



SOUTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

Jerome P. Singleton, Commissioner
P. O. Box 211575
Columbia, South Carolina 29221-6575
Phone: 803-798-0120 Fax: 803-737-0029 www.schsl.org

To: Kathryn Benjamin – Principal, Greenwood High School
From: Jerome Singleton, Commissioner
Subject: Time of scheduled appearance before Executive Committee
Date: September 16, 2020

You are scheduled to appear before the Executive Committee on **September 18, 2020**, to present your case for sanction relief. The meeting will be held at the South Carolina High School League Office, 121 Westpark Boulevard, Columbia, South Carolina. Your scheduled appearance time is 10:00 a.m.

Please refer to page 1 of the League's By-Laws for the procedures to be used when making appeals to the Executive Committee. You are to forward copies of your request brief to members of the Executive Committee. Each committee person must receive a complete copy of all pertinent information prior to the meeting. You will have 10 minutes to make your presentation to the Committee.

Date: September 18, 2020
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Site: SC High School League
121 Westpark Blvd
Columbia, SC 29210



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Jerome P. Singleton, Commissioner
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SAM TUTEN
President
Johnsonville

VIA EMAIL

JASON WARREN
Vice President
Greenville

September 11, 2020

MIKE BEASLEY
Barnwell

KANDACE BETHEA
Marion

KYLE BOCZKOWSKI
Summerville

RYAN BROWN
Columbia

SONYA BRYANT
Batesburg-Leesville

CARLOS CAVE
Seabrook

MARTY CONNER
Rock Hill

RAY COOPER
Prosperity

TONY FOLK
St. George

LAURA HICKSON
Lake City

JASON JOHNS
Fort Mill

KEITH KISER
Greenville

ANNA MILLER
Chapin

DARRYL OWINGS
Spartanburg

ANDREA PRIDGEN
Green Sea

MICHAEL STONE
Mullins

JOSH TRAHAN
North Augusta

Kathryn Benjamin, Principal
Greenwood High School
1816 Cokesbury Road
Greenwood, South Carolina 29649

Dear Mrs. Benjamin:

I have reviewed your letters dated September 9 and 10, 2020, appealing Mr. Wentzky's decision that the Greenwood High School football team participated in an illegal practice on September 8, 2020. In reviewing the documents provided, including your prior correspondence with Mr. Wentzky, I do not see any reason to change the sanction determined by Mr. Wentzky, which is the minimum penalty as previously determined by the Executive Committee. Furthermore, I would like to address some of the points you previously raised in your communication with Mr. Wentzky.

First, as Mr. Wentzky shared with you, the League was clear in its communications with member schools that students were only allowed to wear "Helmets and Shoulder Pads" on September 8th and 9th before progressing to full pads on September 10th. This guidance was shared with member schools on page 4 of the "Best Practices – Return to Play for Fall 2020" as well as the Football Update memo that was issued on August 28. Furthermore, this acclimatization period is no different than past years with respect to the progression from helmets to shoulder pads to full gear. I would also note that the Rules and Regulations for football state that "A school shall not permit contact practice in pads between its last game and August 5 (prior opening date of preseason practice). Pads include padding of any kind on the shoulders, hips, or thighs." Because we only specifically allow for shoulder pads as part of the acclimatization process, the default rule would still be that any other pads are prohibited before full gear is allowed.


Additionally, I understand Greenwood High School's position to be that anything short of "full gear" is permissible prior to September 10. That is clearly not the case. The rule plainly states that there are two days of helmets and shoulder pads before full gear is allowed, and Greenwood High School players were effectively wearing all pads except for knee pads. If Greenwood High School had any questions about whether the use of girdles with hip pads

and/or thigh pads were permissible, it could have easily contacted the League and asked for clarification.

If you wish to appeal my decision, please notify me in writing by September 15, 2020.

If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,


Jerome Singleton



Office of the Principal

Greenwood High School

1816 Cokesbury Road
Greenwood, SC 29649

Phone (864)-941-5600
www.gwd50.org/greenwood

September 10, 2020

Dear Commissioner Singleton,

This letter serves as a formal appeal of the ruling of the South Carolina High School League that Greenwood High School conducted an illegal football practice on Tuesday, September 8, 2020. The Greenwood High Head Football Coach and the Athletic Director assured me that we had not violated any High School League rule on September 8. After extensive research of all appropriate High School League documents, I agree that our football team did not violate a High School League rule.

Mr. Wentzky stated in his ruling letter on September 9, 2020 that wearing pads in a girdle or football pants on the first two days of practice is not allowed and is considered an illegal practice. Some Greenwood High football players wore padded girdles under shorts on September 8. There is no rule, directive, or mandate in any of the League documents that prohibits this practice.

Please consider the following:

South Carolina High School League Football Pre-Season Practice Plan

Bullet 5 under Notes – All athletes must complete Days 1 - 4 of the practice timeline before participation in full pads.

No Greenwood High Football players participated in the September 8 practice in full pads.

SCHSL Handbook – Page 45 (9b) under Practice Information

High School programs may practice in full gear and use all field equipment beginning August 10, 2020.

No Greenwood High Football players participated in the September 8 practice in full gear.

SCHSL Handbook – (f4) under Practice Information

A full-contact practice is defined as football pants, pads, and shoulder pads.

No Greenwood High Football players participated in the September 8 practice in football pants.

Football 2020 Important Reminders Document – Bullet #3

All players must have two (2) days in helmets and shoulder pads before they put on full gear.

No Greenwood High Football players participated in the September 8 practice in full gear.

Mr. Wentzky called me on Wednesday, September 9. He did not indicate any rule that our football team had broken. He sent a document and told us to decide if we had broken a rule. We had to speculate as to what caused him concern. After speaking with him a second time, he stated that the players were not allowed to wear pads below the waist. When I told him that was not a rule anywhere in the SCHSL documents, he stated that it would be full gear if they had knee pads on.

Using Mr. Wentzky's own definition, no Greenwood High Football players participated in the September 8 practice in full gear.

Section e in the High School League Manual – Passing Leagues

Players may not wear padding of any kind during the 7 on 7 passing league competition. (i.e. no girdles, hip, thigh, or tailbone protection) Only helmets, pants, jerseys, shoes, and socks may be worn.

This is the only place that any type of specific, below the waist, padding is banned. We are asserting that no rule was violated during the September 8 practice. If it was illegal to wear a girdle at practice, why would it not have been stated as it is in the above section?

I assure you that I expect and demand that all of our athletic programs at Greenwood High School are run in accordance with SCHSL rules. After being told by the Head Football Coach and the Athletic Director that no rule was violated, I did my own research. As I have illustrated in this letter, there is no prohibition or ban on girdles being worn during the first two days of practice. If we had violated a rule, we would acknowledge it and accept the consequences. We have not violated a rule.

I appreciate your consideration of our appeal. I look forward to hearing your decision.

Sincerely,



Kathryn Benjamin
Principal
Greenwood High School



South Carolina High School League

PO Box 211575

Columbia, SC 29221-6575

803-798-0120

www.schsl.org

Sept 9, 2020

Mrs. Kathryn Benjamin, Principal
Greenwood High School
1816 Cokesbury Road
Greenwood, SC 29649

Dear Mrs. Benjamin:

This letter is in response to Greenwood High School holding an illegal practice in football on September 8, 2020. As you are aware the SCHSL rules and regulations for football outlines what equipment student athletes are allowed to wear during the first week of official team practice. This information was also shared with each member school through the following:

- Best Practices Return to Play Guidelines after they were approved by the Executive Committee on 8/5/2020
- Memo titled "Football Update" on 8/28/2020
- Power Point Presentation uploaded to www.schsl.org on 8/28/20

On September 8th, 2020, Greenwood High School held a football practice that allowed multiple players to wear pads in their girdles in addition to helmets and shoulder pads. Wearing pads in a girdle or pants is not allowed until full gear can be worn (8/10/2020). Wearing pads in a girdle or inside football pants on the first two days of practice is not allowed and is considered an illegal practice.

Greenwood High School will be fined \$500 for holding an illegal practice. In addition to the fine, the Greenwood High School football program will have the following sanctions:

- Loss of 1 day of practice. (Greenwood High will not be allowed to practice on 9/9/2020. Greenwood High School will be in helmets and shoulder pads only on 9/10/2020. Greenwood will be allowed to wear full gear on 9/11/2020.)
- Limited to 1 scrimmage (Jamborees may not be substituted.)

Should you have any questions regarding this issue, feel free to contact me. If you wish to appeal any of these sanctions, please respond in writing to this office within ten days of receipt of this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CW', with a horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Charlie Wentzky
Associate Commissioner

Zimbra

jsingle@schsl.org

Fwd: Follow Up Question

From : Charlie Wentzky <charlie@schsl.org> Wed, Sep 09, 2020 03:14 PM
Subject : Fwd: Follow Up Question
To : Jerome Singleton
<jsingle@schsl.org>

From: "benjamink" <benjamink@gwd50.org>
To: "charlie" <charlie@schsl.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 9, 2020 12:20:47 PM
Subject: Re: Follow Up Question

Yesterday was the first day that any equipment was worn.

On Wed, Sep 9, 2020 at 12:11 PM Charlie Wentzky <charlie@schsl.org> wrote:

Mrs. Benjamin,

Thank you for you phone call this morning after checking with your coach about practice yesterday.

You stated in the phone call that they wore their girdles as well that included pads in them. One follow up question to this is how many days did Greenwood High wear their girdles with pads in them during a team practice or workout?

Once I receive this answer, I will be able to get back to you with where we are with this matter.

Thanks
Charlie Wentzky

--

Kathryn W. Benjamin
Principal
Greenwood High School



Office of the Principal

Greenwood High School

1816 Cokesbury Road
Greenwood, SC 29649

Phone (864)-941-5600
www.gwd50.org/greenwood

To: Charles Wentzky
Associate Commissioner South Carolina High School League

From: Kathryn Benjamin *Kathryn Benjamin*
Principal, Greenwood High School

Date: September 9, 2020

RE: Possible Equipment Violation

As a result of a phone call from you on the morning of September 9, 2020, I took a copy of the rules you emailed, to the Greenwood High football Coach, Chris Liner, and asked him to review them and comment if he felt the football team had violated any League rules on the document. He stated that they had not. I knew that the local newspaper had run a story on the first day of practice and that would be the most probable way anyone would have accused the program of a rules violation. I reviewed the pictures with the athletic director, Michael Hudson. The only thing we could think of was the pants the players were wearing might be misunderstood from a picture. Coach Liner had a set of old game pants cut and hemmed to create shorts so that the team would be in matching clothes for practice. A number of players also wore girdles under the shorts that are pre-made with padding and a built-in jock strap. Coach Liner and Coach Hudson both believe that neither of these items violate the rule as stated on the document sent by the High School League. The League rule is as follows: All players must have two (2) days in helmets and shoulder pads before they can put on full gear. This was copied straight from the document I received.

In my subsequent conversation with you, you stated that there could be no padding beneath the waist of a player. That is not what the rule states. It states that a player may not be in full gear. I contend that if a player arrived on the field wearing the shorts and the girdle several of our players were wearing, he would be sent from the field for not being fully equipped. Therefore, there is no violation of a full equipment rule. You told me to write a statement and a penalty would be decided by the League. There should not be a penalty if there is no violation of a rule.