

# Sports



BOB BRAWDY Tri-City Herald

The Richland Bombers will march into Saturday's Class 4A state quarterfinal against Bothell at Lampson Stadium. A win for the Bombers will send them to the semifinals in consecutive years for the first time since 1980-81.

## STATE FOOTBALL PLAYOFFS

# Richland, Bothell eye semifinal slot

■ **Kamiakin hosts Bonney Lake, Royal welcomes La Salle and Connell travels to Meridian in quarterfinal slate.**

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The Richland High School football team seemed to have an easy time of it the past two weeks, shutting out Central Valley in a regional crossover game and then blanking Sunnyside in the opening round of the Class 4A state playoffs.

The Bombers (11-0) should get a tougher challenge this week when they host the Bothell Cougars (9-2) in a state quarterfinal at 5 p.m. Saturday at Lamp-

son Stadium. Even after beating CV and Sunnyside by a combined score of 78-0, Richland coach Mike Neidhold said complacency would not be an issue with his squad.

"Our guys aren't wired like that," Neidhold said. "They love to compete, and they love to compete against teams that are good. And these guys are good. Skyline's good, Chiawana's good, Kamiakin's good. The teams that we've played this year that have been really good, our kids have risen up to that and played well."

The Cougars will present the Bombers with a different style of game. Bothell has pushed around many of its opponents this season with a roster featuring six linemen that weigh in at 260 pounds or heavier.

Neidhold's message remained the same as it has all year when looking ahead to Bothell: The Bombers must win the line of scrimmage to come out on top.

"It sounds cliché, but you've gotta win up front," Neidhold said. "We won some battles on the defensive line last week, but our offensive line struggled a little bit against Sunnyside, and we have to get that right

## STATE SCHEDULE

**4A:** Bothell vs. Richland, 5 p.m. Saturday, Lampson Stadium

**3A:** Bonney Lake at Kamiakin, 1 p.m. Saturday, Lampson Stadium

**1A:** La Salle at Royal, 7 p.m. Friday, Royal HS

**1A:** Connell at Meridian, 1 p.m. Saturday, Civic Stadium (Bellingham)

this week."

Richland hasn't lost many battles in the trenches this year, and a big reason why is 6-foot, 275-pound senior lineman Brigham Whitby, who acts as the heart and soul of the Bombers' offensive and defensive lines.

Always up for a challenge, Whitby said he's looking forward to taking on Bothell,

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which is two years removed from winning its first state championship.

"We always look forward to playing better teams," Whitby said. "When we play against those better teams, we play really well. That's just the way it goes — we play up to that level of excellence."

If Richland beats Bothell, the Bombers will advance to the state semifinals in consecutive years for the first time since 1980-81.

**BONNEY LAKE AT KAMIAKIN:** Champ Grayson has provided a huge boost for the Braves since returning from injury two weeks ago — not that Kamiakin (9-2) really needed any more receiving weapons.

In the Braves' 56-16 glue crossover win against Evergreen of Vancouver, Grayson — playing in his first game since re aggravating a shoulder injury in Week 5 against Hanford — caught two touchdown passes. He finished with 122 receiving

yards, second on the team to Darreon Moore's 126 yards on three catches.

Then, in Kamiakin's Class 3A state first-round victory over Gig Harbor, Grayson was on the receiving end of Zach Borisch's only touchdown pass, and he totaled a team-high five grabs for 88 yards.

Grayson and the rest of Kamiakin's offense will need to take advantage of every possession they get Saturday against the Panthers (9-2), who have a knack for grinding out the clock on the ground.

"We have watched a lot of game film on them, as much as we could, get we get our hands on," Kamiakin coach Scott Biglin said. "They are a big, physical team. We are going to have our hands full up front. We have to buckle it up and go."

Last week, Bonney Lake ran the ball 62 times for 295 yards in its 24-7 win over Squalicum. Running back Jason Day found the

end zone a school-record eight times the week before in the Panthers' 56-42 regional playoff win over Mercer Island.

Kickoff between the Braves and Panthers is set for 1 p.m. Saturday at Lampson Stadium.

**LA SALLE AT ROYAL:** Two of the top wide receiver-quarterback tandems among the state's Class 1A teams will be on display when the Lightning (10-1) and Knights (10-0) square off.

La Salle quarterback Bridger Parrish is putting together one heck of a senior campaign — 2,698 yards and 35 touchdowns through 11 games. He kept it going last week against Okanogan, hitting Jordan Martin on touchdown passes of 87, 26, 34 and 80 yards. Martin caught six passes for 271 yards.

Royal quarterback Kaden Jenks has found a favorite target in Corbin Christensen. The 6-3 junior wideout caught a touchdown pass for the sixth consecutive game in last week's 27-6 win over Colville. He has caught 13 touchdown passes during his current streak.

Kickoff is scheduled for 7 p.m. Friday at Royal High School.

**CONNELL AT MERIDIAN:** The Eagles (10-1) and Trojans (7-5) will play for the first time since the 2006 Class 1A state championship game, when Meridian topped Connell 27-22 to claim its third state title.

Connell also is in search of its fourth state championship. With a solid defense, and offensive stars at quarterback, running back, wide receiver and tight end, this — with all due respect to Royal — seems like a good year to get it done.

Tailback Jaxs Whitby was the hero for the Eagles in their 48-28 win over previously undefeated Montesano last week. He rushed for 257 yards on 30 carries and found the end zone four times in the win.

Kickoff is set for 1 p.m. Saturday at Civic Stadium in Bellingham.

Annie Fowler contributed to this report.

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## SPORTS

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