

Bombers hold on to top Blue Devils

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Richland football coach Mike Neidhold is a big fan of movies, but he might have some mixed emotions watching the one his team put together Friday night.

At times — when he sees the 115 yards in penalties or the three turnovers — he might feel like he's watching a horror flick. Other times it might feel like an uplifting charmer.

Considering how difficult wins are to come by in the Mid-Columbia Conference, Neidhold will certainly be pleased about the happy ending of a 21-6 win over Walla Walla at Fran Rish Stadium.

One of the biggest differences was the Bombers' depth at running back. When Walla Walla players started falling victim to the high heat and humidity in

Richland, the Bombers just kept plugging in players in the backfield and churning out yardage.

Anthony Galat led four Richland backs with at least 45 yards rushing, gaining 67 yards and a touchdown on 13 carries. Nathan Perry, Bennett Peterson and Josh Phillips combined for 146 yards and two touchdowns on 21 carries. Like a boxer taking too many jabs to the nose, the Blue Devils wilted under the constant pressure.

Richland scored on its first drive of the night, a 71-yard, 12-play drive capped by Galat's 4-yard run.

The Bombers scored on their next possession, taking advantage of a short field after a bad snap to punter Ethan Gardner. Peterson capped the four-play drive with a 4-yard scoring run



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Richland's Jesse Malone, left, Hunter Chambers and Isaac Campbell gang tackle Walla Walla's Noah Porter on Friday. See photo gallery at tricityherald.com.

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that made it 14-0 with 4:38 left in the first quarter.

But the Blue Devils came back with a big play to get back into the game.

Richland quarterback Zach Whitby dropped back to pass, intending to throw over the middle. But Walla Walla defensive tackle Nick Fuller batted the pass into the air. Gerardo Gomez caught it and ran it to the Bombers 1-yard line, setting up Noah Porter's 1-yard run to make it 14-6.

Penalties proved to be a key element in the game, as both teams combined for 212 yards on 21 infractions. It would have been more, too, had several not been declined.

Richland put one last score on the board in the fourth quarter, as Phillips ran through a gaping hole up the middle, scoring from 5 yards out to give the Bombers a 21-6 lead.

Despite falling to 0-2, the Blue Devils did put up a considerable fight. Quarterback Zach Zehner was inconsistent at best, but he couldn't be faulted when Wa-Hi's receivers began



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Richland's Josh Phillips shakes off a tackle by Walla Walla Brandon Laughery on Friday during a game at Fran Rish Stadium in Richland. See photo gallery at tricityherald.com.

suffering ill effects from the heat.

Zehner finished 10-for-26 for 110 yards.

Whitby finished 9-of-20 for

111 yards, but had the luxury of handing the ball off for most of the second half. The Bombers attempted just two passes over the final 24 minutes.

Walla Walla.....	6	0	0	0	- 6
Richland.....	14	0	0	7	- 21

Scoring plays

- R - Anthony Galat 4 run (Damien Ruiz kick)
- R - Bennett Peterson 3 run (Ruiz kick)
- WW - Noah Porter 1 run (kick failed)
- R - Josh Phillips 5 run (Ruiz kick)