

Tigers easily take down host Richland

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Tri-City Herald

There's just no better way to put it.

From the Richland Bombers' perspective, Saturday's State 4A play-in game against the Lewis and Clark Tigers was a real dud.

While the Tigers dominated, the Bombers had trouble running the football, throwing the football and stopping the run. Lewis and Clark also forced four turnovers in handing Richland its season-ending 28-0 loss at Fran Rish Stadium.

Richland, the CBL 4A's No. 2 seed, finished with a 6-3 record. LC, the Greater Spokane League's No. 2 seed, improved to 7-2 and will play host to the Woodinville-Heritage winner next week in Spokane.

"It's a tough loss to swallow," said Richland coach Rick Redden, whose team was making its first playoff appearance in four years.

The Tigers executed a simple game plan to perfection. The objective on offense was to jump on the back of GSL rushing champion Alex Shaw. On defense, the Tigers' plan was to shut down Richland standout running back Marcelino Morales.

Both missions were accomplished.

Shaw, a 6-foot-2, 216-pound senior, carried the ball 22 times for 118 yards and two touchdowns. He scored on a 13-yard run to put LC ahead 7-0 late in the first half, then finished his day with a 3-yard TD run that gave the Tigers a 28-0 lead with 9:11 left in the game.

"He's a strong runner and his shoulders are always in front of his hips when he runs, so he's a downhill runner," Redden said. "He's 216 pounds and he runs with high knees, so he's tough to bring down."

Meanwhile, the Bombers never got their man in gear. Morales, who entered the game with

1,426 rushing yards and 16 touchdowns, managed only 59 yards on 16 carries.

“They were beating our guys at the point of attack, sometimes on single and sometimes on double teams,” Redden said. “He couldn’t find many creases because they were closing down quickly on him.”

Richland quarterback Jake Haworth also had problems against the hard-charging Tigers defense. He completed only 12 of 31 passes for 86 yards and was intercepted twice.

However, it was what came after a completion that proved most costly for Richland. On the Bombers’ first possession of the second half, Haworth connected with his tight end for an 8-yard gain. But a hard hit by Lewis and Clark’s Chris Mastin, one of several by the junior defensive end, resulted in a fumble that the Tigers recovered on the Richland 34. Four plays later, LC’s Taylor Eglet connected with Vaughn Kapiko on a 9-yard touchdown pass for a 14-0 advantage.

“The fumble as a huge momentum swing for us,” Tigers coach Tim Yearout said.

“Once we get up two scores, we’re pretty good at eating the clock with our big tailback.”

But the Bombers were not done giving. Two plays from scrimmage later, Doug Talkington intercepted a pass and raced 32 yards for a 21-0 lead with 7:35 left in the third quarter.

And with Shaw churning out the yards, the victory was secure.

“This is the first time in about 50 years (actually 27) that we won a playoff game,” Shaw said. “It’s such a great feeling.”

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