

RICHLAND 14, SOUTHRIDGE 3

Bombers win in MCC finale

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With no conference titles or playoff berths at stake, it didn't appear as though the Richland and Southridge football teams had an awful lot to play for in their regular-season finale Friday night at Fran Rish Stadium.

But the host Bombers moved over .500 in the Mid-Columbia Conference by securing a 14-3 win over the stubborn Suns.

This game wasn't really decided until Jacob Heinen led the Bombers (4-5 overall, 4-3 MCC) on an late eight-play scoring drive after Southridge's failed fake punt gave the Bombers a first down on the Suns' 38-yard line.

Heinen carried the ball six times for 29 yards on the drive, including a nifty 10-yarder in which he broke three tackles while tip-toeing along the sideline. He scored on a 2-yard run on which he carried three Southridge defenders into the end zone with 2:27 to play.

Heinen and teammate Josh Phillips were both effective running the ball against the Suns.

"That's by design," Richland coach Mike Neidhold said of the contrasting styles of Heinen and Phillips. "We want to get as many different looks as we can, use different personnel groupings."

The Suns looked as though they were about to take the lead on the opening drive of the second half. With Southridge trailing 7-3, an offensive pass interference penalty

wiped out a 37-yard pass from Jair Ealy-Thomas to Andrew Staybrook that would have given the Suns a first-and-goal at the Richland 3.

Instead, the Suns (2-7, 2-5) were facing third-and-24.

"It's always nice to get a win in this league," Neidhold said. "Southridge played a sturdy game. These were two teams with nothing to lose, and they played like it."

After taking the opening drive of the game 66 yards in 11 plays, it looked as though Richland might turn this one into a rout early. Senior quarterback Taylor O'Toole was 3-for-4 on the drive and hit Rhett Levin for an 18-yard scoring strike with 8:07 remaining in the first quarter.

Richland appeared on its way to a 14-0 lead later in the quarter when the Bombers turned the ball over on downs at the Southridge 27.

Southridge gave the ball back to Richland on the next play, when Ryan Wolski intercepted an Ealy-Thomas pass.

Richland reached the Southridge 31, but Trenton Nett stopped the Bombers with an interception of O'Toole.

The Suns' only score came on Nate Newbry's 20-yard field goal.

KENNEWICK 58, HANFORD 14: Kennewick finished the regular season strong by beating visiting Hanford in an MCC contest. Kennewick led 42-6 at the half.

The Lions, the No. 2 seed in 3A for the MCC, will travel to Spokane next week for a regional crossover game.

Check Sunday's Herald for full details.