

Richland 'D' will go up against Chiawana

MCC opens continue with Hanford at Pasco, Southridge at Kamiakin

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The third Friday night of high school football is upon us, and the big thing this week is the beginning of Mid-Columbia Conference play.

Not only are there some good matchups in the MCC, but in smaller classifications, too.

Here are five things to watch for tonight:

1. Can Chiawana's offense overcome Richland's vaunted defense?

The Bombers surrendered just 13 points in their first two games, losing 13-10 to Gonzaga Prep and then winning 52-0 over Shadle Park.

Standout defensive end Lakota Wills tweeted out this week that he would head to Air Force next year.

Alex Chapman has been wicked on both sides of the ball for Richland, getting a pick-six against G-Prep, then scoring two receiving touch-

downs against Shadle. Quarterback Paxton Stevens had five TD passes against the Highlanders.

Meanwhile, the Riverhawks' offense got untracked a bit in last week's 27-16 win over Wenatchee. Andrew Vargas rushed for 248 yards in the victory, earning him WIAA boys Class 4A state athlete of the week honors Thursday.

Also, Chiawana quarterback Troy Simpkins has found a great connection through the air with Josh Wilson, who is second in the MCC in receiving with nine catches for 110 yards. And junior linebacker Caleb Weber has been receiving plenty of interest from a number of schools.

Kickoff is at 7 p.m. at Fran Rish Stadium in Richland.

2. Can Pasco's defense slow down the high-flying Hanford Falcons?

Brett Jay has the Falcons off to a 2-0 start, and the offensive unit is averaging an MCC-best 423 yards per game.

Falcons QB Desmond Samples leads the conference with 451 passing yards and five TD passes. He's also the total offense leader with 642 yards — 191 of them rushing.

He also has a number of weapons at his disposal. Elwood Davis leads the MCC with 17 receptions for 114 yards. He also has 188 rushing yards. Kevon Skinner has found the end zone three times in the first two games.

Perhaps the most impressive thing is that five Falcons scored offensive TDs in Week 1 at Hermiston, and four found the end zone in Week 2 against West Valley.

For Pasco, Kynen Tate has looked outstanding at linebacker.

New Pasco coach Kevin Jolley has his team working hard to establish the run. Kaleb Ash has been speedy to the outside, while big fullback Deondre Hendrix has been impressive pounding through the middle. Quarterback Kolby Killoy has become a dual threat.

Kickoff is at 7 p.m. at Edgar Brown Stadium.

3. Which Southridge team will Kamiakin see tonight?

The Suns came out in Week 1 and played great against Moses Lake, showing off their new running game in a 21-17 win. But they ran into a buzzsaw last week, losing 39-7 to Mead, which is coached by former

Prosser coach Benji Sonnichsen.

Samuel Kori has 179 rushing yards for the Suns.

Kamiakin, meanwhile, rolled over Hermiston 54-6 last week. Running back Jethro Questad leads the MCC in scoring with six touchdowns, and he's averaging 10.1 yards a carry, totaling 284 yards on the ground.

The Braves' Zach Borisch is the MCC's highest-rated quarterback, with a 175.9 passing efficiency rating (307 yards and 5 TDs).

Kickoff is at 7 p.m. at Lampson Stadium. Kamiakin is the home team.

4. The battle of the SCAC East titans.

Opening night of SCAC East play has a doozy. Connell, ranked fourth in the state in Class 1A, will visit No. 1 Royal (kickoff is at 7 p.m.).

Royal quarterback Kaden Jenks and Joe Lang, a standout on both sides of the ball, lead the Knights.

Meanwhile, Brian Hawkins has been money for the Eagles at quarterback. He threw four TD passes last week in a 45-7 rout at Cashmere.

That's right — at Cashmere. Not an easy place to play.

Notes

Liberty Christian senior **John Lesser** rushed for 397 yards in Week 1 over Almira-Coulee/Hartline, then another 343 last week in a win against Odessa-Harrington. Lesser cracked the 6,000-yard career rushing mark last week and is about 1,500 yards away from the all-time career 8-man record, held by Tri-Cities Prep's **Joe Campbell**. Lesser has 96 career touchdowns, while Campbell's career mark is 125. Lesser could get both those records by the end of this season. ... **Michael Kernan** is a good running back for the Prosser Mustangs, but he might be an even better defensive back. The junior had four interceptions in Prosser's Week 1 win over Emerald Ridge. ... Tri-Cities Prep might have lost 55-17 to Stanfield last Friday, but it wasn't without a great effort by Jaguars linebacker **Will Dituri**. The junior was in on a school-record 23 tackles — 15 solo tackles and eight assists.

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