

Prime RBs on parade

Chiawana's Vargas, Kamiakin's Questad square off tonight

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The top two running backs in the Mid-Columbia Conference — Chiawana's Andrew Vargas and Kamiakin's Jethro Questad — will collide tonight, when the Riverhawks visit the Braves at 7 at Lampson Stadium.

Vargas leads the MCC with 737 rushing yards and eight touchdowns, while Questad isn't far behind with 538 yards and seven scores.

But neither team's coach believes that tonight's contest will be decided by which player runs the ball better as much as who can fare better against the battle-tested offensive lines.

"We have to control the line of scrimmage by stopping Vargas, but we also have to make them throw the ball a little bit," Kamiakin coach Scott Biglin said. "(Riverhawks offensive coordinator Dave) Spray really gets those guys blocking well and

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blocking hard. They do a great job with those zones and counters."

Chiawana coach Steve Graff knows the Braves aren't ranked No. 1 in the MCC in offense and defense for nothing. The Riverhawks are ranked fourth in offense and sixth in defense.

Graff also believes time — and quality — of possession will be a factor.

"We've just got to slow them down," Graff said. "We can't let them run anytime they want, and we can't give up big plays. (Kamiakin defensive coordinator Tim) Maher does a really good job with their defense.

"It's going to come down to execution — who executes the best and who doesn't turn the ball over. The more chances we can give our offense, the better off we'll be."

Both teams suffered Week 1 losses but have rebounded nicely. Kamiakin (3-1 overall, 2-0 MCC) has won its past three games and shares the MCC lead with Richland. Chiawana (2-2, 1-1) has lost to state top-ranked Camas and No. 8 Richland.

"The motivation of playing a good program like Chiawana and measuring yourself against one of the best programs in the state will tell us where we're at and where we need to go," Biglin said.

The Riverhawks, who played for the Class 4A state title the past two seasons — winning it all in 2013 — always are up for a challenge.

"We like to fly around to the ball and smack people in the mouth," Chiawana junior linebacker Caleb Weber said. "That's kind of who Chiawana is. We like to go out and hit people."

Other games

WALLA WALLA AT RICHLAND, FRANK RISH STADIUM, 7 P.M.: The Blue Devils' offense is finding a rhythm, averaging 37 points over the past three games, but don't expect the Bombers to give up a lot of points. The Richland defense has surrendered just 27 points all season.

KENNEWICK AT PASCO, EDGAR BROWN STADIUM, 7 P.M.: The Bulldogs are coming off their worst loss of the season against Wa-Hi (55-7) but will be back in the comfy confines of home to face a feisty Lions team that gave Kamiakin a tough test last week.

WAPATO AT PROSSER, ART FIKER STADIUM, 7 P.M.: The Mustangs will have to corral Wolves RB Greg Rodriguez, but the Prosser defense has only allowed 17 points all season. A third consecutive shutout is highly likely for the Mustangs.

CONNELL AT RIVER VIEW, 7 P.M.: The Eagles shook off their Week 3 loss to Royal and responded with a run-stuffing win

over Wahluke. The Panthers are coming off their most lopsided defeat (64-6 against Warden) since a 66-6 loss at Royal on Oct. 26, 2007.

WAITSBURG AT KIONA-BENTON, 7 P.M.: Expect a high-scoring affair when Cardinals QB Jacob Dunn tests his aerial attack against one of the scrappiest Ki-Be teams in recent memory. Bears WR/DB Vladimir Rizin can break a big play at any moment.

TOUCHET VS. SUNNYSIDE CHRISTIAN, SUNNYSIDE HIGH SCHOOL, 7 P.M.: Indians RB Leo Garcia has emerged as one of the most dangerous offensive threats in the Southeast IB, but the Knights will not be pushovers.

POMEROY AT LIBERTY CHRISTIAN, HANFORD HS, 7 P.M.: With five games remaining in the regular season, Patriots RB John Lesser continues his pursuit of Washington's 8-man record book, moving into third place on the all-time rushing yardage list at 6,488. Lesser needs just 1,051 yards to tie Tri-Cities Prep's Joe Campbell, who set the record of 7,539 yards from 2003-06. Also in reach are Campbell's 8-man records of 125 all-purpose touchdowns (Lesser is third with 109) and 808 points (Lesser is second with 766).

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