

MORE THAN BLACK AND WHITE

Placing blame, yelling at referees should be reconsidered by athletes, spectators



written by **Joseph Krum**
Managing Editor
@joseph_krum

Whichever angle you look at the incident at the John Jay vs. Marble Falls high school football game in San Antonio, it does not look good.

For all who do not know, during a high school football game on Sept. 4, a referee allegedly made racist remarks, which then caused the coach on the John Jay High School team to use explicit language to the point of 'He is going to (expletive) pay for this.' The football players, defensive backs Michael Moreno and Victor Rojas, took the matters into their own hands and blindsided the referee from behind during a play late into the game.

As a result, both of the players were suspended from the team for the rest of the year and from the school for an indefinite amount of time while being put on investigation with the school district

and the county. The coach, Mack Breed, who allegedly told the players to hurt the referee has resigned, yet there has been no punishment handed out from the University Interscholastic League for the players or the coaches.

Throughout this incident, there are many people to blame. For one, it's the coach's fault for telling the players that the referee "needs to pay". In no instance should that be acceptable language to talk to a kid, especially a kid who looks up to you. However, the players should not have taken the matters into their own hands and blown the coach's orders way out of proportion. And even if the coach had told them to hurt the referee, some would hope that they would use common sense and not do it.

One last angle is to put some blame on the referee, who allegedly used racist remarks addressing hispanic and black players on the John Jay team. Whether or not it is in a game or in any situation, it is never OK to use that kind of language.

One aspect that could have played a factor in this reaction of the players is how players are growing up with a society that abuses and yells at officials. Whether it's a bad call or not, players, especial-

ly of a younger age, are seemingly more and more OK with the idea that they can yell and complain at a referee.

I cannot say that I am a perfect human being and do not yell at the officials one of my games every once in awhile, because I do. But yelling at someone for their mistakes is not something we should do. Especially in football, referees have to make snap decisions, and sometimes they are wrong. But it doesn't seem right that we should abuse them for a mistake that they make.

Yet there was a line that was crossed when the John Jay players slammed into the back of the referee from behind, blindsiding him. There was even a similar incident that also crossed the line in a Texas high school playoff game in 2008.

Former Euless Trinity player Elikena Fieilo, in a playoff game against the Allen Eagles, showed the same lack of sportsmanship that the two Jays players did. On the second to last play of the game, Fieilo streaked across the field and slammed into the referee from behind. That one play had an effect that pulled multiple Division I offers away from Fieilo and changed his entire life.

Another aspect that played a

role in this incident is how the players look up to their coaches and what they say. Even though what the coach said was absurd, the players took it to heart since he was their coach.

As a football player, even if you do not agree with what the coach is saying, you do it. You do not only do it because you look up to the coaches, but the fear of being chewed out and letting the coaches down makes you want to do whatever orders they bark out.

Players also look up to their parents, who can be much, much worse at yelling than the coaches.

In one of my games earlier this season, a questionable call was made by an official and the stadium erupted in boos and shouts. Later in that game, after the other team scored, a parent screamed at a player – who was not even his kid – to "wake up", before proceeding to yell at the coaching staff for a bad play call.

Yet it's not just in high school that parents can get bad. Coppell Youth Soccer Association referee Ryan Storch has had some trouble in the past with dealing with parents.

"I was refereeing a 6-year-old game and I accidentally called the time for the end of the game 30

seconds short," Storch said. "The parents yelled at me, saying that there's still 30 seconds left, but the kids didn't even notice. They were just trying to have fun. It was ridiculous."

Whether the 30 seconds remaining in that game mattered or not, the parents should not be yelling at the officials about time-keeping like that. The parents' jobs should be to encourage their kids to have fun, not to be a terrible example of how to act.

Overall, everyone has some fault in this, whether you like it or not. The referee, if the allegation of racist remarks is true, should never have said anything like that to the players. His only job is to regulate the rules of the game, not to affect the players.

The coach should never have brought up the referee while talking for the players, even if what the referee said was true. He could have easily just called the head of the Texas Association of Sports Officials and gotten the situation handled that way. And finally, the players should have never acted in such a harsh way, even if the coach had told them to. The players should have never retaliated at an official, the only thing that they should be worried about is playing the game.

