

Playoff picture still fuzzy

All 4 3A teams competing for postseason; Richland, Chiawana to decide 4A No. 1

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If the first year of the Mid-Columbia Conference is any indication, football fans in the Tri-Cities are in for some fantastic finishes in the race for the league championship and the top seed into the

regional playoffs.

Heading into the final week of regular season play, all four 3A teams have a shot for at least a piece of the league title, and three — Kamiakin (6-2, 5-1 MCC), Kennewick (5-2-1, 4-2) and Southridge (5-3, 4-2) — have a chance for the No. 1 3A playoff berth.

“As long as we have a chance to control our own fate, we will keep fighting,” Suns coach Tony Reiboldt said. “We don’t need help from anyone as long as we win.”

Southridge will need a bit of help to

reach the playoffs without going to a tiebreaker.

For starters, the Suns, who play host to Hanford (6-2, 4-2) at 7 p.m. today at Lampson Stadium, will need to beat the Falcons, who have won three of their last four games.

If Kamiakin then beats Kennewick (7 p.m. Friday, Lampson), the Suns get the No. 2 seed behind the Braves. If Kennewick wins, however, all three city rivals would be locked in a three-way tie

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MCC STANDINGS

(Conf. wins)	MCC	Overall
Kamiakin (3A)	5-1	6-2
(Hanford, Southridge, Richland, Pasco, Walla Walla)		
Hanford (3A)	4-2	6-2
(Chiawana, Pasco, Walla Walla, Richland)		
Kennewick (3A)	4-2	5-2-1
(Chiawana, Walla Walla, Hanford, Pasco)		
Southridge (3A)	4-2	5-3
(Richland, Kennewick, Pasco, Walla Walla)		
x-Richland (4A)	3-3	4-3
(Walla Walla, Chiawana, Kennewick)		
x-Chiawana (4A)	3-3	5-3
(Pasco, Kamiakin, Southridge)		
Walla Walla (4A)	1-5	3-5
(Pasco)		
Pasco (4A)	0-6	0-8
x-clinched playoff spot		
Today		
Hanford at Southridge, 7 p.m.		
Friday		
Kamiakin at Kennewick, 7 p.m.		
Pasco at Richland, 7 p.m.		
Walla Walla at Chiawana, 7 p.m.		
End regular season		

PLAYOFF SCENARIOS

4A
Richland gets No. 1 seed if:
 A) It beats Pasco
 OR
 B) Chiawana loses at Walla Walla
No. 2: Chiawana

Chiawana gets No. 1 seed if:
 A) It beats Walla Walla
 AND
 B) Pasco beats Richland
No. 2: Richland

3A
Kamiakin gets No. 1 seed if:
 A) It beats Kennewick (**No. 2**
 Southridge-Hanford winner)
 OR
 B) It loses to Kennewick and
 Southridge beats Hanford, and Kamiakin
 wins three-way tiebreaker (**No. 2**
 Kennewick or Southridge)

Kennewick gets No. 1 seed if:
 A) It beats Kamiakin
 AND
 B) Hanford beats Southridge

(No. 2: Kamiakin)
 OR
 B2) Southridge beats Hanford,
 forcing three-way tie, and Kennewick
 wins tiebreaker (**No. 2: Kamiakin** or
 Southridge)

Southridge gets No. 1 seed if:
 A) It beats Hanford
 AND
 B) Kennewick beats Kamiakin, and
 Southridge wins three-way tiebreaker
(No. 2: Kamiakin or Kennewick)

Note: If there is a three-way
 tiebreaker between Kamiakin,
 Kennewick and Southridge, and they
 split their games among themselves, the
 next criteria is quality wins. If Chiawana
 and Richland both win or lose Friday, the
 three tied teams will finish tied in quality
 wins and go to a Kansas tiebreaker; if
 Richland wins and Chiawana loses,
 Kennewick will lose to both Kamiakin and
 Southridge on quality wins; if Chiawana
 wins and Richland loses, Kennewick will
 be No. 1 seed, and Kamiakin and
 Southridge face tiebreaker

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for first place at 5-2.

If that happens, the first tiebreaker for the No. 1 seed is head-to-head play. The Suns beat Kennewick 16-15 back in Week 3, and then fell to Kamiakin 20-0 the following week. If the Lions beat the Braves on Friday, that would negate any head-to-head advantage by any one team, requiring another tie-breaker.

The next tie-breaker is quality wins in conference, with a victory over a first-place team worth eight points, over a second-place team worth seven points, etc.

However, the most likely scenario would leave the three teams still tied, requiring a Kansas-plan playoff, where

teams would play an abbreviated game to determine the remaining seeds in question.

“If it comes down to that, then we had better be real comfortable with it, or we will be bounced out of the playoffs,” Kamiakin coach Scott Biglin said.

The Braves are in the drivers seat with a one-game lead over the other contenders. A win over Kennewick will solve all their problems and give them their third consecutive league championship.

Even with a loss, Kamiakin will get the No. 2 seed (if Hanford beats Southridge) or face a tiebreaker.

Kennewick has perhaps the busiest week ahead, not only because the Lions face two-time defending league champ

Kamiakin, but also for the potential distractions of Senior Night and Homecoming weekend. But if the Lions can beat the Braves and Hanford tops Southridge, they will share the inaugural MCC championship with Kamiakin and Hanford and earn the No. 1 playoff seed.

“We are focused on playing a very good Kamiakin team. All the other stuff matters not,” Lions coach Bill Templeton said.

Hanford dearly wants to *not* share in the league title — it would result in the Falcons losing a tiebreaker for any playoff spot.

Instead, Hanford needs a win over Southridge combined with a Kamiakin win over Kennewick. That would secure the No. 2 seed.

The MCC 4A race is a lot easier to figure, with Richland and Chiawana locked in to the two playoff spots. The Bombers (4-3, 3-3) have the inside track on the No. 1 seed based on their 21-14 win over the Riverhawks (5-3, 3-3) in Week 3. That means if Richland beats visiting Pasco (0-8, 0-6) on 7 p.m. Friday at Fran Rish, or if Chiawana loses at Walla Walla (3-5, 1-5), the Bombers earn the No. 1 seed into the 4A regionals.

However, Chiawana can grab the No. 1 seed with a win over the Blue Devils and a Richland loss.

In either case, Walla Walla will be the No. 3 seed and Pasco the No. 4.

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