

Sports

MCC FOOTBALL: RICHLAND 26, SOUTHRIDGE 10

Bombers stave off Suns

■ Top-ranked Richland shakes off a slow start against Southridge to remain unbeaten. Paxton Stevens throws for 260 yards and 3 TDs.

BY JEFF MORROW
Special to the Herald

Richland High School coach Mike Neidhold told his football team at halftime Friday night that he wasn't aware the Bombers had added another team to their schedule.

"I said, 'We were playing Southridge tonight, and Richland,'" Neidhold said. "Richland is not on our schedule."

Neidhold was lamenting the Bombers' tendency to shoot themselves in the foot with key penalties calling back big gains in the first 24 minutes.

But good teams find ways to win, and Richland held off a strong effort from Southridge for a 26-10 victory at Fran Rish Stadium. That makes the Bombers 4-0 overall, including 2-0 in Mid-Columbia Conference play.

Richland overcame a slow start in which Southridge held a 3-0 first-quarter lead thanks to Hunter Spiva's 42-yard field goal.

But early in the second quarter, the Bombers finally got things going.

Richland quarterback Paxton Stevens found a breakdown in the Suns' coverage, connecting with a wide-open Alex Chapman for a 76-yard touchdown pass.

Chapman had no one within 10 yards of him as he streaked downfield.

"Their corners were coming down too low (to the line of scrimmage)," said Stevens, who passed for 260 yards and three touchdowns.

Chapman's 76-yard score gave the Bombers the lead for good.



BOB BRAWDY Tri-City Herald

Richland's Parker McCary (21) looks to get away from Southridge's Brycen Kelly on Friday night at Fran Rish Stadium.

Stevens added a 6-yard touchdown strike to Ryan Piper on a slant pattern later in the quarter for a 13-3 halftime lead.

"The slants were working," Stevens said. "Their defensive backs had a tendency to drop back right away."

But the score stayed 13-3 through three quarters, as the Suns' defense kept the Bombers' offense in check.

Meanwhile, Suns QB Mason Martin began running the option play to perfection in the third quarter. He finished with 69 rushing yards — 75 in the second half.

"Mason ran the ball well," said Southridge coach Keith Munson, whose team dropped to 2-2 overall and 1-1 in MCC play. "We made a couple of adjustments at halftime. And we told the kids to pretty much don't quit."

But the Suns couldn't overcome another solid Richland defensive effort.

The Bombers kept Southridge out of the end zone until 42 seconds remained in the game, when Martin rushed in from 8 yards.

"We were worried about how we work together," said Piper, who had eight tackles (one for loss) and a pass breakup from his safety position. "They have a good running back (Zayid Al-Ghani), and we were worried about their running game."

Al-Ghani finished with 80 rushing yards, but it took him 24 carries to get there. Southridge's running game was further hampered when lineman Taylor Ambrose injured his knee in the first half and didn't return.

Bombers defensive lineman Brigham Whitby had nine tackles (two for loss), while linebacker Jacob Stanfield added six tackles and a quarterback sack.

Brycen Kelly had a stellar game in the secondary for the Suns with 10 tackles (one for loss), while team-

mate Corey Bibe added six tackles (one for loss) and a pass breakup.

Neidhold liked what he saw in the second half, but there's plenty for the Bombers to work on in the coming week.

"We need to run the football better," Neidhold said. "They were getting after us pretty good up front. And we had a lot of penalties."

Southridge	3	0	0	7	-	10
Richland	0	13	0	13	-	26

SCORING PLAYS

S — FG 42 Hunter Spiva
R — Alex Chapman 76 pass from Paxton Stevens (Adam Weissenfels kick)
R — Ryan Piper 6 pass from Stevens (snap fumbled)
R — Chapman 29 pass from Stevens (Weissenfels kick)
R — Ben Stanfield 2 run (kick failed)
S — Mason Martin 8 run (Spiva kick)

STATISTICS

RUSHING — S, Zayid Al-Ghani 24-80, Martin 16-69, Gavin Willingham 2-9, Corey Bibe 1-1, Samuel Kori 1-0. R, Stanfield 10-50, Parker McCary 8-28, Stevens 6-21.
PASSING — S, Martin 7-11-0-65, Willingham 1-1-0-24. R, Stevens 18-33-0-260.
RECEIVING — S, Kori 6-31, Willingham 1-34, Peyton Monson 1-24. R, Chapman 6-157, Piper 3-26, Weissenfels 1-22, McCary 1-14, Kyle Kirby 1-12, Josh Mendoza 1-9, Ryan Kriskovich 1-8, Jacob Stanfield 1-7, Gaven Brasker 1-3, Kody Kjarro 2-2.
FIRST DOWNS — S 13, R 16. FUMBLES-LOST — S 1-0, R 0-0. PENALTIES-YARDS — S 9-83, R 8-64.

FOOTBALL STANDINGS

MCC

	Lg	All
Chiawana	2-0	4-0
Richland	2-0	4-0
Kamiakin	1-1	3-1
Kennewick	1-1	2-2
Southridge	1-1	2-2
Walla Walla	1-1	2-2
Hanford	0-2	2-2
Pasco	0-2	0-4

Friday, Sept. 23

Chiawana 49, Hanford 14
Kennewick 41, Walla Walla 40 (OT)
Richland 26, Southridge 10
Kamiakin 56, Pasco 6

Thursday, Sept. 29

Chiawana at Kennewick, 7 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 30

Kamiakin at Hanford, 7 p.m.
Richland at Pasco, 7 p.m.
Walla Walla at Southridge, 7 p.m.

