

**BELLEROSE
BCHS**
COMPOSITE HIGH SCHOOL

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**Registered Apprenticeship &
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Mr. Chad Bodnar
Mrs. Kelly Lajoie

Continuing Education
Mr. Bill Turnham

Student Athletics
Ms. Sue Leighton



October 24, 2014

Dear Parent and or Guardians,

Bellerose Senior Football Team

The Bellerose Senior Football Team has been sanctioned by the Metro Edmonton Athletic Association for the following: ineligible players participating in our program. The policy states as follows, "In the event of an ineligible player participating, the team for whom he/she competed shall forfeit all matches in which he/she has participated while ineligible."

We are appealing this decision. The appeal is being held this afternoon and will likely mean that today's game will be postponed. We will inform you as to when we will play next and the website will be updated. We will have a 90 minute practice this Saturday from 11:00 am until 12:30pm.

Regards,

Larry Dick
780-964-8849
Sue Leighton
780-722-5315
Chad Hill
780-920-0353

The two boys arrived after the start of the school year from Saskatchewan. They were living in homes in St. Albert not with "legal" guardians. They had not played football in Saskatchewan. It appears that we wrongly interpreted the ASAA regulations in the following manner – our interpretation was that if children coming from out of province had not played in a sanctioned high school league in Saskatchewan in **the ASAA sport** that they wished to involve themselves in then there was no need to apply for eligibility. With this interpretation, those involved believed the boys need not apply for eligibility for football. It was not until September 26th that the school's athletics director sought an interpretation from ASAA that indicated that the rule was that if an out of province student had played in any sport in the province they were transferring from that ASAA over sees in Alberta then an eligibility application must be submitted. Once that interpretation had been understood and on that same day, the papers regarding eligibility were submitted and the boys did not play any more football. The boys were later, based on the application, declared ineligible for reasons primarily related to lack of proper guardianship but the sanctions are related to the fact that they played not as a "pending" decision of eligibility or that they played after having been declared ineligible but instead, and in good faith, personnel in our school believed they need not apply for eligibility for football. We now understand that the rule means that had either of the boys played one game of badminton in Grade 10 on behalf of a school team at their Saskatchewan high school we would have had to apply for eligibility immediately before they participated in Metro sanctioned football

Key Messages re sanctions

1. The governing body of inter-school athletics for our area is the Metro association.
2. That body asked me yesterday to investigate whether our senior football team had kept two players on their game roster while the question of their eligibility was still pending.
3. Upon investigation, I indicated to Metro's executive director that the two boys in question had been in uniform on the bench for three games while their eligibility was pending.
4. This constitutes a violation of the Metro rules and leaves the team open to sanctions that have been applied.
5. My interview with the coach is poignant, "I want it to be known that if I had known, in any way, that the two boys from Saskatchewan could be deemed ineligible, I never would have had them suit up. I knew we would have a successful season without them. One boy played about a dozen plays and the other even less. One played six man football and the other had not played."
6. The breach of the rules is clear. The errors lie in the hands of the adults involved. Rules were misinterpreted causing avoidable delays. This was a case of broken lines of communication and busy people making assumptions that were not valid.
7. As the principal of the school with full responsibility for school programs, I take complete responsibility for these events.
8. I believe there was no intent to subvert the rules to gain advantage.
9. As the person responsible for the management of the various procedures, I have put in place what hopefully are "fail safe" procedures structuring communication between various staff and volunteer coaches in the future to ensure the eligibility status of all students involved in our sports program is monitored and communicated to all concerned.
10. A series of professional development sessions are planned to ensure all staff and volunteer coaches understand the rules of Metro and ASAA, as well as who is responsible for what in the school.
11. The staff and volunteer parents in this school have put in hundreds of hours to ensure a positive experience for the young men on this team. This situation saddens everyone.
12. I believe the sanctions applied to be extreme and punitive given the situation was the result of the failing of the adults around them.

Larry Dick
Principal