

LHSAA penalizes Parkway at sportsmanship hearing

Written by Staff Reports

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Parkway will not be allowed to host any football playoff games in 2013, the LHSAA Executive Committee ruled at a sportsmanship hearing in Baton Rouge Thursday, according to Twitter reports by the New Orleans Times-Picayune and Baton Rouge Advocate.

The hearing was the result of an incident in which Live Oak head football coach Barry "Tut" Musemeche was handcuffed by Bossier City law officers and led off the field before the Parkway-Live Oak first-round playoff game Nov. 9 at Preston Crownover Stadium. Musemeche was not arrested and coached the game, which Parkway won 36-13.

The ruling came down after three-plus hours of testimony from officials from both schools, including Parkway principal Nichole Bourgeois, and Parkway head football coach David Feaster. Musemeche and Live Oak principal Tracy McRae also testified.

According to the Advocate, Musemeche has also filed a lawsuit against Bourgeois, the Bossier Parish School system and the Bossier Parish Police Department. Bossier City law officers did not testify during the hearing, citing pending litigation. According to the Advocate, Musemeche is suing Bourgeois and the school system for "libel, slander and defamation."

In other penalties reportedly handed down Thursday, Parkway will have to pay the entire cost of the hearing and was put on probation for one year. Also, Bourgeois will have to attend the next handbook certification meeting. Live Oak was not penalized. Bourgeois was also "officially reprimanded." Parkway can appeal the ruling.

Both coaches were commended for their actions in defusing the situation. That included a pregame handshake line between the two teams.

The sportsmanship hearing was the result of a dispute over when the Live Oak team was supposed to leave the field before the game to allow the Parkway band access to perform. After several requests by the PA announcer and Parkway officials to leave the field about 20 minutes before kickoff, Bossier City law officers at Preston Crownover told Muscheme he must leave the field. He was eventually put in handcuffs and escorted off about 15 minutes before the scheduled kickoff time of 7 p.m.

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Live Oak officials testified at the hearing that they heard Bourgeois said, 'Cuff him,' with regard to Musemuche. Bourgeois denied this during the hearing, according to Twitter reports. Parkway assistant principal Lorenzo Baker also testified he was close to Bourgeois during the discussion with Musemuche and never heard her say it.

During the hearing, Parkway officials claimed Musemuche was asked to leave the field 13 times. Musemeche denied this in his testimony.

Bourgeois told local media during the game that the pregame and halftime schedules were discussed with Live Oak administrators over several emails during the week. She said Live Oak officials would not agree to the pregame itinerary set by her, and she knew that something might happen before the game and was prepared for it.

She called the actions of Musemeche "unsportsmanlike" and "unprofessional" in her comments to local media.

During the hearing, according to Twitter reports from the Times-Picayune and Advocate, Musemuche said the Live Oak band gave the football team its pregame time so the players could warm up until 6:45. He said Feaster told him he didn't care what Musemuche did between 6:35 and 6:45. Feaster countered that he had no authority in what Live Oak did from 6:35-6:45.