

Southridge's
Kadin Diaz
eludes
Richland's
Matthew
Chalmers on
Friday during
Southridge's
9-7 win at
Lampson
Stadium in
Kennewick.



Suns pull out 9-7 victory

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Down to the final play of the game, Southridge quarterback Grant Lathim didn't panic.

Making his first career start, the Suns senior had 5 seconds left in the game, trailing 7-3 and the ball at his own 34-yard line.

Lathim avoided a pair of Richland defenders and lobbed a pass toward the end zone.

Junior wide receiver Brenden Kelly climbed the ladder, grabbed the ball, and split a pair of Richland defenders to score an improbable touchdown for a 9-7 win, setting off a wild scene at Lampson Stadium in both teams' openers Friday.

"Brenden Kelly made an amazing catch," Lathim said. "I tried not to get too high, or too low, just stay in the middle. I was nervous the last drive ... but Brenden Kelly gets it done."

Southridge took over the ball at its own 18-yard line with 1:52 left in the game trailing 7-3. Lathim led the Suns on a 10-play drive to win the game.

He was 5-for-6 on the final drive, including connecting with Clay Gonzales on a 18-yard fourth-down play. Gonzales got drilled after making the catch, laying on the turf for several minutes — but he hung onto the ball to extend the drive.

Two plays later, Lathim hit a streaking Kelly down the right sideline for a 34-yard gain, but after a fumbled snap it appeared as if Richland would hang on for a victory in the defensive slugfest.

But Lathim and Kelly connected to cap a magical night in the Mid-Columbia Conference opener for both teams.

After two-and-a-half quarters of no offense, Southridge

got on the board first on a Conner Mertens 37-yard field midway through the third quarter to take a 3-0 lead.

As the Suns defense continued to give the Bombers fits, Southridge appeared to ice the game early in the fourth quarter going on an 18-play drive that took more than 8 minutes off the clock.

But as the Suns faced a third-and-10 from the 13, Bennett Peterson jumped a rout and intercepted Lathim, returning it 87 yards for a touchdown and what appeared to be the game-winner.

But Lathim rebounded and made sure this night will go down in the pantheon of Southridge football.

Lathim was 13-for-27 for 167 yards with the lone touchdown, while Kelly had nine receptions for 125 yards.