



Parent accuses Texas high school football coach of bullying after 91-0 blowout game

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The coach of a Texas high school football team has been accused of bullying in a formal complaint after his team beat another school 91-0.

In the complaint, the dad of a player on the Western Hills High School football team claims Aledo High School football coach Tim Buchanan encouraged his players to bully their opponents by running up the score. Buchanan learned of the online complaint against him Saturday, the day after his team beat Western Hills in a 4A matchup.

"It wasn't good for anybody," Buchanan said. "I've sat and gone over and over and over it on what we could have done differently. The score could have very easily been 150 to nothing."

Buchanan tells MyFoxDFW.com he pulled his starters from the game after the first quarter and even eventually brought in his third-string players, but it was clear the game was going to be a blowout. The clock was also run continuously starting in the third quarter.

In the report, which was released Tuesday, the unnamed dad lists both football teams as victims and the Aledo High School coaching staff as the offenders. The parent claims "everyone in the football stadium" was a witness to Buchanan and his staff's "unsportsmanlike conduct."

"We all witnessed bullying firsthand, it is not a pretty sight," the complaint reads according to MyFoxDFW.com. "I did not know what to say on the ride home to explain the behavior of the Aledo coaches for not easing up when the game was in hand."

Buchanan, whose team is averaging 69.3 points a game and is on its way to a 7-0 record, said he is not sure what else he could have done besides telling his players to take a knee.

"I'm not gonna tell a kid that comes out here and practices six to seven hours a week trying to get ready for football games 'Hey, you can't score a touchdown if you get in,

you're gonna have to take a knee,' cause that may be the only touchdown that kid gets to score in his high school career," Buchanan told MyFoxDFW.com.

Under state law, Aledo's principal must investigate the complaint and prepare a report. The complaint was filed with the school district, which the law requires to provide bullying complaint forms on its websites.

The University Interscholastic League, the governing body for high school sports in Texas, only has a mercy rule for six-man football that ends a game when one team gets ahead by 45 points by halftime or later. There is no mercy rule for 11-man football, though coaches can agree to end a game early, UIL spokeswoman Kate Hector said. Buchanan said he wasn't aware of that option.

There were about 1,500 fans still in the stands at the end of the game, most of them Aledo's, he said. About 5,000 were at the Bearcats' stadium in Aledo at the beginning because it was a recognition night for band members' parents. A cold front that brought rain added another reason to leave when the game started to get out of hand, Buchanan said.

While blowouts are not uncommon in Texas high school football, Aledo has racked up several of them this season, due in part to being placed in a new district that has not been as strong in football. The Bearcats' average victory margin in four district games is 77 points.

The University Interscholastic League bases its realignment decisions on enrollment and geographic location to minimize travel time, a move aimed at reducing class absences. When Aledo was placed in a different district before last season, its travel time to the furthest location was cut from two hours to about 35 miles, Buchanan said.

Buchanan's team ran just 32 plays but scored on about every third one during Friday's game. Aledo rushed for 391 yards. It scored eight touchdowns on the ground, two each on passes and punt returns, and one on a fumble recovery.

"It certainly didn't seem like they were trying to run up the score in this case," Hector said.

Western Hills had 79 yards rushing and 67 yards passing.

The UIL follows NCAA rules, but most other states follow guidelines of the National Federation of State High School Associations, said Bob Colgate, the federation's director of sports and sports medicine.

Colgate said many of the federation's 48 member states and the District of Columbia have adopted a mercy rule in 11-man football. He noted that a survey published in

February found that 16 states reported using a mercy rule with point margins, which are set by individual states, ranging from 30 points to 50 points.

Aledo Principal Dan Peterson said his report on the bullying complaint should be completed this week. It will be given to the father who filed the complaint and the staff at Western Hills.

Hector said anyone can submit a proposal for a rule change which could then be considered by the UIL's legislative council.

Buchanan said his school, winner of four state titles since 1998, and district are very supportive of the football program. The same, he said, cannot be said of Western Hills.

"It's not so much money as it is lack of emphasis," he said. "If you're going to have a program, support it."

The Associated Press contributed to this report