

Belmont radio crew told to leave press box

From staff reports

Along with heightened security measures at the South Point-West Mecklenburg high school football game Friday night came a ban on media in the press box, at least for most of the first half.

That included the radio crew at WCGC in Belmont that covers South Point football, as well

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WCGC, said he and two other station employees were just about to begin their broadcast when, just minutes before

as all local newspapers and Charlotte television stations.

Chris Preslar, program director at

kickoff, West Mecklenburg administration officials came into the press box and ordered all media to leave.

"They started kicking everybody out," Preslar said. "They said they had an incident earlier in the day and didn't want any more publicity on that."

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Preslar said his crew was allowed back into the press box at about the midway point of the second quarter after they pleaded their case to Charlotte-Mecklenberg Schools Athletic Director Vicki Hamilton. According to Preslar, Hamilton said only television crews were to be banned from the field, and she called West Mecklenberg officials to allow the crew back in the box.

A Gazette sportswriter covered the game from the sidelines.

"We were told it was just certain media members, the TV people, that they didn't want there," Preslar said.

On its 11 p.m. newscast, Charlotte television station WBTV reported that CMS of-

ficials did not allow their cameras into the stadium to film the game. And the Carolina News 14 Web site also reported that camera crews were escorted from the stadium and were not allowed to talk to anyone at the game.

CMS athletic officials were not able to be reached for comment late Friday night.

The incident that touched off the security measures Friday night was a disturbance at the school earlier in the day. A fight in the hallways led to a three-hour lockdown and worries of a weapon on campus. No weapon was found, however. The search went on for about three hours before CMS determined the lockdown could be called off, said a report on the News 14 Web site.

Raiders manage to stay focused

By LARRY DAWALT
Gazette Correspondent

CHARLOTTE — Distractions abounded. But South Point had a football game to play.

Despite heightened security from a morning pushing and shoving match that led to a school lockdown at West Mecklenburg, the Red Raiders stayed focused on the field and defeated the Hawks, 21-7, in non-conference high school football action Friday night.

"We didn't talk to our players about it," South Point coach John Devine said of the incident. "As coaches, we prepare to handle any situation and keep our kids safe, but we wanted to keep our minds on the game."

The Red Raiders came out strong early, scoring three touchdowns in the first half, all on short runs by fullback Matt Hudspeth. But the offense sputtered in the second half while the Hawks controlled the ball.

"We came out and played well in the first half, but West Meck made some plays in the second half," Devine said. "They're improving."

Devine tipped his hat to the school, administration and parents of West Mecklenburg for the support of its team.

"You've got to give the people of West Meck credit," Devine said. "We didn't come over here to play the kids that got in the fight. We played their athletes and they have some good ones. They had a good crowd and they played a good game. They have every right to be proud."

The Hawks were a much-improved unit from the team South Point demolished last season, especially on offense.

"They mixed it up and kept us off-balance a little in the second half," Devine said. "We're satisfied with where we are, but we've got to find

the hunger. We've got to start tackling better in the open field and we need to execute better on offense."

Hudspeth was all the offense the Red Raiders needed in the first half as he consistently generated yardage up the middle. After his touchdown early in the game, he scored again on a 1-yard run with 1:20 left in the opening period and ran the two-point conversion to push the lead to 14-0.

South Point got the ball deep in West Mecklenburg territory on the next possession after an interception by James Justice gave the Red Raiders a first down at the Hawks' 18-yard line. From that point, the Red Raiders took only five plays to find paydirt with Hudspeth scoring from 2 yards out to run the lead to 21-0 at the half.

West Mecklenburg put together a 15-play drive to open the second half. But two straight sacks by the Red Raider defense forced a punt and South Point took over at the Hawk 20 with 2:57 left in the third quarter.

But the Raider Red offense couldn't move the ball and West Mecklenburg took over early in the fourth quarter and got on the scoreboard as quarterback Rickey Foggie tossed a 43-yard strike to wide receiver Quinton Gaddy for a touchdown.

From that point, the Red Raider defense held up to preserve the victory.

"We're satisfied with the win, but we know we can play better," Lowery said. "We've got to practice at game speed, then bring it out here and put it on the field."

SP 14 7 0 0 - 21
WM 0 0 0 7 - 7

SP - Matt Hudspeth 2 run (kick failed)

SP - Hudspeth 1 run (Hudspeth run)

SP - Hudspeth 2 run (Hudspeth run)

WM - Quinton Gaddy 43 pass from Rickey Foggie (Dewey Jones' kick)