



Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association

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February 23, 2015

Mr. Tom Nolan, Principal
Riverdale High School
802 Warrior Dr.
Murfreesboro, TN 37128

Dear Mr. Nolan:

This is in regard to the situation that occurred during the District 7AAA Girls' Consolation Contest on Saturday, February 21, 2015. According to the information received, Riverdale High School and Smyrna High School made a mockery of the game with both teams initially trying to lose in order to avoid going into the region seeded third. There was obvious slow-play, intentional turnovers, free throws being missed on purpose, intentional lane violations, five-second inbound and ten-second line violations. It was even reported that players were being instructed to shoot in their opponent's goal.

The report received from the referee in charge of the contest stated:

Both teams played to lose the game. Riverdale started off the game in a 2-3 zone, which is very odd for Riverdale who usually plays 32 minutes of man to man full court pressure. After a few minutes I think that the Smyrna coach realized what was going on and subbed his second team in. Riverdale followed suit and did the same. The first half continued with nonstarters in the game, but they both played the game. The second half started with both teams' starters sitting the bench and with Smyrna with the lead. Riverdale pulled the ball out and just passed the ball around. The Smyrna coach realized what was going on and told his team to foul to put Riverdale in a bonus situation. When Riverdale got in the one and one they intentionally missed the free throws. They probably missed 12-16 free throws intentionally. On the other side, Smyrna wouldn't get the ball across the half court line to get a 10 second count or to make us call an over and back violation intentionally. One time a Riverdale girl looked at one of the officials and gave the official a 3 second signal wanting him to call three seconds on her. Smyrna stood in the lane as well to have us call 3 seconds on them. In the 3rd qrt I finally called both coaches together when a Smyrna player was about to attempt a shot at the wrong basket (but there was a 10 second violation call before they attempted the shot) on purpose. That is when I called both coaches together and told them we are not going to make a travesty or mockery of the game. WE ARE NOT GOING TO START TRYING TO SHOOT AND SCORE FOR THE OTHER TEAM. So they didn't attempt anymore baskets at the wrong goal but continued playing the same way until Smyrna realized they were going to win the game, and he put his starters back in the game, and Riverdale left their subs to finish.

Now I think Riverdale was the first team to start, "let's lose the game," but both teams obviously didn't want to win and it really showed.

TSSAA requested a meeting with the administration of both schools on Monday, February 23, 2015. Both administrations admitted the game was not in the spirit of fair play and apologized for the actions of their team.

It is important to know that Rule 4, Section 19, Article 14, of the NFHS Basketball Rule Book states:

An unsporting foul is a noncontact technical foul which consists of unfair, unethical, dishonorable conduct or any behavior not in accordance with the spirit of play.

After considering the facts, this case is being closed in the following manner:

1. Riverdale High School's girls' basketball program is being removed from the post-season tournament series and placed on restrictive probation for the remainder of the 2014-2015 school year and fined \$1,000.00. Article V, Section 4(3) of the TSSAA Constitution states, in part:

Restrictive probation to an individual sport in an athletic program shall result in removal from the tournament series and a fine of \$1,000.00 annually.

2. Riverdale High School's girls' basketball program is being placed on probation beginning February 23, 2015, throughout the 2015-2016 school year and fined an additional \$500.00. If there are any other issues involving the girls' basketball program during the period of probation, TSSAA would be forced to consider further disciplinary action.

The mission of TSSAA is to provide athletic programs which enhance the education of student-athletes. Our ultimate goal is to teach student-athletes ethics, integrity, sportsmanship, morals, and values which will help them become successful citizens in society. This situation defeated the purpose of educational-based athletics.

If you have any questions regarding this, please feel free to contact our office.

Sincerely,



Bernard Childress
Executive Director

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