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November 29, 2025

State Final Four, Sat., Nov. 29.

4A Football

6	Graham-Kapowsin	11-1
2	Lake Stevens	12-0
Lake Stevens HS, 4PM		
5	Sumner	9-3
1	Puyallup	12-0
Sparks Stadium, 1PM		

3A Football

3	Eastside Catholic	9-1
2	Mount Tahoma	12-0
Mount Tahoma HS, 1PM		
4	Bellevue	10-2
1	O'Dea	10-1
Renton Memorial, 1PM		

2A Football

3	East Valley	12-0
2	Tumwater	11-1
Tumwater District Stadium, 3PM		
5	Anacortes	11-0
1	Archbishop Murphy	10-2
Goddard Stad. (Everett), 2PM		

1A Football

3	Mount Baker	10-1
2	Cashmere	10-1
Wenatchee Apple Bowl, 3PM		
4	Lynden Christian	10-1
1	Royal	11-0
Royal High School, 3PM		

2B Football

7	Adna	10-2
3	Tri-Cities Prep	12-0
Fran Rish Stadium, 3PM		
5	Okanogan	10-2
1	Toledo	11-0
Tumwater District Stad., Noon		

1B Football

3	Wahkiakum	12-0
2	Liberty Christian	10-1
Fran Rish Stadium, Noon		
4	Almira-Coulee-H.Line	10-1
1	DeSales	12-0
Walla Walla H.S., 3PM		



Survive and Advance

Three Familiar Faces in Semi-Finals, One Newbie Joins the Race

As we enter the final four weekend of high school football in the state, nearly everything has played out as the brackets have suggested.

Despite public opinion, the 2A bracket had one spirited contest and three blowouts last week.

The closest game was #3 East Valley's narrow 24-21 victory over #6 Lynden.

The Lions played hard but at the end, the Red Devils' speed and the power running of senior Cody Gasseling was the difference.

However, the game was intense down to the final seconds.

Perhaps the biggest redemption was #5 Anacortes' 35-14 victory over unbeaten #4 Orting.

The SPSL champion hosted the Northwest Conferences' two seed, who had suffered two losses on the year.

The two-time defending state champion Seahawks took an early lead and never looked back.

However, their reward



Franklin Pierce could not slow down Tumwater. Next up is Yakima's East Valley who is 12-0.

(Courtesy of Tumwater/John O'Leary photo)

faced one of the best rushing attacks in the state this year in Franklin Pierce.

The Cardinals' only two losses were by one point to Lynden (21-20), early in the year and then by one to Orting (43-42).

Both losses came in September and they had won seven straight before meeting the T-Birds last weekend.

Nobody really talked about Franklin Pierce's defense, but they held Tumwater to their second-lowest points total of the year, losing 27-6.

will be playing conference foe, Archbishop Murphy, classified as perhaps the best football team in the state, regardless of classification this week.

The Wildcats simply destroyed another NWC member, Sehome, in the first half en route to a 52-20 victory last Saturday.

Nobody has even played them close and they only time they trailed was two weeks ago. Down 7-0 against Olympic, they rolled to a 45-13 win.

The #2 seed, Tumwater,

Both semi-final games will be interesting to watch. Unbeaten East Valley vs Tumwater, whose only loss was to unbeaten 4A Puyallup 25-19 in week one. Murphy will be hosting Anacortes who they beat 43-7 in week six.

Famous Quotes...

"Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how you do it."

... Legendary Basketball Coach, John Wooden.



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It was a bitter-cold, winter day, a perfect afternoon for football.

Meeting at West Valley's Clausen Field in a 2A Elite Eight football contest at 3PM on Saturday, November 22, were the unbeaten East Valley Red Devils (12-0) of the CWAC and battle-hardened Lynden Lions (9-2 of the Northwest Conference.

The Lions, with their rich football history (Eight state championships in 18 years, along with two runner-up finishes.), were meeting a talented Red Devil program that had not advanced this far since 2004.

The coach back then was Barry Reifel, who now runs the Fellowship of Christian Athletes in the Northwest.

Since his retirement, EV has had some good years but hadn't replicated the dominating success that Reifel had so steadily built from taking over a winless program in his first year.

This year's group, has become well-seasoned with many starting since they were sophomores and they understand the urgency that 20 of 22 senior starters bring.

The Red Devils won the coin toss and elected to receive, confident their high-powered offense could get on the board first.

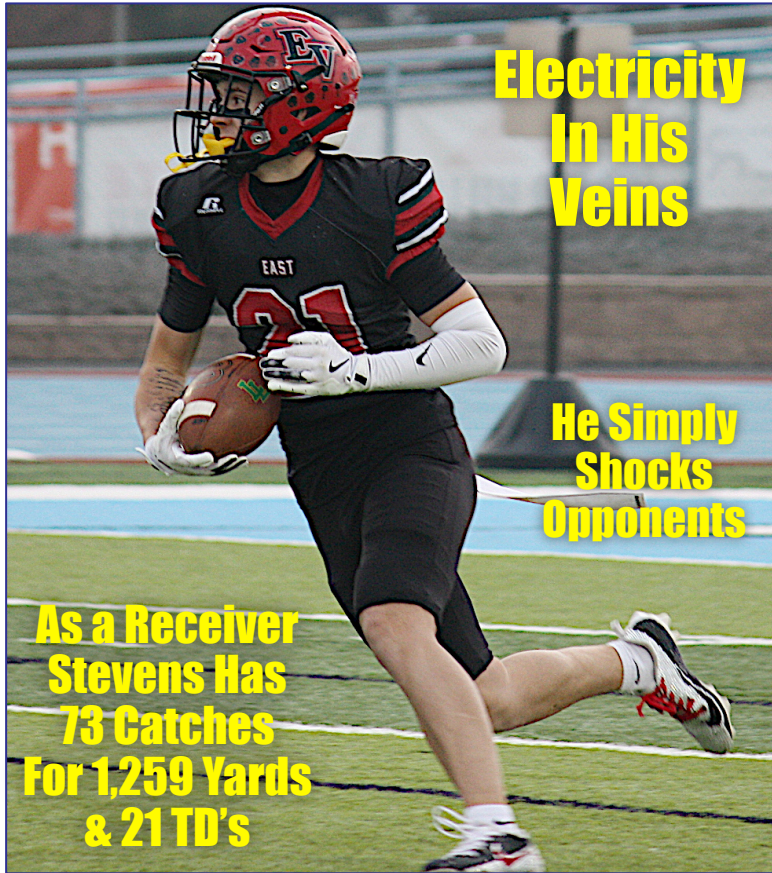
Averaging nearly 50 ppg, while only giving up only a total of 84, they were coming off an imposing 56-22 opening-round playoff victory.

Burlington-Edison, the only NWC team not in the

Game of the Week

Down to the Wire

East Valley's 27-24 victory over Lynden Was an Old-Fashioned Heavyweight Battle in Which Neither Team Blink



**Electricity
In His
Veins**

**He Simply
Shocks
Opponents**

**As a Receiver
Stevens Has
73 Catches
For 1,259 Yards
& 21 TD's**

Greyson Stevens of East Valley's key punt return, helped propel the Red Devils back into the game in the first half.

(Jeff Place photo)

final eight, lost 56-22 with their last score coming on the last play of the game.

Lynden, meanwhile, had played several close games this year en route to their nine wins.

They had beaten Franklin Pierce 21-20 (another final eight contestant) in week two, lost to Anacortes 26-23 and battled West Valley of Spokane the previous week, 28-14.

After a first down on their opening drive,

Lynden stopped the Red Devils and forced them to punt.

The Lions, then scored and took an early 7-0 lead on a 10-yard run by 6-1 junior quarterback Lukas Lalji with 3:18 in the first quarter.

The momentum was truly on the Lions' side until they too, were forced to punt midway in the second quarter.

Greyson Stevens (6-0, 170, Sr.), one of the state's fastest sprinters and

heading to Montana State on a football scholarship, returned it to Lynden's 21-yard line.

Cody Gasseling (6-2, 230, Sr.), filling in at running back for Braden Albrecht, punched it in from three yards out. An Angel Lopez extra point would tie it at seven.

With less than a minute left in the half, Lalji hit junior Sam Arango (5-10, 170) with a four-yard pass. The extra point by Malachi Koenen (5-9, 201, Jr.) made it 14-7.

A strong kick return gave East Valley good field position and they answered back. A 30-yard pass from senior quarterback, Jaxon Berg (6-0, 185) to Gasseling down the left sideline made it a one score game, 14-13 in favor of Lynden.

A botched extra point by the Red Devils kept that the halftime score.

A Koenen 39-yard field goal extended Lynden's lead to 17-13 in the third.

From there, East Valley scored two unanswered touchdowns to grab a 27-17 lead. One was a 27 yard pass from Berg to Stevens and the second was a powerful 2-yard run by Gasseling.

Lynden answered back in the fourth on a 52-yard pass from Lalji to Arango who slipped past the free safety. Trailing 27-24 with just over six minutes left to play, Lynden couldn't stop East Valley as they drove inside the five-yard-line.

A key fourth down stop gave the Lions one more chance but they had to punt.

East Valley was able to get a key first (see next page)

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(East Valley - Lynden from Page 2)

first down by an inch which ended the Lions' season.

Lynden quarterback, Lalji, had his most productive game of the year, running for 169 yards on 18 carries while passing for 133 yards and a pair of TD's on 19 attempts.

His main target, Arango caught six of those passes for 73 yards.

The Red Devils were keyed by again by Gasseling, who powered for 126 yards on 16 carries. CWAC Player of the Year, Berg was 9 of 14 for 112 yards. Stevens was his main target with five catches for 61 yards.

"The kids played with a ton of heart," said East Valley head coach, Eric Berg. "I'm really proud of their perseverance. They stayed together and kept a positive mindset."

"This was a hard-fought battle by both teams," echoed Lion coach, Blake Vandalen

"I couldn't be prouder of my kids' effort," he added. "They played with class and never quit. Tip your hat to East Valley, they played their hearts out and got one more inch in key situations."

"Two great teams and only one could move on and this time, it wasn't meant to be for us to advance," remarked Vandalen.

East Valley will travel to Tumwater this Saturday for another test, facing the #2 rated T-Birds at 3PM. "It will be our biggest challenge to date," states Berg. "The team is excited for the opportunity." ♦

EV-Lynden Photo Gallery



A look in the trenches. Both Lynden and East Valley's lines were impressive in the contest. It was extremely physical all game long. (Jeff Place photos)



Dynamic Duo in the Game.

Lynden QB, Lukas Lalji (#5) ran for 169 yards and added another 133 yards in the air.

He is being chased by East Valley's Greyson Stevens (#21) whose electric returns energized the Red Devils in their 27-24 victory.

Lalji had two touchdown passes and ran for another.

Stevens had a key 27-yard TD reception which gave his team their first lead in the third.

Excited About His Power - Running Touchdown.

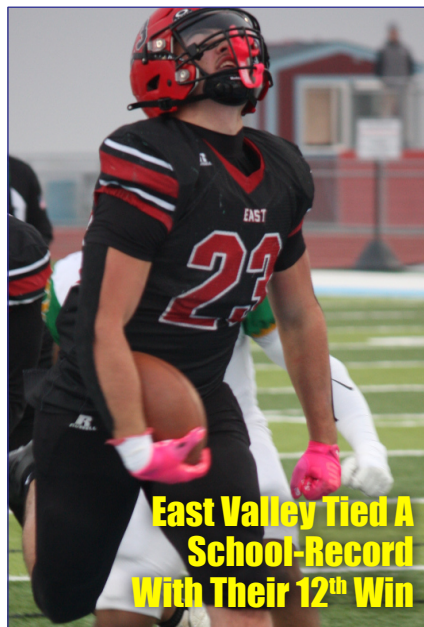
East Valley senior, Cody Gasseling, celebrates after scoring a touchdown in the game.

The 6-foot-2, 230 senior has really carried the offense the past two weeks, filling in for fellow senior, Braden Albrecht.

A two-way threat on offense, he has run for 765 (8.4 yard average) yards on the year and scored 11 TD's.

He has also caught 29 passes for 524 yards (18.1 average), and another eight touchdowns.

Albrecht, who Gasseling has been filling in for, has scored 19 TD's as well, running for 1,199 yards with a nifty 8.7 yards-per-carry..



East Valley Tied A School-Record With Their 12th Win

A Look at the Upcoming Match-Up

East Valley at Tumwater.

Tumwater (11-1), the #2 rated team will be facing #3 East Valley (12-0) at 3PM Saturday, November 29, on their home field.

"East Valley is really talented," notes Tumwater coach, Willy Garrow. "They're going to be smart and savvy. Their QB (Jaxon Berg) manages the offense real well." He explained that being a coaches kid makes him even better.

"I felt that (Cody Gasseling) ran real hard," Garrow said about the performance against Lynden. "(He's a) big kid (6-2, 230), tough to tackle, and he made Lynden pay. We have to find a way to get him on the ground."

He also said they are preparing for running back Braden Albrecht (5-10, 185), too.

"The film showed how electric he can be with the ball as well," stated the T-Bird mentor. "I know he was banged up for a couple weeks, but his vision and burst was really special in other films we've seen. We are preparing for them both."

"(Greyson Stevens) is electric as well," he adds. "He is such a dynamic player with the ball in his hands. their screen game with him is amazing and he's so hard to tackle in the open field."

"He also impacts the game on special teams as a dynamic kick returner."

Garrow also points to a few other areas of concern for Tumwater, who may be facing their toughest opponent since they lost in week one to unbeaten 4A Puyallup 25-19. (See Page 4.)



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Tumwater Slows Down Explosive Franklin Pierce 27-6

The match-up featured the famed Tumwater Wing-T against Franklin Pierce's Power T.

The Cardinals, the second-place team in the SPSL entered the game with an 9-2 record which was deceiving.

Their two losses were by a total of two points (21-20 to Lynden and 43-42 against undefeated SPSL champion, Orting, 43-42.).

Twice, FP has scored over 70 points and 68 in another. They also beat third-place Steilacoom soundly 53-6.

Tumwater (10-1), meanwhile, was their usual steady self. Their only loss came in week one against undefeated 4A semi-finalist, Puyallup, by less than a touchdown (25-19).

The Cardinals were propelled by a dynamic run game which on the season had accumulated 4,431 yards and scored 62 touchdowns on the ground.

Led by Bryson Allen who, after the game, completed his senior season with 2,040 yards rushing, a 10.5 average and 30 scores, it was a daunting task.

However, the T-Birds took a 7-0 lead in the first quarter en route to a 27-6 victory.

"It was an incredible job by our defensive coaches and defensive players this week," stated Tumwater head coach, Willy Garrow. "The game plan they put together to stop the Power T offense and the way they used our personnel was



Two Heavy Weights Battled Hard. Tumwater's offensive line was able to slow down Franklin Pierce's high-power explosive offense by keeping them off the field.

(Courtesy of Tumwater/John O'Leary)

really impressive."

"(Defensive coordinator) Tony Prentice, defensive line coaches Rick McGrath and Nick Edwards along with defensive back coaches Zaiden Hernandez, Justin Heryford plus linebacker coach Jordan Stray," explained Garrow, "Did such a good job teaching the correct reads and what the opposing offense was trying to accomplish."

Garrow also felt they were aided by T-Bird, offensive assistant coach, Pat Johnson.

He used to be the offensive coordinator at Tenino High School where they also ran the Power T.

"Pat was instrumental in coaching up our coaches on the scheme," stated Garrow. "Then in coaching our scout team to understand the intricacies of the system."

Another key to victory

for Tumwater was their offensive line.

"We knew that FP was going to limit our total possessions because of what they do offensively," explained Garrow. "(We felt) that we needed to maximize our opportunities when we got them."

Tumwater only had one punt in the game and a turnover in the Red Zone, but overall he was pleased.

"Our offensive line was lights out," he said.

Up 13-6 at the half, Tumwater opened the second half with a tremendous 11-play offensive drive for a score which, "Really set the tone for the rest of the game."

This week, they face unbeaten East Valley (12-0) with the winner advancing to the state title game. "It's going to be a tremendous challenge for our kids and coaches." ♦

(Tumwater/EV from the Previous Page)

"Defensively, it starts with #70 (6-5, 255 senior, Zelih Wade) on the edge," remarked Garrow of the CWAC Defensive Player of the Year. "The kid is an absolute game-wrecker."

"I can see why he's going to be a college player," he added. "He has great size and a great motor. He might be the best defensive lineman we've played all season."

Garrow also stated East Valley's linebackers are tough. "They flow to the football and play very aggressively."

The veteran coach was also impressed with EV's secondary, led by free safety Stevens, who he says, "Is really dialed in as a group."

Garrow also feels their offensive line is impressive along with the size they have up front. "They are much bigger than we are and they move bodies," he explains. "They really run the ball physically."

Finally, Garrow says "You don't make the semi-finals without being a really, really good football team."

"We are going to have to play incredibly well to hang with them for four quarters," remarked Garrow.

"Anytime you have a team with that many seniors and they are seasoned playoff veterans, there's something to it." ♦

Editor's Note: East Valley's offensive front line includes Wade at left tackle (6-5, 250), senior Matthew Dosch (6-0, 240) at left guard; junior Isaac Allen (6-0, 210) at center, plus seniors Ezekiel Nolan (6-1, 310) at right guard and Logan Jones (6-2, 220) at right tackle.

The defensive line is led by Wade and Jones at end, Dosch and Nolan at tackle.

Gasseling along with Griffin Ramos (5-10, 180 junior) are the linebackers.

Jayden Buckalew (6-3, 180 senior) is the strong safety while the corners are manned by seniors Dominic Verduzco (5-8, 160) and Garen Chapman (5-9, 145) who double as starting wide receivers.



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