



RICHLAND BOMBER FOOTBALL

RICHLAND – Mike Neidhold, the 2017 WIAA 4A State Champion Head Coach and four-time conference coach of the year, announced today that he is retiring as head football coach at Richland High.

Neidhold owns a 119-55 (.684) record at Richland in 16 seasons ranking second in program history in victories (129, Lonnie Pierson) and winning percentage (.709, J.D. Covington). He is only the sixth head coach of the Bombers since 1946 and coached Richland to four conference championships and eight State Tournaments. Neidhold was at the helm for Richland's 800th game, 500th overall victory, 200th victory at Bomber Bowl and 50th playoff victory including the 2017 WIAA 4A State Championship.

"I've had an unbelievable experience being able to coach and play here," Neidhold said. "It's been a wonderful thing for me. Personally, I think what I'm most proud of is the relationships with coaches, players, and people that I have met from having this job. I'm just really, really, really, lucky and really, really grateful. The memories, there's just too many. It has been a rich and wonderful ride."

Neidhold started his journey in the Richland Bomber Football program as a player from 1975-1976 under Coach J.D. Covington. Neidhold played quarterback on those Richland Bomber squads that would bring conference titles back to Richland for the first time since 1961 with a combined 20-3 overall record (17-1 conference record) over the two seasons. The 1975 Richland Bombers would finish 12-1 and would make Richland's first State Championship game appearance in just the 3rd ever football championship game in the State of Washington.

Neidhold began his Richland High coaching career in 1986 under Lonnie Pierson. He would spend a stint as assistant coach and coordinator at Pasco High under legendary coach John Morgan from 1991-93. He returned to Richland to coach at his alma mater for good in 1994. After 21 seasons as an assistant coach, including coaching the offensive line to the 1999 WIAA 4A State Championship, Neidhold became head coach of his alma mater in 2008. Neidhold would coach Richland to their first conference championship since 1999 in his inaugural season finishing with an 8-2 record. Neidhold became the only Richland head coach to win a division or conference title in their first season.

During Neidhold's head coaching tenure, the Richland Bomber Football record book would be continually rewritten. Running back Jacob McKinney would set season and career rushing yardage records (1,778 and 3,473) in 2010 en route to the Bombers' 9-2 record and a State berth. Four Richland quarterbacks would set the season and career passing yardage and touchdown marks during his final ten seasons. Zach Whitby, Paxton Stevens, Cade Jensen and Josh Woodard would improve upon each other's records from 2013-2023. Josh Woodard now holds the career passing yardage and touchdown marks with 6,000+ passing yards and 75 passing touchdowns.

Neidhold and the Bombers' most successful stretch took place in three consecutive seasons from 2015-2017. Each season, the Bombers climbed closer to a State Title as they lost to Gonzaga Prep in the semifinals in 2015, lost to Camas in the State Final in 2016 and capped the stretch off with the school's 3rd State Championship in 2017. During this unprecedented run, Neidhold and the Bombers posted the first undefeated season in school history (14-0 in 2017), a 38-3 record including an undefeated conference record, three consecutive conference championships and a 24-game conference win streak.

Neidhold always finished his pregame speeches reminding his players about the most important aspect of playing football at Richland, the relationships made playing the game of football.

"The greatest gift we have, is the simple gift of each other."

**24 Conference Championships · 36 State Playoff Appearances · 6 State Championship Games
1981, 1999, 2017 WIAA State Champions**

