

Week 9 prep football preview: Prosser, Othello set for CWAC clash

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Tanner Bolt, the reigning Class 2A state player of the year, will lead Prosser High School's football team into Othello for a key CWAC game Friday night.

With a loss to Ellensburg in the rearview mirror for the Mustangs (7-1, 6-1), a victory would keep them alive for the CWAC's No. 2 seed, meaning they would host a Great Northern League team for their playoff game.

Regardless of this week's outcome, Othello will have a shot to win the league championship next week against Ellensburg, and Prosser likely will need a win against Selah — assuming the Vikings beat Toppenish on Friday — to secure a spot in the postseason.

Prosser coach Corey Ingvalson expects a tough game because of Othello's playing style under coach Roger Hoell and the atmosphere at Huskie Stadium.

“Roger Hoell is a Hall of Fame coach, so he's going to be well prepared obviously, and he always throws in some wrinkles, and they'll bring out some trick plays,” Ingvalson said. “They just have a way of controlling the game that really minimizes the number of possessions that you get, so you get really stressed out, feeling like you need to score on every offensive possession.

“On top of that, you add the bus ride, throw that all together, and it's just always really tough to play Othello. You've gotta be ready.”

After the Mustangs' Sept. 23 loss to Ellensburg, Bolt has done a nice job of rallying the team. The senior has thrown for 2,005 yards and 28 touchdowns with just four interceptions this season.

Senior wide receiver Michael Kernan has emerged as a dangerous pass catcher for the Mustangs, recording team highs in receptions (37), yards (600) and touchdowns (eight). He had three first-half scores last week against Wapato after missing Prosser's Week 7 matchup against Ephrata because of an injury.

Senior Kolby Swift has been a difference maker on both sides of the ball for the Mustangs. He has been a capable runner and pass catcher as Prosser's tailback — he began the season as an H-back but converted during the Ellensburg game — and has been a pass-rushing force from his hybrid outside linebacker/defensive end position.

Ingvalson called Swift one of the most physical players he has ever coached and said it would be difficult to overstate the impact he has had.

“He's quite honestly getting in the realm of all-time great Mustangs as far as his playmaking ability,” Ingvalson said. “We've got some guys that have been on the coaching staff from like the 1980s to now, and for them to mention that he's an all-timer, it means Kolby is held in really high regard. He's playing really well.”

Prosser has not allowed a touchdown in its past three games.

With first-year starters at most positions, Ingvalson expected the regular season to be a grind for the Mustangs, but he said the team is starting to overcome its youth at the right time.

“We're kind of backloaded on the schedule, with facing Othello this week and then Selah next week,” Ingvalson said. “But you want to be able to control your own destiny, control the stuff that's in front of you, so we're excited that we have the challenge in front of us and have an opportunity to respond and decide whether we're going to be able to play in the postseason.”

Kickoff is scheduled for 7 p.m. in Othello.