

Kamiakin, Kennewick, Royal advance to state football semifinals

BY HERALD NEWS SERVICES

Playing football on Thanksgiving morning before the big feast has been a time-honored tradition, filled with throwing the ball around, and maybe getting muddy.

But for three area high school football teams, Thursday's football will be all business, as they prepare for the next level of playoffs.

Kamiakin, Kennewick and Royal all won their WIAA state quarterfinal matchups over the weekend, each earning an opportunity to advance to the state semifinals in their respective classifications.

Now, the three have matchups this coming Saturday:

- Kamiakin, seeded fourth in the Class 4A bracket, will take on top-seeded Graham-Kapowsin at Art Crate Field in Spanaway in a semifinal. Kickoff is set for 1 p.m. Saturday.
- Kennewick, a 6 seed in the 3A bracket, will meet No. 2 seed Eastside Catholic in a semifinal at Memorial Stadium at the Seattle Center. Kickoff is at 4 p.m. Saturday.
- Royal, which is the top seed in Class 1A, plays host to No. 5 seed

King's in a semifinal set for David Nielsen Field in Royal City at 1 p.m. Saturday.

How they got there

KAMIAKIN 35, CAMAS 14

Payton Graham set the tone for the game with a long opening kickoff return and Kamiakin pulled away in the second half for victory over the Camas Papermakers in a 4A state quarterfinal game Saturday at Lampson Stadium in Kennewick.

The Braves (12-0) now meet the Graham-Kapowsin Eagles (12-0), which beat Bothell 41-25 in its quarterfinal game Friday night. Camas finishes the season with a 7-4 record.

"We wanted to come out and put the pressure on them," said Kamiakin quarterback Henry Mercado.

Kamiakin raced out to a 7-0 lead, scoring on its first drive of the game after the opening kickoff return by Graham to the Papermakers 16-yard line. The Braves needed just four plays to take a quick lead.

Graham did a little bit of everything for the Braves: the kickoff return, two rushing touchdowns, and a receiving touchdown. The senior even completed a

32-yard pass to Gabe Tahir on the Braves' final touchdown drive of the game. Oh, by the way, he kicked five extra points.

Kamiakin extended the lead to 14-0 later in the first quarter before Camas started to settle in on offense.

Taylor Ioane connected with Connor Murphy on a 26-yard touchdown play with 10:08 remaining in the first half to cut the lead to 14-7. Camas tied the game two possessions later when Jon Schultz burst through the middle on a 32-yard run.

"It's really hard to fake these guys," said Camas coach Jack Hathaway said. "We are a heavy run team and think we can run on anyone and we did that in the second quarter."

Schultz had 11 carries for 66 yards in the first half.

But after the Papermakers' second touchdown, Camas did not find the end zone again. Kamiakin bottled up the run and reeled off the final 21 points of the game. Camas did not threaten to score against the Braves' staunch defense in the second half.

"That is a good football team," said Kamiakin coach Scott Biglin. "This is a good win and now we get to disrupt some Thanks-

giving plans."

Kamiakin, which won the Mid-Columbia Conference regular-season title, took the lead for good on a 4-yard touchdown run by Mercado with 1:20 left in the second quarter.

After a scoreless third quarter, the Braves extended the lead to 28-14 early in the fourth on a 2-yard run by Graham off a direct snap.

"We all knew this was our last home game of the year and we had to make it count," Mercado said. Mercado passed for one touchdown and ran for another.

KENNEWICK 27, O'DEA 21

Though it was no surprise in this region, the Lions (11-1) opened some eyes around the state by holding off the No. 3-seeded Irish (8-3) for the victory.

Myles Mayovsky carried the football 28 times for 132 yards and a touchdown.

Meanwhile, the Kennewick defense did enough to keep O'Dea's vaunted rushing game bottled up.

Kennewick opened the game with the first two touchdowns and a 13-0 lead.

Lions senior quarterback Dayton Davis scored on a

3-yard run, and then Mayovsky added his 2-yard TD run.

O'Dea came back, though, scoring a touchdown before halftime to trail Kennewick 13-7 at intermission.

Early in the third quarter, the Irish took the lead, 14-13, as Khalil Holliday broke free for a 64-yard TD run.

But Kennewick then took control, as Davis connected with Bronson Childs for a TD pass, and then Davis himself scored the final touchdown on a 9-yard run. Davis finished with 180 passing yards.

O'Dea was able to score another touchdown to cut Kennewick's lead to 27-21, but couldn't get closer.

The Lions return to the state semifinals once again — remember, there were no state playoffs in 2020. In 2019, Kennewick lost to O'Dea 29-7 in the semifinals.

Now, Kennewick meets No. 2 seed Eastside Catholic (9-1) on Saturday.

ROYAL 59, TOPPENISH 6

The Royal Knights continue to cut through the rest of the 1A state field like a buzzsaw, as they rolled over South Central Athletic Conference rival on Saturday in the quarterfinals in Royal City.

The Knights were up 49-0 at halftime to put the game away.

Derek Bergeson was once again the standout for Royal. The quarterback threw three touchdown passes and rushed for two more, and he finished with 10-of-15 for 148 yards passing.

Avery Ellis rushed for 91

yards on just 8 carries, scoring one touchdown. He also led the Knights on defense from his linebacker position, collecting three tackles, two quarterback sacks, and a fumble recovery.

Receiver Luke Bergeson added three receptions for 96 yards and a touchdown for the 12-0 Knights, who play host to King's (9-1) on Saturday.

OTHER GAMES LYNDEN 54, PROSSER 20:

The Mustangs (8-2) saw the season come to an end Saturday night in Bellingham, falling to the Lions in the 2A state quarterfinals.

Prosser quarterback Kaiden Rivera finished his outstanding prep career with two touchdowns passes — a 16-yarder to Marcus Smith, and a 34-yard scoring strike to Isaac Kernan.

But in between those two TD passes, Lynden scored 38 unanswered points to put the game away.

Trey Webb opened the scoring for Prosser with a 42-yard interception return for a touchdown.

OKANOGAN 50, COLUMBIA-BURBANK 0: Trevor Curtis' Coyotes saw their undefeated season end on Friday night in Wenatchee, as Okanogan rolled to the 2B state quarterfinals victory.

With just three seniors on the roster this season, the Coyotes went 11-1.

NOTE: Tomorrow, we'll look at Richland girls soccer and Kamiakin volleyball.

Jeff Morrow, former sports editor for the Tri-City Herald, contributed to this report.