landon Charlton are doing a good job of running the football.

Defensively, Rodriguez and Deacon Boyce have led Richland in those two

shutouts.

Neidhold, who picked up his 100<sup>th</sup> career victory as Bombers head coach last Friday, has been able to get plenty of playing time for his entire team — Richland led Hanford 30-0 after the first quarter.

That will enable the Bombers to go deep come the postseason, and if someone gets banged up, the next guy up will be ready.

Whatever happens Friday, it should be a fun

game.

## OTHER GAMES

All contests 7 p.m. kick-offs, unless otherwise noted

● **Hanford (0-2) at Walla Walla (0-2), Borleske Stadium:** Hanford head coach Nick Baker leads his Falcons into Walla Walla looking for his team's first win. Wa-Hi, led by running back Jake Humphrey, hopes to do the same.

● **Hermiston (0-2) at Chiawana (1-1), Edgar Brown Stadium:** Game features two outstanding QBs in Bulldogs' Chase Elliott and Riverhawks' JP Zamora.

● **Kennewick (2-0) at West Valley-Yakima**

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## SHOWDOWN

(0-0): Lions take week off in MCC play, taking on a Rams team that lost its chances to play first two weeks, thanks to Covid and then smoke.

● **Pasco (1-1) at Southridge (1-1), Lampson Stadium:** Bulldogs hung on last week in 13-6 win over Wa-Hi, as defense recovered four fumbles. Host Suns hope to bounce back after close 17-14 loss to Kennewick.

● **Sunnyside (2-0) at Skyview (2-0), 3:30 p.m., Saturday:** Good non-league matchup. Visiting Grizzlies have been dominant so far on offense, with Myles Newhouse and Logan Rodriguez. Can they continue the run after a long bus trip to Vancouver?

● **Prosser (1-1) at Selah (0-1):** Mustangs quarterback Kaiden Rivera brings his high-flying offense into Selah in a 2A CWAC opener.

● **Connell game cancelled:** Connell (2-0) had to cancel its road game to Timberlake, Idaho, after some players caught Covid.

● **Kiona-Benton (1-1) at Wapato (0-2):** Visiting Bears, with running back

Camron Villarreal, look to bounce back after loss to Columbia Burbank.

● **Royal (2-0) at Cedar Park Christian (0-2), 3 p.m., Saturday:** Top-notch Knights team (once again) takes its show to west side of the state.

● **Liberty Christian (1-1) at Almira-Coulee-Hartline (2-0), 6 p.m., Saturday:** LC head coach Craig Lukins scrambled to find a game after the Patriots' scheduled opponent, St. John-Endicott-LaCrosse, cancelled because of Covid concerns. So he finds one of the top 8-man teams in the state. Lukins' Patriots are also one of the top 8-man teams in the state. Should be fun.

● **Granger (1-0) vs. Tri-Cities Prep (1-0) at Chiawana High:** Visiting Spartans earned a 20-14 win over on Monday. Now, four days later, they face a well-rested Jaguars team that lost its game to White Swan last week — first from lack of officials, then smoke.

● **Cle Elum-Roslyn (1-1) at River View (1-1):** Host Panthers coach Kris Welch will expect another big game from running

back Miguel Farias and the River View defense.

● **White Swan (0-1) at Columbia-Burbank (2-0):** Coyotes head coach Trevor Curtis has got his team rolling again, despite a number of players lost to graduation.

## CROSS COUNTRY

As the season is just getting started, the Washington State Cross Country Coaches Association released its Week 2 state poll rankings for high school teams.

And the Kamiakin boys are listed as the top 4A team.

In girls 4A, Tacoma is No. 1, with Kamiakin at No. 10.

Kennewick's girls are ranked eighth in the 3A poll, with Mead No. 1.

In boys 1A, College Place sits in ninth, with Connell and Royal receiving votes; while Connell's girls earned votes in 1A girls.

Other state No. 1 teams this week are Bishop Blanchet (3A boys), Sehome (2A boys), Anacortes (2A girls), Lakeside Nine Mile Falls (1A boys), Seton Catholic (1A girls), Liberty Bell (1B/2B boys), and Pope John Paul (1B/2B girls).

The state cross country meet is set for Nov. 6 at Sun Willows Golf Course

in Pasco.

● Meanwhile, Kennewick High senior Macy Marquardt got her season off to a rousing start by winning the 2.5-mile girls varsity race at the Highlander Invite in Spokane

last Saturday.

Marquardt covered the course in 14 minutes, 17.02 seconds. For her efforts, she was named the girls state runner of the week by The Runner WA website.

Marquardt's teammate, sophomore Sofia Lieberman, finished eighth in that same race, finishing in 16:06.99.