

KAMIAKIN 21, RICHLAND 14

# Braves find a way to victory

WR Austin Gutierrez fills in at QB with TD pass, run to pace Kamiakin

**BEN REYNOLDS**

SPECIAL TO THE TRI-CITY HERALD

Austin Gutierrez had a different idea what his senior night would be. The Kamiakin receiver envisioned getting a win in his final regular-season home game at Lampson Stadium, but how he helped the Braves accomplish that was far from what happened Friday night.

He figured he'd catch a pass or two, maybe score a touchdown, possibly get an interception; not at anytime did he figure it would be playing quarterback.

But that's how it all played out because of some off-the-field issues for the Braves this past week, thrusting Gutierrez behind center. Having not played quarterback since his freshman season, Gutierrez shook off some early nerves before leading the Braves to a second-half comeback in a 21-14 victory over the Richland Bombers.

So in the end, it wasn't a matter how he and the Braves got the win, it was just a matter of getting the win.

"I didn't find out until Monday that I would be playing quarterback," said Gutierrez. "I just tried to step up and do my best."

"We really just wanted to come out and get this win."

Gutierrez, who coach Scott Biglin says will be his starting quarterback next week against Walla Walla, completed all five of his passes after half-time, including a 10-yard strike to



Andrew Jansen Tri-City Herald

Kamiakin running back Mike Jones carries the ball Friday during the Braves' game against Richland at Lampson Stadium in Kennewick. The Braves won 21-14.

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## BRAVES | Big runs key winning TD

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Jace Navejas to tie the game at 14 on the Braves' first second-half drive.

"I was nervous every time I got ready for a game," Biglin said. "I can imagine he was pretty nervous. He stepped up and did a great job tonight."

Gutierrez ended his senior night and his first start as a varsity quarterback for the Braves (6-2, 5-1 MCC) by scoring the game-winning touchdown on a 1-yard run with 3:07 left in the game.

"We ran the same place twice," said T.J. Faamasili. "We told him to just put his head down and run hard."

Faamasili set up the winning touchdown with back-to-back runs of 35 and 28 yards to put the Braves at the Richland 3-yard line.

The Bombers (3-5, 3-3), who had

won three of its last four games, could not get anything going on offense in the second half against the Braves defense. They had just five first downs and were only able to cross the Kamiakin 40-yard line once.

Richland tried to answer Gutierrez' touchdown with a drive in the final minutes, but after getting inside the Kamiakin 35-yard line, it had a fourth-down pass tipped away with under a minute left.

"Any win is a good win," Biglin said. "But when you beat a team with such history like Richland."

Biglin added this win is also special for his kids in dealing with the adversity this week of losing a handful of players for undisclosed reasons.

"We told the kids they could use this as an excuse or they could use it as motivation," Biglin said.