



Missouri State High School Activities Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Date: November 13, 2025

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MSHSAA Announces Findings and Action Following Class 1 District 1 Boys Soccer Semifinal Incident

Columbia, Mo. — The Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) has completed its review of an on-field altercation that occurred near the end of the Class 1 District 1 boys soccer semifinal match between St. Mary's South Side Catholic High School and Gateway Science Academy Charter on Thursday, November 6. St. Mary's won the game, qualifying them for the final match on Tuesday, November 11. The other qualifying school was Valley Park.

During the final minutes of the semifinal contest, a physical confrontation between two players escalated into a multi-player altercation involving individuals from both teams. Game officials issued four red cards to St. Mary's South Side Catholic and two to Gateway Science Academy Charter, resulting in automatic ejections. Both schools responded appropriately to the officials' special reports and acknowledged the required suspensions for the involved students.

Both schools were directed to investigate the situation and determine if there were additional students who violated the Board Policy on Unsportsmanlike Conduct, with specific reference to the extenuating circumstance of players who leave the bench to enter the field during a fight or altercation. The penalty for this action is a minimum one-game suspension.

St. Mary's South Side Catholic suspended two additional players after further investigation. At the request of another member school, Wednesday morning MSHSAA began collecting facts. On Saturday, upon request video was provided by St. Mary's South Side Catholic, which appeared to be security video. Due to poor quality and limited scope, the provided video was inconclusive. On Wednesday morning, MSHSAA staff discovered a high-quality video, taken by St. Mary's South Side Catholic's own Hudl camera, which provided clear evidence multiple players had left the bench and entered the field during the altercation. St. Mary's South Side Catholic explained they believed the policy directed suspension only for players who "joined" the altercation. The policy does not use this language.

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St. Mary's subsequently confirmed that multiple players who left the bench area were not suspended and participated in the District 1 Championship match on Tuesday, November 11. Under MSHSAA By-Law 1.2.3.a, participation by ineligible players requires forfeiture of the contest.

As a result, St. Mary's South Side Catholic must forfeit its district championship victory. In accordance with By-Law 1.2.3.c, Valley Park High School—the most recently defeated opponent—will advance to represent Class 1 District 1 in the Class 1 Quarterfinal on Saturday, November 15.

“MSHSAA’s role is to ensure fairness, consistency, and the safety of student-athletes,” said Dr. Jennifer Rukstad, MSHSAA Executive Director. “Our review determined that required suspensions were not applied, resulting in the use of ineligible participants. Enforcement of these rules is essential to maintaining the integrity of postseason competition.”

For questions related to this decision, please contact the MSHSAA Office.

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