



Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association

P. O. BOX 319 • 3333 LEBANON ROAD • HERMITAGE, TENNESSEE 37076
615/889-6740 • Fax 615/889-0544 • www.tssaa.org

January 29, 2018

Mr. Nathan Langlois, Principal
Austin-East Magnet High School
2800 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave.
Knoxville, TN 37914

Dear Mr. Langlois:

This is in regard to the unsportsmanlike incident that occurred during the boys' basketball contest between Brainerd High School and Austin-East Magnet High School on Saturday, January 27, 2018. According to the information received from administrators, coaches, officials, and video recordings, a brawl involving fans and players from both schools occurred before halftime, with 2:20 left, and the game had to be stopped. The brawl consisted of fans, students, and players. A player from Brainerd High School was injured and had to be transported to the hospital. The report submitted by the officials stated:

With a little over two minutes left before halftime, two players went to the floor for a loose ball. Then all of a sudden both players were in an altercation: #10 – Derion Battle of Austin East hit #4 – Jalen Wofford of Brainerd with the ball. In return, #4 Jalen Wofford punched the Austin East player while both were still on the floor in front of the East bench: per Ken Adams. Afterwards, both benches emptied, and altercations were taking place everywhere: the fans, and the players. The game was suspended at that point with Austin East ahead 32-36.

News reports indicate that local law enforcement officials are investigating whether criminal charges may be warranted. One TSSAA Basketball Supervisor, who was in attendance, stated the altercation was the “worst he has ever seen in 36 years.” It was reported to us that an older man attending the game said he was as afraid as he has ever been in his life.

This is not simply a matter of two players having an altercation in the heat of a contest. This melee reflects a loss of perspective by all those who participated in it. Occurrences like this undermine our ability to accomplish the objectives of high school sports and are simply unacceptable.

Article I, Section 7, of the TSSAA Bylaws states:

The principal of each school, in all matters pertaining to the athletic relations of his/her school, is responsible to this Association.

Administrators must realize that they have more responsibilities than the general public to understand the purpose of high school athletics and the principles behind the TSSAA rules, and they must maintain that level of understanding and purpose when dealing with the general public and students. The principal shall exercise control over all finances, the scheduling of contests, and all other matters involved in the management of the school's athletic program.

The administration of each school must step up immediately and take responsibility for their spectators, coaches, and players. We are asking the administration of each school to deal with the incident and report in writing any action they plan to take as soon as possible. Until this incident is thoroughly investigated and effective administrative action is taken by your school's administration to address it, deal with those responsible, and prevent future incidents of this type, the boys' basketball team at Austin-East Magnet High School is being placed on suspension from further play.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bernard Childress". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "s".

Bernard Childress
Executive Director

BC:lj