



# Deer Valley High School

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October 20, 2015

Bud Beemer  
Commissioner  
Bay Valley Athletic League  
1050 Neroly Road  
Oakley, CA 94561

Commissioner Beemer,

On Friday, October 16, 2015 Deer Valley High School and Pittsburg High School were scheduled for a varsity football game at 7:00 PM. We received one communication prior to the football game from Connie Spinnato, Vice Principal of Pittsburg High School, stating that the game may be late due to the senior celebration of the senior band members and the celebration for Vic Galli for his accomplishments.

We did not receive the customary game plan with a schedule showing the sequence of events, practice areas for warm-ups and field restrictions if any.

Prior to the game our varsity football team was on the practice field behind the visiting side bleachers beginning their warm-ups, when they were directed to leave the area because the band needed the field. Coach Hubbard asked where they could warm up and did not receive a definitive answer, so he took the team back to the locker room. He was then contacted by an unknown member of the Pittsburg Staff in the locker room advising him that he could warm up the team on the stadium football field. He proceeded to the field where Steve Ahonen, Pittsburg USD Administrator, told him that he could warm up the team from the Southern thirty (30) yard line to the goal post for the team. Coach Hubbard took the team to the area for the warm up. During the time for the warm up, prior to the game, with no communication with Coach Hubbard, any member of our extensive coaching staff or I did a single member of the Pittsburg staff approach us and request that we clear the field for the Pittsburg Marching Band. We saw the Pittsburg Marching Band form up in the North End Zone however we did not expect them to enter while we were on the field. The Pittsburg Band, under the direction of Ms. Jennifer Martinez, once formed immediately came onto the field while the Deer Valley High School varsity football team was engaged in warm-ups, in violation of **Sports and General Handbook Section 305H (f)—Bands, song girls, entertainment, etc., should never interfere with officials, practicing teams, or the playing of the game.** The resulting confusion of being surrounded by a very large and unyielding marching band, caused our players to mill around and not respond to the shouted commands of their coaches. The coaches tried to address the issue with members of the Pittsburg High School staff who were on the field who told them to leave the field. The players attempted to continue their warm-ups despite the band's presence and it appeared that they did not recognize the playing of the national anthem and did not respect the flag or our country. In speaking with coaches and players none of them realized that the national anthem was playing. I was on the 50 yard line and as a military veteran and retiree, I did not recognize the playing of the national anthem until at least one third through the song, at which time I turned to the flag and stood at the position of attention until the completion of the song.

Antioch Unified School District - Antioch, California

A video was posted of the incident which out of context makes Deer Valley High School and its players appear to be unpatriotic, uncaring and disrespectful to both the national anthem and the Pittsburg High School Marching Band. They are neither, if adults had acted appropriately and if the rules had been followed we would not have been in the situation to begin with.

The ensuing social media criticism, the media commentary and the court of public opinion has painted our students in an extremely negative light which they neither deserve nor should be subjected.

I am also very concerned about the safety of students who have not had adequate time to warm-up, which we were denied.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth Gardner  
Principal  
President of the Bay Area Valley Athletic League