

Hamilton football fires 10 coaches after on-field incident with athletic director

[Wendell Shepherd Jr.](#)

Hamilton High School has fired 10 members of its football coaching staff this week following an on-field altercation involving Hamilton administration at last Friday's game versus Sheffield.

Jerel Blanchard, Hamilton's former coach, told [The Commercial Appeal](#) this week that he and nine other coaches were fired on Tuesday after Blanchard said an incident involving Hamilton's football staff and school athletic director Alfred Burchett occurred during the game.

The incident, Blanchard told The Commercial Appeal, evolved around a player's eligibility at Hamilton's Sept. 13 game with Sheffield. Blanchard said the team had not received notification of the player's ineligibility, but Burchett entered the playing field in an effort to remove the player from the game.

"I almost got a penalty during the game because he walked past the 25-yard line," Blanchard said. "He was screaming at the kids and at college coaches, saying not to recruit the kids."

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An email from The Commercial Appeal to Burchett asking for comment has not been returned.

Blanchard said that he asked to have a conversation with the athletic director after the game, but, ultimately, the game did not advance past the second quarter and Sheffield was credited with a 16-6 victory. Blanchard said he and other staff members were then fired on Tuesday.

Memphis-Shelby County Schools and the Shelby County Interscholastic Athletic Association have not responded to an email from The Commercial Appeal regarding questions about the Hamilton football program, including the allegation of an ineligible player participating as well as the firing of the Hamilton coaches.

"I'm asking that the athletic director be removed and that an investigation be done into how he is doing his day-to-day things," Blanchard said. "How could there have been a thorough investigation in just one (business) day? I never got an answer on that.

"I have no problem stepping away, but there was no paperwork. No one talked to the staff. (Burchett) only talked to one or two people on the staff and then they made their decision."

Blanchard and East coach Greg Moore confirmed to The Commercial Appeal that Friday's Hamilton-East High game at Crump Stadium will still be played.

"We want the boys to stay together," Blanchard said. "They're putting a makeshift staff together, but why put them in that type of danger?"

TSSAA executive director Mark Reeves told The CA on Thursday that he had not been made aware of any issues within the Hamilton football

program involving ineligible players.

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