



Kentucky High School Athletic Association

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May 3, 2017

Principal Christy Phelps
Caldwell County High School
350 Beckner Lane
Princeton, KY 42445

Dear Ms. Phelps,

This letter is to address the situation whereby the competitive cheer team from Caldwell County High School withdrew from state competition following participation in the regional competition.

KHSAA Competitive Cheer Competition Rules state:

Sec. IV) ELIGIBILITY TO ENTER POSTSEASON COMPETITION

C) Withdrawal from postseason

1) All squads shall designate participation status and division on or prior to October 1. 2) No out of state travel will be approved for teams that do not participate in the KHSAA region competition or for those that participate in the region competition and then withdraw from the state competition after having qualified.

3) If a school withdraws from the state competition after having qualified, that school shall also be penalized in accordance with Bylaw 27.

FINDINGS

Caldwell County High School entered a team in the KHSAA competitive cheer postseason in the prior to the October 1 entry deadline. and participated in the regional competition. Following the competition and prior to the state competition, it was communicated that the squad would withdraw from state competition. Withdrawal from the postseason following Oct. 1 is a violation of the Competitive Cheer Competition Rules and subject to penalties within Bylaw 27.

These rules are in place for several reasons. Competition logistics, including the ordering of trophies and awards and the schedule for the day is dependent upon the declared number of schools entered into each division. Judges and schedules have to be completed well in advance. The policies are also in place to prevent a team from entering the postseason and then after seeing who is in their division, deciding not to participate based upon perceived competitive advantage and/or disadvantage.

Lastly, some coaches may contend withdrawal was due to injuries and for safety of the stunts that were within the routine. This cancellation of participation is seldom done in any other competitive environment where injuries and other short-term problems almost always force coaches to make very tough decisions, but are considered part of the process of coaching. In Competitive Cheer, this is simply fixed by minimal reworking the routine or not doing certain stunts that were planned while still allowing the rest of the team the opportunity for participation.

A reminder to coaches of penalties for withdrawing from postseason following the October 1 entry deadline was also included in the mandatory online rules clinic.

CONCLUSION AND PENALTIES

As Commissioner of the KHSAA, I direct that the following be imposed per KHSAA bylaw 27:

1. An institutional FINE of \$300 is assessed to the competitive cheer program. The maximum fine for this violation is \$500 within the KHSAA Board Policies and Procedures, however this is a first documented offense for this school and the penalty is therefore reduced. And invoice is enclosed to allow for the proper tracking and administration of this penalty.
2. The competitive cheer program is hereby placed on probation for the remainder of the 2016-2017 school year.
3. No out-of-state travel for any competition is permitted for the remainder of the 2016-2017 school year.

With the acceptance and completion of the imposed penalties, this matter shall be considered closed. This office remains committed to assistance for your athletic program and offers its complete resources, including personnel, to assist the school with this matter or any KHSAA Bylaws. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The findings of this review will be made public by the Association through its normal news media contact channels and through its website (including social media). Commentary from the Association (if contacted by media representatives) will focus solely on the final ruling contained in this correspondence. Additional inquiries will be directed to school athletic administration.

NOTICE OF APPEAL RIGHTS

Caldwell County High School may appeal the Commissioner's ruling in accordance with the KHSAA Due Process Procedure. Please note that, under the KHSAA Due Process Procedure, this is considered a "Board Matter", and as such, any appeal would go directly before the Board of Control.

Sincerely,



Julian Tackett
Commissioner

xc: David Barnes, Athletic Director
KHSAA Executive Staff
KHSAA Board of Control