



Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association

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

October 3, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Mr. Justin Smith, Principal
Blackman High School
3956 Blaze Drive
Murfreesboro, TN 37128

Dear Mr. Smith:

This is in reference to the incident that occurred at the end of the football game between Oakland High School and Blackman High School on Friday, September 20th. TSSAA staff asked the administration of Blackman High School to submit an incident report and any video of the altercation they had for review. We received the report from Blackman High School along with three videos of the incident.

The videos show an Oakland High School player running across the field into the Blackman High School bench area. The player then jumps onto the fence and taunts the Blackman crowd. He is immediately surrounded by Blackman players. A Blackman High School assistant coach is quickly seen putting himself between the Oakland player and the Blackman players. While this is happening, at least three other Oakland players are seen in the Blackman bench area. There is some pushing and shoving between players from both schools that can be seen before a police officer uses pepper spray to break up the group. As players are moving away from the area, more pushing and shoving can be seen in and around a tent on the sidelines for approximately 15 - 20 seconds before the group disperses.

After reviewing the video and the report from the administration of Blackman High School, TSSAA contacted the administration of Blackman High School to clarify what disciplinary action was being taken against any players they identified as being involved in the altercation. After considering all of the facts and the disciplinary measures against the players involved that the Blackman administration took, we are closing the case in the following manner:

1. The entire athletic program from Blackman High School will be placed on probation until the end of the 2024-2025 school year. The football team will remain on probation until the end of the 2025-26 school year. Article V, Section 4 states the following, in part:

Probation to a total athletic program shall result in a fine of \$1,000.00 annually.

Probation to an individual sport in an athletic program shall result in a fine of \$500.00 annually.

Schools that are on probation remain eligible for the postseason tournament series.

2. The total fine for Blackman High School as a result of the September 20 incident is \$1,500.00.

We want to commend the large majority of the Blackman team, who showed restraint as the situation was being addressed. The coaching staff and security in place did a great job quickly controlling this situation. The restraint shown by the large majority of Blackman players was crucial in de-escalating the situation, which had the potential to become much worse and lead to a more serious problem and harsher penalty. Their actions serve as a reminder of the importance of restraint in such incidents and the need for administrators to effectively respond to conflict both in the moment and with the disciplinary measures taken on those directly involved.

If you would like to appeal this decision or discuss the consequences, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Mark Reeves
Executive Director

MR:lj