

# Sports

## PREP FOOTBALL PREVIEW | WEEK 10

# Richland aims to get past CV, move on to state

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Business-like is a good way to describe football practice at Richland High School this week as the Bombers prepare to host Central Valley in a Class 4A state play-in game.

With an undefeated regular-season record and a Mid-Columbia Conference title already to their credit, the Bombers are focusing on taking care of the little things in their matchup with the Bears (7-2) at 7 p.m. Friday.

“We’ve gotta play hard, we’ve gotta run hard, we’ve gotta execute, we’ve gotta complete passes when we need to, and we’ve got to play good strong Bomber ‘D,’” junior wide receiver/defensive back Adam Weissenfels said. “We’ve got to swarm to the ball and get 11 men on it every single play, hit ‘em in the mouth and make them wish they didn’t have to play the Bombers this week.”

There probably isn’t a team in the state that would wish otherwise.

On top of its 9-0 record, Richland boasts the best offense in the MCC (402.3 yards per game) and second-best defense (207.6 yards allowed). The Bombers have navigated a brutal schedule, racking up wins against Skyline, Chiawana and Kamiakin.

As Richland coach Mike Neidhold points out, they’ve done it without a true superstar at running back or wide receiver, but instead with a roster full of players who are capable of contributing.

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*Richland football player Adam Weissenfels on Friday’s game against Central Valley*

Senior Alex Chapman led the MCC in receiving for the first six weeks of the season, but he has four catches for 31 yards in the past three games. Neidhold said that’s not because of a drop-off in Chapman’s play, but because so many other guys have stepped up that there aren’t enough touches to go around.

While guys such as Josh Mendoza, Weissenfels and Ryan Piper have contributed all season, senior Kody Kjar-mo and junior Gaven Brasker have seen an uptick in targets the past few games. Their increased production has rounded out the offense.

“They’ve always been there, since Week 1,” Neidhold said. “I think the first game we played against

FROM PAGE 5B

## PREPS

Skyline, we might have had 15 or 20 completions to 10 different guys.

“We don’t think that we lose a whole lot when we put our seconds in. They’re not really seconds, they’re just numbers five, six, seven and eight behind the one, two, three, four.”

Armed with a stable of receiving talent, senior quarterback Paxton Stevens has feasted on opposing defenses to the tune of an MCC-leading 2,075 passing yards. He also has thrown 24 touchdown passes, tied for second in the conference.

“Not very many teams have eight guys that can cover all eight of our receivers,” Stevens said. “We’re solid all the way across with our receivers, and I’m glad to have those guys at my back. It’s good to throw to them.”

Central Valley running back Braedon Orrino leads the Greater Spokane League in rushing (976 yards and 11 touchdowns), but kicker Ryan Rehkow might be the Bears’ top weapon.

Rehkow’s older brother, Austin — a senior at the University of Idaho — has twice been named an All-America punter and famously made a 67-yard field goal when he was at Central Valley. Ryan Rehkow’s career long is a mere 57-yarder, and he leads the GSL in punting (48.4-yard average on 23 attempts).

Neidhold said he has to strategize against a kicker as talented as Rehkow, whom the Bombers got a good look at last year when they beat the Bears 30-3 in the first round of state.

“You try to get your offense to take the field goal off the plate so they have to score, so that a three won’t help them,” Neidhold said. “It puts a little pressure on your offense when you have such a weapon like that. And he’s their punter too, so if you get them bottled up in their end, he kicked a 68-yard punt against (Gonzaga) Prep.”

“He’s able to flip the field with his foot, which is a nice weapon.”

If Richland beats Central Valley, it will host the Skyview-Olympia winner in the first round of state.



BOB BRAWDY Tri-City Herald

Richland senior quarterback Paxton Stevens (17) leads the Mid-Columbia Conference with 2,075 passing yards entering Friday’s Class 4A state play-in game against Central Valley.

### MID-COLUMBIA CONFERENCE

	Lg	All
Richland	7-0	9-0
Chiawana	6-1	8-1
Kamiakin	5-2	7-2
Southridge	4-3	6-4
Hanford	2-5	4-5
Kennewick	2-5	3-6
Walla Walla	3-6	3-6
Pasco	0-7	0-9

### MCC LEADERS THROUGH WEEK 9

	Carries	Yds	TDS	Avg
<b>Rushing</b>				
Andrew Vargas-CH	243	2232	35	9.2
M.Lesmeister-WW	142	1172	15	8.3
Zayid Al-Ghani-SR	215	1128	10	5.2
Jethro Questad-KA	131	858	13	6.5
Ben Stanfield-RI	102	694	6	6.8
Ronny Loomis-KE	106	640	3	6.0
Deondre Hendrix-PA	155	612	6	3.9
Parker McCary-RI	98	573	10	5.8
Mason Martin-SR	113	465	5	4.1
AJ Templeton-KE	140	443	9	3.2
<b>Passing</b>	<b>Comp</b>	<b>Att</b>	<b>Yds</b>	<b>Int</b>
Paxton Stevens-RI	143	271	2075	6
Garrett Horner-HA	168	282	1971	9
Zach Borisch-KA	127	211	1847	9
M.Lesmeister-WW	91	203	1292	14
Mason Martin-SR	65	110	995	5
Keaton Stewart-PA	100	245	910	6
AJ Templeton-KE	79	172	906	14
Troy Simpkins-CH	61	101	899	7
<b>Receiving</b>	<b>Catches</b>	<b>Yards</b>	<b>TDS</b>	<b>Avg</b>
Joe Gauthier-HA	42	783	9	18.6
Alex Chapman-RI	27	601	9	22.3
Isaiah Brimmer-KA	39	558	10	14.3
Benson Smith-KA	36	474	6	13.2
	23	370	6	16.1
Blake Loftus-KE	32	364	6	11.4
Brady White-HA	28	350	4	12.5
Jacob Sandoval-PA	34	347	1	10.2
A.Weissenfels-RI	22	340	5	15.5
Josh Mendoza-RI	24	307	4	12.8

SEE PREPS, 6B