

## HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

# MCC crown at stake between Braves, Bombers

Kamiakin 'O,' Richland 'D' tops in league

JACK MILLIKIN  
TRI-CITY HERALD

When the Kamiakin Braves meet the Richland Bombers at 7 p.m. tonight at Fran Rish Stadium — a match-up of two ranked 6-1 teams that are undefeated (5-0) in the Mid-Columbia Conference — expect the best that high school football has to offer.

For starters, you have the best offensive team in the league in Kamiakin, averaging almost 400 yards and 37 points a game, going against Richland's top-ranked defense, which gives up just over 200 yards and 8.7 points a game.

You've got the league's two top passers in Richland junior Paxton Stevens (94 attempts, 177 completions, 1,212 yards, 10 touchdowns) and Kamiakin junior Zach Borisch (69-126-1,177, 15 TDs). If that's not enough, throw in the MCC's top receiver — Bombers' senior Griffey March (29 catches, 376 yards, 4 TDs) — and one of the best running backs in the state — Braves junior Jethro Questad

(105-826, 11 TDs).

The team left standing will likely be the 2015 MCC champion.

"I believe the atmosphere will be electric. Two teams battling for the MCC title. What else can you ask for?" Kamiakin coach Scott Biglin said. "Both schools have very proud traditions in all sports with a community that supports all they do. I think back to when I was in high school at Pasco and always loving to play both schools because of the success and all the fans that came to the games."

The 45-year rivalry between the two teams has seen its share of top-notch talent, drama and controversy. Neither team has dominated the rivalry — Richland leads the overall series 24-21 since it began in 1971 — but there have been stretches where both teams have put their stamp on history. The Bombers won

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seven consecutive games from 1975-81, and the Braves won five in a row from 2000-03.

"I cannot help but think about all the great players that have played in this game on both teams. Way too many to mention," Bombers coach Mike Neidhold wrote via email. "I also love the spirit of the kids in the stands. Those Kamiakin kids really get after it during the games, but the Richland kids like to jump around better than anyone."

Both teams seem destined for a trip to the state playoffs, and both Class 3A Kamiakin and Class 4A Richland have clinched the top seed to the crossover playoffs Nov. 6 with the Greater Spokane League.

"Our kids are definitely focused on this game. But in the end, we still have the No. 1 seed," Biglin said. "I'm sure coach Neidhold would say the same and add that we both want to stay healthy going into the playoffs."

But even in the years when neither Kamiakin or Richland made the playoffs, there is always something to play for.

In that light, here are some of the most memorable match-ups in the Bombers-Braves history.

**1971** | The first-ever match-up between the two teams was a precursor to what have been, for the most part, very close games. Kamiakin took a 6-0 second-quarter lead on Lance Danner's touchdown pass to Randy Herrin, but Richland scored two unan-

swered touchdowns — a scoring pass from Dean Thompson to Keith Prichard and a 36-yard run by Tony Maki — to complete a 14-6 win at Bennett Stadium.

**1982** | Controversy reared its head in a 19-12 Kamiakin upset victory at Kennewick Stadium over the defending state champions. Braves quarterback Garrick Redden threw into the end zone, where receiver Mike Skeins and Richland defender Carl Fite both went up for the ball and fell to the ground still battling for possession. Head linesman Pete Dauenhauer ruled a simultaneous catch, which goes to the offense, giving Kamiakin the score and a 12-6 second-quarter lead. The win also broke Richland's seven-game winning streak against Kamiakin.

**1983** | Kamiakin scored with 59 second left to take a 20-17 lead, but Richland countered with three seconds left in the game when backup quarterback Rob Fryer hit Carl Fite with an 18-yard touchdown pass to give the Bombers a 24-20 win at Fran Rish.

**1990** | Played in front of 8,000 fans at Kennewick Stadium, Richland prevailed over the second-ranked Kamiakin 28-21 in double overtime when Bombers quarterback Brian Edwards hit Tobin Phelps on a 25-yard score — his second of the day to Phelps and third overall — for the win. Edwards also ran for a score.

**1996** | Richland, despite getting beaten 31-7 by the Braves

in the regular season, pulled off the upset of top-ranked Kamiakin in the first round of the Class AAA state playoffs, winning 21-14 at Lampson Stadium. Bombers receiver Josh Jelmberg caught eight passes for over 70 yards and a touchdown from Jared Mitchell, while the Richland defense held Kamiakin to just six rushing yards in the second half.

**2000** | Scott Davis ran for 184 yards and three touchdowns, and Beau Reilly found Cam Hall wide open for a game-clinching 47-yard touchdown pass to cap a 26-15 upset of defending state champion Richland in the first round of the Class 4A state playoffs at Lampson Stadium. Hall also intercepted a pass late in the game to seal the victory.

**2013** | In an offensive display like none other in the series history, Richland beat Kamiakin 56-49 in four overtimes at Fran Rish Stadium. Bombers quarterback Zach Whitby threw for 324 yards and five touchdowns, and receiver Payton Radliff caught five passes for 70 yards and three scores, including Richland's final TD. Braves quarterback Kyle Robertson had a good night too, completing 18 of 28 passes for 330 yards and three touchdowns. He found Brandon Larson open in the front left corner of the end zone in the fourth overtime, but officials ruled a trap.

► Jack Millikin: 509-582-1106; jmillikin@tricityherald.com; Twitter: @jackbull61