

We welcomed Muriel Battle High School's football team to Jackson on September 27th. It was a much anticipated game for our team and our community. Our booster club prepared food for the Spartan players and coaches. Our Athletic Director's parents purchased bottled water for the team. This is how our district treats all visiting teams.

The Spartans entered the field and gathered at the center of the fifty yard line and taunted our fans and players. Our captains waited for the Spartans to take their place on their sideline for the coin toss.

Our student section was supervised by teacher/coach, Justin McMullen (an African American male) and principal Seth Harrell. A photographer from Battle High School approached Coach McMullen and told him comments were being made in the stands by a lady in a red shirt. He asked what was being said, but the photographer would not give him specific statements, rather she said "you won't do anything about it anyway." Coach McMullen told Dr. Harrell that the assistant principal told him after the game by the locker room that the photographer is a parent that is a "handful."

Coach McMullen reported the Spartan players were turning around and cussing repeatedly. He said one kid kept doing it as he was complaining about the refs and saying they were getting "cheated" and "this is bullshit."

One of our assistant principals, Travis Wilson, and one of our SROs, Chad Ludwig, escorted the visiting team from their locker room to the field. They block off the walkway as the players enter and exit our field. We had several young students there to high five the players. No derogatory statements were made during this time. When escorting the team to the field for the start of the second half, the player in the lead told Mr. Wilson they weren't going through our designated entrance. This player continued to argue with Mr. Wilson.

After halftime, our custodian reported to our Superintendent and principal that there was damage done in the visitor's locker room. Doors were ripped off lockers, mayonnaise packets were opened and contents squeezed out in the lockers as well bananas smashed in lockers. Locks were broken off lockers, deodorant smashed all over clothes and lockers. We have surveillance cameras inside the building and outside the building that show the entrances to the visitor's locker room. Our Athletic Director and SRO watched the surveillance footage and no one was seen entering the building or locker room. The Assistant principal from Battle High School was made aware of the reported destruction. Our custodian reported that once the team left, he found urine everywhere, on walls,

bathroom floor and locker room floor. Our PE teacher reported that student clothes were urinated on. Our custodial team had to power wash the locker room on Monday to clean off the urine. Battle coaches made accusations that their items were ransacked and 6 cell phones were missing. Our SRO requested the phone numbers of these missing phones so he could attempt to "ping" them. These numbers were not provided and the phones reappeared.

Complaints from the Spartan coaching staff were made that we didn't let the equipment truck park on the street close to the field. Our AD specifically told them prior to the game to park on the street next to the concession stand. Coach McMullen said the two guys driving the equipment truck were the "main ones cussing."

Coach McMullen referenced a conversation he had with one of the coaches from Battle. He couldn't recall who the coach was, but said this coach was the nicest and most well-behaved coach during the locker room situation. This coach said, "I hope this wasn't our kids because we are trying to change the culture." Justin responded with "it starts with the coaches." The visiting team coach agreed with that statement and said "yes, it does." Coach McMullen said most of the coaches were saying how much "bullshit this was." This was said in front of the parents and players. Other JHS assistant principals also heard this language. One coach said, "this is bullshit, we ain't ever coming back here."

Our Superintendent, Dr. John Link, Mr. Travis Wilson, KFVS12 sports reporter, SEMissourian reporter and photographer were all on the field on our sidelines. At no time did they hear either team make racial or derogatory statements to each other.

We were not made aware at any point of racial or harassing behavior by our fans or team Friday evening. We were made aware of these concerns through social media posts. Our AD contacted the Battle High School AD to get more information. Battle's AD said he had not heard of any concerns and if there would have been concerns with the cheerleaders, he would have most definitely heard from the cheerleading sponsor.

Our District still has not been contacted by any Columbia Public School or Muriel Battle High School officials. We have reached out to their administration. We do not want any players, coaches or fans to feel unwelcome on our campus. We take pride in having a competitive team, a supportive crowd and a welcoming community to any team.

Michelle Baumstark

From: Link, John <jlink@jr2mail.org>
Sent: Monday, September 30, 2019 9:57 PM
To: Peter Stiepleman
Subject: [External] Jackson High School Athletic Director

Peter

Hate to burden you more, this is the accounts from our athletic director.

John

**Battle HS @ Jackson HS
Varsity Football Game (9/28/19)
Witness Statement
By John Martin (JHS Athletic Director)**

This is my account from observations and conversations I have had on 9/28/19 and 9/29/19 from our Varsity Football game with Battle HS. They arrived around 4pm and our folks helped them get settled in their locker room in the basement of the multi-purpose gym. Matt Roethemeyer and myself helped a couple of their assistant coaches unload their equipment trailer and told them where they could park at. I introduced myself to several of their coaches, including their head coach. I told them that after the game there would be burgers for their players and staff from our Booster Club on tables just outside the multi-purpose gym. I showed them in the training room where there were boxes of plain Lays potato chips, a tray of cookies and coolers full of water. I then told them that our Asst. Principal, Travis Wilson, would escort their team on and off the field through-out the night. I also told their coaches that our custodian, Gavin, would secure the outside door and lock the locker room once everyone was out of there.

Their cheerleaders walked past me as I was standing at the back of the east end zone around 6:30pm. I introduced myself to their coach and escorted them to the sideline where they would be cheering at just inside the fence. I explained to the coach that there is not a lot of space on the sideline and her girls would need to pay attention if there was a play in this area. They would need to be prepared to move out of the way. I, also, told the coach that if she or her girls needed anything that I would be at the back of the east end zone. Shortly after, I noticed 5 or 6 Battle Cheerleaders go use the restroom on the east end of the stadium. At some point during the game (I believe late in the 1st half) two or three Battle cheerleaders asked if there was a place to fill up their water bottles. I pointed them into the old gym on the east end of the stadium. There was a water fountain just inside to the right. They went in there, filled their water bottles up and went back to their sideline. In the 2nd half, our custodian, John Coffman, asked if it would be alright to fill up a water cooler for their cheerleaders. I told him, 'absolutely' that would be fine.

Just under 5 minutes prior to kick-off, Battle High School's football team entered back into the stadium. They were headed to their sideline on the North end of the stadium. However, they circled back toward the 50 yard line, stopped on the 50 and began pointed to our team and our fans. They then turned around and went back to their sideline. The coin toss occurred and kickoff was shortly thereafter.

At halftime, we were up 42-6. As I was waiting for the officials to come to me in the east end zone at the beginning of halftime, I noticed their team was huddled up along with their staff. I headed toward their sideline to make sure nothing was occurring or any type of engagement with fans. As I headed over there, they broke their circle (huddle) and began their trek back to their locker room. I did notice all of their coaches were behind their players. As the 3rd quarter began, I received a phone call from our Asst. Principal, Travis Wilson, saying they felt like there could have been damage done inside Battle's locker room and to contact their Administrator on duty due to quite a few of loud noises coming from their locker room (such as locker door being slammed) I believe our building Principal, Dr. Seth Harrell, instructed our custodian, Gavin, to go into their locker room and check it out. Gavin said it was the worst he had seen in his 13 years. A locker door had been ripped off its hinges and laying on the floor. There was trash everywhere. I called their Asst. Principal, Rachel McCarthy, met her, explained that we believe the locker room was trashed at halftime, including a locker door ripped off. She and I went into the locker room. I took a picture of the locker door that was ripped off. I also noticed a box of bananas on a table inside the locker room. She took several pictures of the trashed locker room. We left the locker room and Gavin locked it back. She and I discussed it would be best if she was down here. She asked if we could have a resource officer or two down there with her. I told her, 'Yes, that would not be a problem. The game finished and I got the officials off of the field and back to their locker room. I then went back onto the field for supervision purposes. I noticed several Battle players still on the field visiting with their parents or patrons. I actually noticed 4 or 5 Battle players visiting with one of our players as well (smiling and laughing). I then escorted several Battle players off of the field and got them headed back to their locker room. Shortly afterward, I heard a school resource officer (believe it was Officer Chad Ludwig) come across the radio and state, "We need an Administrator to the Battle Locker room area. We may have a situation." Our Asst. Principal, Travis Wilson, and Coach Justin McMullen headed that way. I was not far behind along with Asst. Principal, Andelle Naeter. When I arrived, several of their Asst. Coaches commented, "How does this happen?" I told them the doors were locked and the facility was secured. One of their Asst. Coaches asked me, "If it was typical protocol for us to go through a visiting team's locker room?" I told him, ' Yes.' If we have suspicion that it may have been trashed based upon hearing locker doors being slammed. Another Asst. asked if we can view the cameras? I requested Mr. Wilson to view the cameras. Mr. Wilson viewed several different angles. The only Jackson personal that he saw were our Head Cross Country Coach entering from the upstairs stairwell down to the basement going to into a storage closet outside the locker room to get a cooler for their cross country meet the next day. The other individual was our custodian, Gavin. Gavin has been taking care of visiting football teams for 13 years. He makes certain the visiting locker room is locked as well as the outside door. He takes a lot of pride is making sure our facilities are secure and clean.

Other individuals that were outside the multi-purpose gym were probably 4 to 5 Jackson Police Officers as well as several Battle parents. Jackson HS Asst. Principals, Mr. Brad Berry and Mrs. Roseann Bruns were present as well. It is my belief that they were eluding to that our people got into their locker room and took items as well as trashed it.

I believe at some point, Battle's Asst. Principal Rachel McCarthy addressed their entire team. She told me that there were 6 phones were missing. These were 'found.' She gave me a short list of 'missing items' They are wireless beat headphones, two DS games (Pokemon heart gold and Mario Kart). She told me later that when she went back in the locker room, she noticed a bag of BBQ chips crumbled up and shavings of bananas inside duffle bags.

Prior to Battle leaving our campus, their Head Coach stated to me several times that he did not want his name to be tied this. Battle was off of our campus by 10:15pm.

I reached out to their Athletic Director, Alex Huck, yesterday and had a good conversation with him. I told him there were several negative things about our coaching staff, school and community from this game along with the officials supposedly using profanity toward players on social media. Many, to my belief, were not true. He had spoken to Mrs. McCarthy as well as their Head Coach. Their Head Coach told Mr. Huck that he was disappointed in the performance.

Two officials (including the lead official) from Friday night's crew reached out to me yesterday evening after learning about the negative comments on social media. Both assured me that they did not use any profanity. Players from both schools were told to shut their mouths and play football. At one point, the lead official circled up the 11 players on the field from both teams and told them to stop chirping at one another and play football. He asked all 22 players on the field, "If they wanted to play next week?"

I thought this was a great move his part.

Witness Statement by John Martin

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Dr. John Link

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