

# Sports



Tri-City Herald file photo

Prosser quarterback Tanner Bolt runs around an Ellensburg defender last season. The football powerhouses will renew their rivalry Friday, with the inside track to the conference title on the line.

## PREP FOOTBALL PREVIEW | WEEK 4

# CWAC titans face off

■ **Tanner Bolt leads Prosser into an early-season matchup against Ellensburg with a spot atop the CWAC on the line. In the MCC, opposing offensive philosophies collide as Chiawana takes on Hanford.**

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Not yet to the halfway point of the season, the annual matchup between the CWAC's perennial powerhouses could go a long ways toward deciding a league champ.

The No. 3 Prosser Mustangs (3-0 overall, 2-0 CWAC) will travel to Ellensburg on Friday to take on the Bulldogs (2-1, 2-0), and the winner will be guaranteed at least a share of the conference lead.

Prosser coach Corey Ingvalson said it was too early in the season to call this his

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team's biggest game of the year, but he did say there's a little something extra on the line every time the Mustangs take on Ellensburg.

"There's added importance, definitely, because anytime you play Ellensburg it's a great measuring stick because they're so good, so well coached," Ingvalson said. "But, with it being so early, it presents an opportunity to get a ton better throughout the course of the year, no matter what happens. But is it the most important game of the season? I think all of them are im-

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portant."

Like in past years, it's entirely possible this won't be the only meeting between Prosser and Ellensburg. In 2015, the Bulldogs won a 27-26 thriller at home over the Mustangs in Week 7, but that would be the only game Prosser would lose, as it got the last laugh with a 31-0 win over Ellensburg in the second round of the Class 2A state playoffs en route to another state title.

With a fairly young roster, Ingvalson said the Mustangs' chances to knock off Ellensburg might be improved if the matchup were to come later in the year, but he's nevertheless relishing the opportunity to see his squad get tested.

"I think Week 4 is going to be great for us as far as measuring where we are as a team and where we need to improve," Ingvalson said. "I think (Ellensburg coach Randy Affholter) has always echoed those statements that that's the best measuring stick. The advantage, of course, is that in Week 4 you get a lot of time to correct what's wrong, win or lose."

Though Prosser's lineup features several underclassmen in starting positions, senior quarterback Tanner Bolt — the reigning 2A Player of the Year — has shown no signs of slowing down from his stellar junior campaign. He's thrown 14 touchdown passes and no interceptions while leading the Mustangs to victories over Kennewick, Toppenish and Quincy.

"Echoing what I said earlier in the year, we kind of gave the keys of the car to Tanner. It's his senior year and he's in that mastery phase of our offense," Ingvalson said. "He understands where we want to go with the ball. He has great progression within his reads."

Ellensburg dropped its season opener to reigning 1A state champion Royal, 21-14, but has been nothing short of dominant since. The Bulldogs knocked off Grandview and Wapato by a combined score of 131-0 over the past two weeks.

### AROUND THE MCC

**Hanford at Chiawana:** Following a blow-out win over Kamiakin — formerly the No. 2 Class 3A team in the state — senior running back Andrew Vargas and the Riverhawks (3-0, 1-0 MCC) will try to keep the hot start to their season going against the Falcons (2-1, 0-1).

Vargas piled up 417 yards and four touchdowns last week behind Chiawana's burly offensive line before shutting it down midway through the fourth quarter in the Riverhawks' 35-13 victory. With 982 yards and 13 touchdowns, Vargas is the conference's leading rusher by a mile through three weeks.

Sophomore quarterback Garrett Horner has piloted the Falcons' offense beautifully thus far, leading the conference in passing yards (862) and touchdowns (11). He nearly orchestrated a comeback win over Walla Walla last Friday, but seven touchdown drives weren't enough as the Falcons fell 50-48.

**Kennewick at Walla Walla:** After pulling off a thrilling victory on the road against Hanford last week, Mitch Lesmeister and the Blue Devils (2-1, 1-0) will defend their home turf against the visiting Lions (1-2, 0-1).

Lesmeister ran for 284 yards and threw for 179 while accounting for six touchdowns. With 574 yards on 63 carries — an average of 9.1 yards per rush — Lesmeister is the MCC's second leading rusher entering Week 4.

Kennewick struggled in its MCC opener against Richland — the No. 1 Class 4A team in the state — racking up just 39 yards of offense in a 40-0 loss. The Lions get a bit of a break facing a Walla Walla defense that has allowed a league-high 110 points.

**Southridge at Richland:** The Suns (2-1, 1-0) enter the second week of MCC play as the conference's only 3A team with a league victory to its credit, but they will be substantial underdogs in their matchup with the No. 1 Bombers (3-0, 1-0).

Richland suffocated an improving Kennewick offense last week, picking off sophomore quarterback AJ Templeton three times and holding the Lions to 12 passing yards on 18 attempts. The Bombers have intercepted a league-high nine passes this season, with leaders in the defensive

backfield including senior Alex Chapman (three interceptions) and junior Adam Weissenfels (two).

Senior tailback Zayid Al-Ghani has led the charge for the Suns' run-first offense, rushing for 411 yards through the team's first three games, 207 of which came in Southridge's MCC-opening win against Pasco. He and the Southridge offensive line will have to deal with a Richland front that has allowed just 113 yards on the ground (37.7 per game). **Pasco at Kamiakin:** Senior Quarterback Zach Borisch and the Braves (2-1, 0-1) will try to get back on track at home against the Bulldogs (0-3, 0-1) after getting dispatched by Chiawana.

Because Kamiakin's defense had not allowed a point through its two non-conference games, the Braves still boast the top scoring defense in the MCC. Kamiakin has the No. 2 overall defense, allowing 262.7 yards per game.

Pasco has struggled on both sides of the ball this season, scoring the fewest points in the conference (27) and allowing the second most (90). Senior running back Deondre Hendrix has scored three of the Bulldogs' four touchdowns.

### SMALL SCHOOLS

**Othello at Toppenish:** The Huskies (2-1, 2-0 CWAC) will stay atop the CWAC standings with a win, tying them with the winner of the Prosser-Ellensburg game. The Wildcats (1-2, 1-1) may have something to say about that.

Reece Jones ran for 151 yards and scored a touchdown in Othello's 20-13 Week 3 victory over Selah, while Toppenish rolled Ephrata, 55-18.

**Dayton-Waitsburg at Tri-Cities Prep:** With both teams coming off wins in their Eastern Washington Athletic Conference openers, this early-season matchup between the Tri-Cities Prep Jaguars (3-0, 1-0 EWAC) and Dayton-Waits-

burg (2-1, 1-0) could have major conference implications.

Jaguars quarterback Gavin Baker ran for four touchdowns in their 43-26 road win against Irrigon last week. Dayton-Waitsburg running back Travis Crockett scored four touchdowns in a win over DeSales in the opener, including a 96-yard scamper to get D-W on the board.

The game will take place at Chiawana High School.

Other local matchups include Grandview at Selah, Wahluke at River View, Connell at Warden, Kiona-Benton at Columbia-Burbank, College Place at Royal, Touchet at Ione, and DeSales at Liberty Christian (at Hanford High School).

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### HIGH SCHOOL MID-COLUMBIA CONFERENCE

	Lg	All
Chiawana	1-0	3-0
Richland	1-0	3-0
Southridge	1-0	2-1
Walla Walla	1-0	2-1
Hanford	0-1	2-1
Kamiakin	0-1	2-1
Kennewick	0-1	1-2
Pasco	0-1	0-3

### CWAC

	Lg	All
Prosser	2-0	3-0
Ellensburg	2-0	2-1
Othello	2-0	2-1
East Valley	1-1	2-1
Quincy	1-1	1-2
Selah	1-1	1-2
Toppenish	1-1	1-2
Grandview	0-2	1-2
Ephrata	0-2	0-3
Wapato	0-2	0-3

### SCAC EAST

	Lg	All
Connell	1-0	3-0
Royal	1-0	3-0
Columbia-Burbank	1-0	1-2
River View	1-0	1-2
College Place	0-1	1-2
Kiona-Benton	0-1	0-3
Wahluke	0-1	0-3
Warden	0-1	0-3

### EASTERN WASHINGTON ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

	Lg	All
Tri-Cities Prep	1-0	3-0
Kittitas	1-0	2-0
Dayton-Waitsburg	1-0	2-1
Liberty Christian	1-0	1-1
DeSales	0-1	1-2
Lyle-Wishram	0-1	1-2
Mabton	0-1	1-2
White Swan	0-1	0-3

### SOUTHEAST 1B

	Lg	All
Sunnyside Christian	0-0	3-0
Colton	0-0	2-1
Touchet	0-0	1-1
Pomeroy	0-0	1-1
Garfield-Palouse	0-0	0-2
St. John-Endicott	0-0	0-2

### OREGON 5A SPECIAL DISTRICT 1

	Lg	All
Bend	1-0	3-0
Summit	1-0	2-1
Hermiston	1-0	1-2
Ridgeview	1-0	1-2
Mountain View	0-1	2-1
Pendleton	0-1	1-2
Hood River Valley	0-1	0-3
Redmond	0-1	0-3