

August 29, 2015

To: Bellevue Football past/present/future football players and families:

Re: Bellevue Football Program

Dear Bellevue Football:

A number of us on the Bellevue Football Staff have been patiently waiting for common sense and reasonable people to take matters over, but it is apparent that is not going to happen any time soon. As taking shots at the Bellevue Football Program and it's coaches is apparently the thing to do these days, and given no one from our own school district is going to defend us, it is time for us to at least say our peace and in some small way offer the below as a form of defense...as we are currently defenseless from this media onslaught that is trying to tear us apart. We literally had a helicopter overhead the other day at practice taking pictures as the media is not currently allowed on campus. The next day, a drone hovering over our facility...it would be so laughable if it wasn't so sad. For so many years we have listened (and ignored) all of the negativity and ill will sent in our direction from so many people with regard to our program. Calling us cheaters, recruiters, uneven playing field...always looking for a simple answer to an interesting question....why is the BHS football program so successful? For those of you whom we have had the honor of working with over the years, you know the answer and you know what you had to go through to get to where you wanted to be. It is a hard thing to explain to someone who has never been in your shoes. For those outside of the program, no matter what we say, do, or write, most have their minds made up, and it isn't going to matter what we say or write. This letter is not intended for them...it is intended for you.

We have understood that this negativity and ill will and at times even hatred from the outside goes with the territory and is unfortunately just the way it is. For the most part we have remained very silent about it through the years, at least publicly. We are easy targets so to speak. As you to whom this letter is intended already know, in many ways we embrace it and use it to sharpen us. However, the recent attacks in the media and what we feel was a sham of an investigation by our own school district which has led to the recent attacks in the media have created such an unprecedented negative climate that it is time to speak up, and enough is enough. The ones to whom this letter is intended are the legacy that is Bellevue High Football. We cannot fight this battle in the newspaper...waste of time. They will do what they do and print what they want to print and twist however they want to twist things. The two reporters for the Seattle Times are to us an example of the worst kind of journalists....the kind that belongs in the tabloids...or worse. The kind that mislead or trick kids and set them up and represent that they have confirmed facts that are not true in order to garner some tidbit of information for them to twist into something far from the actual truth and/or take a quote completely out of context. The kind that tell a kid about all of the dirt they have dug up about his or her situation, even though they only have hypothesis and they really did not have any facts. The kind of reporters that put a young adult on the defensive and take advantage of their youth and ignorance. The kind that reports innuendo as fact, tarnishing reputations of persons and schools for the purpose of advancing their own careers.

In any event, we have remained silent to date. We have decided not to remain silent anymore. It is time now for us speak up for our players, for ourselves....and for our program. A front page news story on Friday June 5th, 2015 in the Seattle Times. A front page news story on Thursday June 11th, 2015 in the Seattle Times. A front page news story on Sunday, June 14, 2015 in the Seattle Times. A Sunday,

August 23, 2015 front page story again followed up by yet another front page story on Tuesday, August 25th. Not the front page of even the sports section---but the front page of the entire newspaper....all five times. Another mean spirited story regarding Darien again today (Saturday). For the record, I have known Darien for many years. He played youth football with my son. Darien and I spoke today and he told me how angry and frustrated he is with the two reporters from the Seattle Times. He told me quite the opposite of what was portrayed in the newspaper today by these "men" from the Seattle Times. These "men" have taken advantage of a young man, twisted his words, and I have a feeling we'll be hearing from Darien in the near future with the true story and not the twisted and false version that these two "reporters" have come up with. Tabloid journalism at its worst. From my read on it, a bit defensive on the part of the Seattle Times article today. The fishing expedition of these two "men" continues but with ignorance to the intricacies of the WIAA rules. Perhaps these "reporters" from the Seattle Times should look into the rules they are quoting and try to actually understand them before spouting off with words of "likely" or "possible". It has often baffled me how it so often sounds like people think that Butch decides who is or is not eligible to play. Do people seriously think that coaches have anything to do with determining who is or is not eligible to play? That is done by the school and has nothing to do with coaches. People make choices in their lives and some choose to live in the same area their entire life and some do not. Some open enroll. Some move in middle school or elementary school. It is obvious that some reporters who haven't read up on their rules are not aware that some families can live in more than one place at the same time (i.e. divorce or separation) and that there are rules to follow for that also.....or that there are circumstances where students can establish residency at a school after one year, and even if their family moves out of the attendance area they can be allowed to finish their high school career where they started. These rules are not exclusive to Bellevue.

The Seattle Times is obviously on a mission here, but the truth (the unspun truth) is apparently not part of that mission. Their mission is to sell newspapers by disparaging good people. There is that word again....the truth....it's about time someone started telling it. Since last January, we have been conducting our own investigation. Investigating the investigation so to speak. Public records requests, talking to persons involved, doing our own interviews, etc. Honestly trying to understand how what at the time seemed like a rather minor incident in a weight room has exploded into the story it is today. Somehow I knew from the beginning that this investigation was not adding up so we got on it early. A lot of information garnered. Here is the story of where things were leading up to where we are now. You all deserve to know the truth...the facts. Since the school district is not saying anything publicly and not coming to our defense really in any appreciable way and the Seattle Times has its own fishing expedition agenda, it is time to say a few things from our point of view. The following is what we have found and what we have seen or experienced. The following is the opinion, based on the facts as we know them, and the hundreds of pages of documents we have reviewed. We hope it helps shed a bit of reality into the current media fiasco that is sadly now national news that we feel was started by our own school district coming to many incorrect conclusions based on a very poorly done investigation. For the sake of simplicity, from this point forward in the letter, as I am the primary author of this document, I may write things using "I" instead of we as it will make things flow a lot easier as I write. It is a very long read as it has become a very long story, so my apologies for the length. It is important to establish context to situations in order to better understand them. Here goes.

Early last December, Eastside Catholic beat our football team in the state championship game. We got outcoached. We got outplayed. As it is when we win as a team, we lost that game as a team. We have no excuses, no right to point fingers....Eastside Catholic beat us and they deserved to win and their staff and players and community did a great job. As much as we wanted things to be otherwise, they earned it and our hat is off to them. Guys, we got beat. The Monday following that game, the weight training

instructor called a meeting unbeknownst to me or Butch at our weight room where around sixty players of ours attended. I was actually at the school in the locker room watching film with Butch and checking in locks that day. The meeting should not have happened nor been called without Butch's permission. At the meeting, words were exchanged between our strength trainer and one of our players and they weren't friendly words. It escalated for a few brief moments when the player came forward and aggressively approached the strength trainer. It was quickly broken up and the player left. In talking to people who were in the room at the time, there was approximately ten to twelve seconds of time where things really escalated.

Sometime after this incident happened, Butch and I left the locker room where we were watching film and passed by the weight room and noticed all the persons in there and went in to see what was going on. Butch said a few things and told everyone to go home (or something to that effect) and I barked at the team a bit to get their locks and gear turned in. Butch then left and I said a few more things to the group and then I left as well. The next day was our year end banquet. Butch spoke well and delivered the right message to our community. He spoke briefly with the player's father who had been involved the night before with our strength trainer in the weight room. As it was the year end banquet, they did not speak long to each other....but they did speak. Butch continued to look into and get details on what had happened and why and the following day (Wednesday December 10, 2014) Butch contacted our strength trainer and informed him that because he called a meeting of the football team without the head coach's permission, he and his company were no longer going to be able to continue as the weight training instructors effective immediately. Butch also went to the Principal's office and spoke to our Principal about the incident and let him know what he had found out and that he had dismissed the weight training instructors because they had called a meeting without Butch's permission. So, within 48 hours of the incident occurring...an incident that Butch did not personally witness, Butch looked into the matter, determined to the best of his knowledge what had happened, spoke briefly with the father of the student the next day, and informed the school principal about it (normally he would go straight to our athletic director but she was on maternity leave). I spoke with Butch about his conversation with the principal at that time, and the matter seemed resolved. Winter Break came and went, another month rolled on by, and we had heard nothing further from anyone on the matter. So, when you read the Seattle Times front page article printed on Thursday, June 11, 2015 which stated in huge letters, **"Probe: Bellevue coach failed to report threatening incident"**, you can imagine my sheer disgust for those making that claim....both at the school district originally and then the Seattle Times putting it on the front page. In reading the above, ask yourself what else Butch was supposed to do. A meeting he did not call happened. Some angry words were exchanged. He looked into what happened. He terminated the weight trainer that called the meeting without his knowledge or consent. As his school's athletic director was on maternity leave, he went to the principal's office and spoke to him about it. The day after the incident he saw the student's father at the banquet and they spoke briefly. Five weeks later, an investigation is started regarding the incident and the front page of the Seattle Times is stating that he "failed to report". Judge for yourself here. Tell Butch what he is supposed to do differently. This determination by the BSD investigator is a travesty and it is damaging many people...particularly Butch. Legal friends of mine refer to these kind of investigations as the "made to order" type and that they are a common practice...they tell me the purpose is to come up with a particular outcome going in and information that doesn't help achieve that outcome is not looked into or followed up on and evidence (no matter how small or insignificant) that might help achieve the "made to order" objective of the investigation is expanded on and highlighted. The problem is the person being interviewed and answering the questions has no idea of the spin that the investigator is going to take and the context gets lost. When I was interviewed, I was never asked and at the time I did

not think to offer that Butch and I had spoken shortly after his meeting with the principal about the incident. The investigator did not ask Butch if he could prove that he had reported it to the principal. She just decided that it didn't happen in spite of his testimony to the contrary. Also, in looking at the email correspondence between the district athletic director and the investigator, he was feeding her facts that he deemed had occurred which were only reported by the complaining family and not corroborated elsewhere. It appears she took these facts as gospel because the district reported them to her. But as far as the truth is concerned, and no matter what this "made to order" investigation or the Seattle Times might want to say or write, Butch reported the incident, the school district knows he reported the incident and that is part of Butch's level 3 appeal where the district has offered now to retract the original letter of reprimand, and it is sad and shocking that even at this late date, there has been no retraction, no public apology to the contrary.....just a June 11, 2015 front page Seattle Times headline telling the world that "Goncharoff didn't act on parent's complaint". Didn't act? Seriously? The principal at Bellevue High School told the investigator that he "did not recall". Why would he have? Butch told him there was an incident in the weight room, Butch was looking into it, he was letting the strength training company go because they called a meeting without his knowledge, and the student involved was not a Bellevue High School student at the time. Five weeks later when there was actually a complaint filed, the conversation he had with Butch early in December would have not been high on his radar at the time as it did not involve a BHS student and Butch was taking care of the rest. I still think it is very strange that there was a five week lag between the date of the incident and the filing of the complaint.

In early January (I'm not sure of the precise date but I recall it was a Friday), Butch got a call from the District Athletic Director about a harassment/intimidation/bullying complaint from the family of the student involved with the weight room incident back on Monday, December 8th, 2014, and that an investigation was being launched to look into it. These types of investigations we are told typically take five to seven days to complete. Ours took over five months and our school district spent almost \$14,000 on the private investigator.

During the investigation, a number of our coaches were called in to speak with a person that the district hired to conduct the investigation. Of the sixty or so students who were in the weight room on the day of the "incident", zero were called in to tell their side of the story.....zero. Coaches were told directly by the district athletic director NOT to speak with anyone about the matter....even though the coaches contract specifically allows for them to have union representation during any kind of disciplinary matter (this was a large error on the part of the district athletic director in my opinion). The family of the student in question also made claims to the district in a January 14, 2015 email to the BSD athletic director that one of our coaches paid their son's tuition at a local private school. The BSD investigation's own documents dismissed that part of the claim as there was nothing there and that claim was unfounded.....by the way Seattle Times, perhaps that should be your next headline.

So there is the background on what led up to there being a five month investigation into the Bellevue Football program and what started it. After the investigation finally ended, here are the main issues and alleged violations that were "found":

1: The investigation claims that Butch Goncharoff failed to report. As described above, he did report to the principal the incident and what action he took. The Seattle Times front page headline on June 11, 2015 is/was incorrect. After Butch appealed to the school district, it knows that Butch reported....there has been no retraction or public statement letting the public know that the June 11, 2015 Seattle Times headline was factually incorrect. This is a very damaging thing to say about a coach; especially publicly,

and to date, nothing has been done to clear his name with regard to that. Nothing.....and guys, that is not okay. We have a BIG concern here with regard to this issue and with all due respect to the Bellevue School District, for them to remain silent still on this matter knowing what they know here about a man who has worked for them for twenty years without a single complaint in his file is not okay.

2: The investigation found that the student in question was harassed. So that we are all on the same page here, the "coaches handbook" that the investigator kept referring to in her report was not even completed until right around the time of the incident. While that matters very much regarding some other issues (i.e. it matters that she kept quoting a handbook for the coaches that wasn't even completed yet), that shouldn't matter as far as this one issue goes, as common sense is always a rule to follow. The meeting should never have happened....you don't have meetings as a team that the head coach does not know about especially at the school. An adult used language with a student athlete in front of others that you cannot use in that setting. An adult sent a text message using language with a student athlete that you are not allowed to do. On this issue, our program was wrong and the two adults who did this are no longer part of our program.....which is sad to me because I love them both very much and I will miss them.

3: The investigator stated in her report that Matt Coombs "failed to report" and that he "failed to intervene" during the meeting. Matt was given a letter of reprimand, put on one year probation, etc. This was so wrong and unfair to Matt and is very revealing about the quality of the investigation and the real/true purpose of the investigation. Matt appealed that decision through the Bellevue Coaches Association (a union that represents all of the coaches in the entire district...i.e. Newport, Sammamish, Interlake and Bellevue). Matt won his appeal and he should have. Similar to Butch, Matt did report. Further, there was nothing Matt could have done in that ten to twelve second period of time when things escalated a bit in the weight room that day....he was behind everyone in the back riding an exercise bike. As with the common sense reasons I mention above on why the student in question was harassed, that works both ways....or at least it should. In my opinion, the investigation had more to do with an agenda than it did with coming up with a fair and unbiased result with no spin. Bottom line is that Matt won his appeal, his letter of reprimand was removed, his one year probation went away, and his slate was wiped clean; and it should have been. Where is the front page newspaper story saying, "Bellevue coach exonerated" from Josh and Mike of the Seattle Times? As with the fact that our head coach did in fact report, why has nothing been said about our defensive coordinator being cleared of any and all wrong doing in this matter? Why is it okay to smear a person's name, make accusations against them that are unfounded, write them up in a letter of reprimand, and then at the end just say "Oops, sorry, we were wrong". This is not okay and worse yet; to date no one from the school district has apologized for wrongfully accusing Matt of wrongdoing and forcing him to waste hour upon hour upon hour of his time clearing his name.

4: The investigator stated in her report that our strength and conditioning program are not in compliance with WIAA regulations and that these activities are "sport specific". Boy do we take great exception with this finding. The district is trying to say that we are excluding others from our weight room, that it is not available to all...i.e. some are being excluded. What is laughable here is that in a typical year, we have roughly 110 to 120 student athletes involved in football including freshman. Our weight room is not large enough for that many people. It is the old cafeteria area. It cannot even safely hold our entire football team for weight training activities, let alone the issue of having enough supervision in there to safely monitor things if you get those kinds of numbers all at once. No one is "excluded" from the weight room...it is available to all and all are welcome...but what do you do when the room is full, all benches are in use, the squat racks are full, etc.? Invite more in? We do have others

in there at times, and nothing in the investigation provided any evidence at all that we were excluding anyone. If you are the girls basketball team or the boys baseball team, does it make sense for you to bring in your student athletes at the same time that seventy or eighty or ninety others from the football program are in the weight room? Does anyone really think that is what the WIAA rules are trying to do? Wouldn't it make more sense (and provide better monitoring and safety) for there to be equal access and equal time in the weight room for everyone. Lifting together as a team is not a violation and if someone is trying to say it is, we vehemently dispute that and we do not agree with our school district that the WIAA rules regarding off season conditioning are being interpreted correctly here by our school district. This is where I begin to bring up the phrase, "athletically ignorant" when it comes to large portions of this investigation. The investigator may be an attorney, but it is clear that she does not know athletics. It is a healthy thing for teammates to work out together. Team bonding, friendships, using similar lifts....and for a school, far more efficient. Not just football players, all athletes. The problem for football is numbers....lots of them in some cases. For a sport with fifteen to twenty athletes, it isn't the same issue as a sport with over a hundred. Contrary to the findings of the BSD investigative report, the fact that so many football players at BHS want to lift and condition together does NOT create a "sport specific" off season training/conditioning violation. The intent of the WIAA ruling regarding "sport specific" off season training and conditioning is about "what" is being taught in the weight room. Does it involve using a football, or basketball or a softball depending on the sport in question. If a softball coach is in the weight room and as part of the "strength training" for their group they have the girls swing softball bats in the corner and work on their swing with their high school coach during their out of season time periods under the auspices of it being endurance training....that would be a violation. If a basketball coach works their players out during the off season and they work on "boxing out" under the auspices of it being a conditioning practice, that would be a violation. There was zero evidence anywhere that football skills were being taught (and there wouldn't be because they were not being taught). Bench press, power cleans, squats, sprints, dot drills, stair climbs, etc. are not "sport specific violations". The fact that a weight room is full of a lot of football players is not a violation nor does it mean others are being intentionally excluded. These "others" quite honestly don't want to be in there when it is so crowded. I wouldn't want to be either. I would rather have a different time if I were another group and lift when it is less crowded...that part of this "violation" they have put on us is really that simple.

The second part of this argument is the part where the investigation has determined that there is a violation because it states that BHS football has made participation in the off season conditioning program "mandatory". What a laugh. Look up the definition of mandatory in the dictionary. Ask yourself what the consequences were for any of you guys who played more than one sport if you couldn't lift or condition with the team. You all know the answer...nothing. There aren't any consequences from your coaches. Now with that said, your chance of sustaining an injury during the game season is likely higher if you aren't conditioning and lifting in the offseason. If you are thinking of moving on to a higher level in your sport, and you are not lifting and conditioning in the off season, then your chances of moving on to a higher level in your sport are likely reduced. Now there can be student athletes who can just show up and be the best player at a particular position without lifting or conditioning. They have that much god given talent. However, they are few and far between. So for most, the "consequences" of not lifting and not conditioning in the off season are that you will likely not be as strong as others who do, your chances of injury are likely higher, and if you have aspirations to play at a higher level, you are likely not increasing your chances of that happening. It's a choice and in a Varsity sport the best players are going to be the ones playing in the games and if they don't lift but they are still the best player at a given position then they play. In my 34 years of coaching high school football, I have never seen any player on any team I have been a part of be punished by the staff for not

participating in off season weight training or conditioning. I have seen student athletes rewarded for doing so, but I've never seen anyone punished. Therefore, this accusation and determination that our off season weight training program is sport specific and in violation is simply incorrect and we strongly disagree that this is a violation. Power cleans and squats are not a "sport specific" off season training and conditioning violation. For the record, over a month ago we asked the Bellevue School District in writing for a list of all students who wanted to participate in these off season weight training and conditioning workouts and were denied access to do so. We are still waiting for the list.

The third part of this issue has the district saying, "football players gathered for sponsored off-season football specific conditioning sessions". Boy, I hope all of the sports programs in the entire state are paying attention to this one as the rules have to apply evenly to all. A better way to say the same thing (and put things into context) would be to say, "student athletes from Bellevue High School "gathered" regularly to bench press, squat, power clean, perform dot drills, and a plethora of other fabulous workouts in order to remain physically fit, become more flexible and help lessen the chance of an injury in the future. Zero persons were excluded from these "gatherings" and all are welcome to attend. The investigation goes on to try to claim that one of the owners of Ford Sports is a "football coach" and that because his company was paid to supervise the weight room, that a violation had occurred. Nope, one of them used to be a coach a couple of years ago but they have not been a football coach for the last couple of seasons. This is incredibly ironic given that the district athletic director for BSD in the public disclosure documents I received very clearly knew that this person was not a football coach (either paid or volunteer) and made that very clear in his written letter to Ford Sports on January 26, 2015 where he states, "you are not a paid nor volunteer coach of the program". With all due respect to my 34 year employer, BSD you cannot have it both ways here and on one hand, have your investigator claim he is a football coach and therefore a violation and on the other hand have your BSD District Athletic Director write what he wrote earlier this year very clearly stating that he is not.

5. Recruiting issue. This is the one that I think is misunderstood the most. Illegal recruiting is defined by the WIAA where it states, "27.0.0 Illegal Recruiting - Students who demonstrate special skills and talent in any of the activities under the jurisdiction of the WIAA should not be subjected to pressures to enroll or continue to be enrolled in a member school **outside of their normal attendance area**" (emphasis added by me). I point out the part in bold because the recruiting issues brought up in this investigation are all stemming from the original incident back in the weight room last December and all involve the same person and the same family. For the record, the person and family involved here live inside the normal attendance area of Bellevue High School according to the information we have from the school. Further, the student in question began at the school three years ago as a freshman. It also goes on to say, "Efforts to induce students to enroll or continue to be enrolled in a member school **because of the students' special talent or skill** is considered recruiting" (emphasis added by me). I point out the part in bold because if the reasons to "induce" a student to continue to be enrolled in a member school are NOT because of the student's special talent or skill, then you are not talking about recruiting. Webster's defines inducement as "something that helps bring about an action or desired result". So let's dive into the alleged recruiting violations that BSD has decided members of our football staff are guilty of. There are three of them:

- A) The investigation determined that one of our coaches met with the player in question at his school (Academic Institute). Contrary to the spin on this by the school district and the Seattle Times, this coach asked permission of the school to visit with this student and the permission was granted. This coach had heard that the student in question was upset with the coaches and this coach wanted to talk to him about it and try to understand where he was coming from and help mend fences if possible. During the conversation, the student made it known that he was

considering going to school for his senior year in Florida because he was mad at some of the coaches. He also stated that he wanted to play football in college here in Seattle at a local university. This coach advised him to keep his options open regarding college and to get to know the schools very well prior to making that decision as it is a big decision. The coach also told this student that staying at his current school would likely be his best option given his preference was to attend a university in the Seattle area. The record shows that the two of them hugged following the meeting which would indicate it was a positive meeting.

This is the meeting where this student claimed in the investigative report that the coach threatened to take away "his scholarship" if the student left. What has always bothered me with that is that if the student actually had decided to move to Florida and go to school there, it would make no sense for the coach here to threaten to take away something that wouldn't be needed anyhow if the student did in fact decide to move to Florida. It simply made no sense which is why the investigation determined that the claims of his scholarship being taken away were unfounded and his claims of there even being a scholarship provided by this coach were unfounded. What the investigation decided was that this coach committed a recruiting violation by trying to "induce a student to continue to be enrolled in a member school". First of all, this student at the time was not enrolled in a member school (he was enrolled in a nonmember school), and second of all, there was no "pressure to continue to be enrolled in a member school outside of his normal attendance area" as he lived inside the BHS normal attendance area. Even if you want to consider what this coach did as "pressure" (I would characterize what this coach with fifteen years of experience did as legitimate concern for the student and an effort to help), given this student already had been in the program for three seasons and no one was trying to convince him to go to a school "outside or their normal attendance area", there is no violation here.....none. The determination by BSD that this is a violation is incorrect. The bloggers can scream and yell all they want but guys, this was not a recruiting violation. The BSD investigation is simply wrong here.

- B) During the investigation, Butch advised the investigator that the father of the family in question had approached him around Thanksgiving time. He advised Butch that he was struggling for money and could not put food on the table for his family. Butch felt bad for him and gave him three hundred dollars. This philanthropic decision by Butch was heartfelt and in keeping with the time of year. In looking above at the definitions of what constitutes "recruiting", this was a philanthropic action...for it to be considered an "inducement" in this case would mean there would need to be something that "helps bring about an action or desired result". There is nothing of the kind here. There is no desired result and there is no intent here to do anything other than donate to a family in need at a time when they were hurting. This isn't and wasn't about trying to convince a family or player to go to one school versus another. The student already goes to the school and has for a number of years. You decide if what Butch did was wrong in your heart and if the punishment currently being laid upon him fits with what he has done here and with what he has had to endure in the newspaper. Further, in asking Butch if this philanthropy was in fact "available to all", he stated very confidently that it was. So what do you call something that is available to all, has no desired result and has absolutely nothing to do with a student's special talent or skill? It is called charity and for this kind of behavior to be considered some form of "recruiting" just does not fit. When I looked up Webster's definition of recruiting online, it says the following, "the process of adding new individuals to a population or subpopulation". Given this student is already part of the "population" at BHS, he is not a new individual being added. He is already here. Call it what you will, but recruiting it is not.

C) The father of this same family mentioned earlier approached another coach of ours separately. This was a new coach at the time (a volunteer coach). Nearing Christmas, the father of this family had lost his job according to the documents I have. This coach owns a small business in Bellevue. Upon hearing of the financial issues and struggles for this family just prior to Christmas 2013, this coach asked his own son to discontinue his work as a janitor at the small business and this job as a janitor was offered by the business to this father so that he could earn some money for his family. He started work at this coach's company three days prior to Christmas. On Christmas Eve, this coach states in his letter that in a philanthropic gesture, his company would pay for the hours worked to date plus give this father an advance of one hundred sixty dollars in addition to that. The coach goes on to say that this father returned to work on December 30th and December 31st 2013 and worked off \$50 (so he only owed \$110 still to the company). On New Year's Eve 2013, this father again approached this coach and again requested an advance which this coach granted from the business to him in the amount of \$250. According to the documents I have, this father then did not perform any further work for the coach's business (and still owes the business \$360 as it was not a gift it was an advance). On January 7, 2014, this same father approached this coach yet again and stated that he was about to be evicted from his apartment and that he was fearful of becoming homeless with his family. On January 8, 2014, this coach contacted Hopelink, Saint Vincent DePaul, Youth Eastside Services, Jubilee Reach, Salvation Army and many more. The father explained to the coach that he had already exhausted these particular resources/entities and that he and his family were about to be evicted if he could not find a way to come up with the rent money. As this coach's efforts with the aforementioned agencies were of no avail, this coach asked around to see if someone else was available to help this family. A few days later the father in question contacted this coach and pleaded with him to help. This coach contacted clients of his and asked them if they could help. A client of this coach's did offer to loan this family money so that they could catch up on their rent and not be evicted. This family was advised that it was a loan, but the loan was not paid back. The coach in question felt responsible and since that time has paid back the client who had loaned the father of the family in question the money. For the record, Butch learned of this particular coach's decision to help this family out this way during the investigation. It had nothing to do with Butch, and was an independent decision made by this man to help a family who had really fallen on tough times.

So there you have it. On May 27, 2015, Butch was given a brief synopsis of the violations that were going to be self-reported. He was not given the full report, he was not offered any time to respond. Despite his labor contract with the school district which provides that he has fourteen calendar days to file a grievance following receipt of a written reprimand, and despite not being told that the district athletic director (who was in charge of the investigation) is the President of Kingco (the one reviewing the self-report on June 1, 2015) and his spouse is the treasurer of Kingco and that both parents of his spouse are District 2 executive board members (who would review the Kingco recommendation on June 2, 2015), Butch was told that the District would self-report these violations.

On June 1, 2015, the people who run Kingco met and on June 2, 2015 they took the matter to District 2 and issued sanctions and suspended Butch for two games. They also took away three years of shared Kingco revenue (which I am told will amount to around \$90,000 but I just heard that from one person and have no way to verify that). While I can find no meeting minutes yet regarding the June 1 Kingco meeting or the June 2 district 2 meeting, it seems strange to me when I look up who does what in Kingco and District 2 that the Bellevue School District's District Athletic Director shows up as the President of

Kingco with his wife as the Treasurer of Kingco and that his wife is the daughter of the District 2 directors (husband and wife). This seems far too connected and closely tied for a quasi-judicial final ruling to be applied without the appearance of some conflicts of interest. I for one would welcome the principal of BHS requesting that the new/current WIAA investigation include everything and not just the new accusation regarding the Academic Institute, as I honestly do not see all of the things that BSD elected to accuse the Bellevue Football program of are actually violations of the rules as written.

On June 3, 2015, BSD issued Matt Coombs a written reprimand including a one year probation for failing to report and for failing to act. As I mentioned earlier, his appeal was granted in full, as he did in fact report and there was no failure to act. On that same date, Butch was also issued a written reprimand citing the above items as violations and his written reprimand included a two game suspension from Kingco/District 2 for "2016" and three years of individual probation. We think the district intended for the two game suspension to be served in 2015, but oddly that is not what they wrote. In keeping with the entire way this investigation was handled by the District Athletic Director of BSD (Jeff Lowell) and the legal department of BSD (Annie Cole), I am not surprised that the year in which the two game suspension is to be served is now up in the air and creating confusion. What's new?

Anyhow, Butch has appealed through the Coaches Association to the district on a number of fronts. First, the district athletic director telling him not to talk to anyone during the investigation was improper. Second, BSD self-reported to Kingco and District 2 prior to first allowing Butch's appeal right timeframes to expire...which they never did as he did in fact appeal. It is our position that BSD had a duty per the contract to first go through the grievance/appeal process with Butch prior to going to Kingco or District 2 with a self-report of violations. The Step 1 grievance/appeal by Butch was filed with the school athletic director and in her response no changes were made, so things moved to step 2. The Step 2 grievance/appeal by Butch was filed with the school principal and no response was provided so the process defaulted to Step 3 which is where we are now. BSD has provided a response to his level 3 grievance/appeal which Butch is currently considering. Unfortunately, the response from BSD was somewhat incomplete and lacked particularly important information which we would need in order to discern his best option going forward. Note that this appeal has nothing to do with the "new" WIAA investigation recently requested by BHS. Should Butch elect to not accept BSD's Step 3 response, the matter would be to the American Arbitration Association. The primary issues in the appeal are the incorrect direction by the District Athletic Director telling coaches not to discuss the investigation with others when they had a right to representation, and secondly that BSD jumped the gun in taking the matter to begin with to Kingco prior to the contractually required two week period of time that Butch had available to him to consider their written reprimand and sanctions and suspensions. Due process is due process and through this entire time it has struck me as so odd that with all the rules and regulations and red tape thrown our way these days as coaches, here is our own school district not letting us be represented as coaches and taking a matter to Kingco which in my eyes they could not contractually do until Butch's appeal period time had elapsed. We do not agree with BSD that we had any out of season practices. We do not agree with BSD that squats and power cleans are sport specific activities. We do not agree with BSD that any persons whatsoever are excluded from the weight room. We do not agree that there was a failure to report on the part of Butch and as with Matt's appeal, should we prevail at one of these levels, what would ultimately go before Kingco would not include the things that were eliminated in the appeal process/grievance process. As I see it, they still should not have taken this matter to Kingco yet as we are still in Butch's step 3 appeal period timeframe and what they prematurely presented to Kingco back in early June will in my opinion not be the same as what they would have presented now to Kingco had they correctly followed the contract to begin with. What a mess.

In closing, thank you for reading this long letter. I hope all of you know how much we love you and that we think and speak of you often. It is so wonderful for us to see many of you return from time to time and visit us at practice. You are part of something that is very special and while so many are currently trying to tear it down, I ask myself what exactly did Butch do here? He actually did report to his principal, so that one is out. The company hired to do the weight room had a meeting without his knowledge and he acted swiftly, looked into what happened, and that company no longer is part of our weight room. Another coach who in our opinion has never done anything but help kids and do so the right way has left us and to this day I still don't think he did a single thing wrong. Another coach who spent hour upon hour of his time trying to arrange for philanthropic help for a family is now no longer with our program. When you break this all down, what exactly did Butch do that warrants the punishment being levied against him both by his own district and in the media both locally and nationally. He dealt appropriately with each of the persons mentioned above who are no longer with our program. He gave a \$300 gift to a family in need. He did report the incident to his principal. The weight room company his program used was not run by a "football coach" and BSD knows that. The determination of there being "sport specific" activities is incorrect. The "illegal practices" are actually just kids lifting weights together or doing sprints together. This man is being ridiculed and attacked in the media because he gave a \$300 gift and one of his coaches with one year of experience went a bit overboard with his philanthropy? The term "recruiting" here is so misguided and so out of place in how it is being portrayed in the media. This all started with a meeting following a loss that he never even requested where some tough words were spoken. We made a few mistakes here as a staff. We are not by any means trying to say otherwise, we did. But these mistakes were dealt with and those individuals are no longer with us. That is a big deal to not have them back and should not be underestimated. So when you factor in all of the above, and hear this long story, I keep coming back to the same thing; just what exactly is Butch actually guilty of? I hope the above puts things into a little bit better perspective and adds a bit of context to the situation.



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