

Dear Members of the NCFA:

I am writing in regards to the highly emotional response I gave to the question of our team's forfeiture at OCC. I would like to formally apologize to the members of the Onondaga Community College coaching staff for the comments that I made pertaining to their coaching. It needs to be made clear that I have no knowledge of the challenges that they face in coaching their players, nor do I have any knowledge of how they instruct their players. I share the challenges that are faced by all of the teams at the club level, and I am fully aware of how challenging it can be to teach the game to players who have inconsistent schedules and varying commitments. In all likelihood, what the OCC coaches are doing for their students-athletes is very admirable, and they did not deserve my accusatory words associated with their coaching techniques.

I would also like to clarify or correct a few of my comments from the report. First, we held the lead for about 15 seconds. Once we scored a touchdown, they returned the next kickoff for a touchdown to tie the game. In addition, it has been brought to my attention that NCFA rules use the same clock as the NCAA, so that is why the clock stopped so frequently. I will admit that all of the games we have played this year were not played using that clock. I should have been more aware of this fact prior to making my comments. Regarding the use of players who are 25 years old, the fact is it does not matter how old your players are so long as they are enrolled in a school. I hope that this letter will set the record straight regarding these concerns.

Very importantly, I want to make it clear that I do not believe the coaches were instructing their players to injure. Given the scrutiny that our game is currently under, such allegations are irresponsible and deserve retraction. We lost a lot of players to injury in a very short amount of time, many of which sustained head injuries on the field. This fact alone is not an indicator of our opposing coaches' practices, and I regret having made comments that implied such.

We are all coaches because we love the game of football, and we want to have a positive influence on our student-athletes. I should have been more cognizant of this as I was writing our appeal. I again have no idea about what transpires at OCC's practices and in their locker room, I should not have made any comment that led anyone to believe otherwise. I sincerely apologize for my actions.

Sincerely,

Stephen Sheeler