

# No Shocker; Glenn baseball coach ambushed



BRAD EMONS

I went around the office last week and got varying opinions about this "Shockers" incident, which cost Westland John Glenn varsity baseball coach Todd Duffield his job last month.

I've had numerous emails and queries about what is the "real story" behind all of this.

"So what is the 'real reason'?" Why did the players decide to come up with a slogan "Shockers" for the 2002 season and wear it on the back of their sweatshirts?

The players' rationale to Duffield: "We're going to shock the world this season." They were going to be like the "Fab 5," the five freshman starters from the University of Michigan who shook the college basketball world during early '90s.

More commonly, it's a phrase which was patented back in the '60s by heavyweight champion

Muhammad Ali.

Upon my investigation, apparently the word "Shockers" is a term that some young males like to sling around school and in the locker room.

But it's also sexually offensive and embarrassing to the opposite gender. What may have been better left unsaid and behind closed doors became an open sore seeping out on the backs of sweatshirts dished in the hallways of Glenn High.

But I'm still trying to come to grips about why Duffield, a former Glenn player, got canned?

When he offered to have the slogan removed after a meeting with Glenn principal Joan Sedik, you would have thought the matter would have been resolved.

And why would a guy who loved to coach baseball so much throw away an opportunity after 16 years? Apparently his 23-8 record this past season couldn't save him from the sinking Rocket ship.

Duffield was caught in a pickle between the front office of the Wayne-Westland Community Schools and his own players. It was a rundown he wasn't going

to escape.

What really got Duffield tagged out? First, the players who came up with the original idea aren't looking so slick right now. It cost this man his job.

Disagreements over fund-raising activities in previous years between Glenn baseball boosters and the administration also set the tone for a frosty relationship. The two sides clashed over fundraisers, namely outfield banner signs, suggested field improvement projects and a golf outing.

So was Duffield in on the slogan "Shockers"?

He denies being a party to it and only learned about it well after the fact, kept in the dark like most clueless adults — such as myself — who never heard of such a term in that context.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Gregory Baracy, however, remains adamant that his assistant superintendent Dan Slee did a thorough investigation and had just cause to make his decision.

Could things have been handled differently? You bet.

Why was outgoing Glenn athletic director Gerald Szukaitis bypassed entirely? And why did Sedik have to solve this issue by involving the front office?

The only way was the one who received the original complaint that "Shockers" was sexually offensive.

Of course, when I tried to press Sedik about the investigation, she pulled a Jose Jimenez on me. "I know nothing or see nothing," was basically her response about the incident, referring all questions to Slee.

Sedik, ironically, wasted little time in hiring a new varsity girls basketball coach (Mike Schuette) without giving new athletic director Ron Turgoz an opportunity to make the hire when he took over July 1.

Why didn't she defer that decision to Slee?

Slee, however, sent a three-paragraph letter to Duffield on June 14, stating: "I believe you demonstrated a lack of acceptable leadership in that matter, both before the shirts were imprinted and after questions arose about those shirts in

February or March.

"This is not the type of leadership, or lack of thereof, that we expect of our coaches."

And when a coach of 16 years gets the final heave-ho, doesn't he deserve a final face-to-face meeting?

I've spoken with Baracy in the past and felt it was only right to get an answer straight from the top. Baracy explained to me the connotation of the term "Shockers." It's something you could print in Hustler magazine, but not in the Observer. And he remains convinced that Slee's investigation had just-cause.

Some readers, however, remain puzzled by all of this, especially Robert Goodwin, who wrote me this recent email:

"I read with interest your July 4 article about the Westland John Glenn coach being fired over the slogan on the backs of the sweatshirts worn by the baseball team."

"Imagine my surprise to find the offending slogan was 'Shockers.'"

"As a proud graduate of Wichita State University — home of the

Shockers, as pointed out in your article — that's the first time I've heard of this term being sexually offensive."

"By the way, the term 'Shockers' came from the early 1950s of the school when members of the athletic teams were engaged in the Kansas wheat harvest. In those days, the wheat was cut by hand and bundled into shocks of wheat on the fields. Therefore, the term 'Shockers' connoted strength, hard work and a strong connection with the land, not a bad set of values."

"I hope some day to understand the process by which commonly used phrases are somehow transformed over time into being unacceptable. Who are the judges and what are the rules of evidence used in this process?"

"Like coach Duffield, I didn't know the 'new' meaning of this term, either."

Thanks, Robert, I couldn't have said it any better. (Emons is the Livonia-Westland sports editor for the Observer and can be reached at (734) 953-2123 or by e-mail at bemons@ec.homecomm.net.)

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## Bucks battle Invaders to draw

By C.J. RISAK  
STAFF WRITER  
cjrisk@ec.homecomm.net

Once again, the weather was hot Sunday. And once again, the Mid-Michigan Bucks were not.

There were improvements for the Bucks, who hosted the Indiana Invaders in a Premier Development League soccer match at Canton High School.

They surrendered just one goal, after giving up nine in their previous two games. But, despite controlling the play, the Bucks could not mount enough offense to get what they needed most — a victory.

Instead, they settled for a 1-1 draw.

"We were a little better organized (defensively)," said Bucks' coach Dario Brose, his team's winless streak now at four games. "Obviously, our finishing wasn't there."

The defense wasn't perfect, however. The Invaders, now 6-4-3 overall, struck first when the Bucks' Boyzzz Khumale was called for a takedown inside the penalty area 10 minutes into the match. Leo Peirano converted the penalty kick and Indiana had a 1-0 lead.

"You come out and give up something like that right away," said Brose, who played nearly the entire match in the midfield. "You're down 1-0 and you have to chase the game."

"We've been doing this all year long."

The Invaders gained no momentum from the goal. Instead it was the Bucks who surged, taking control of the play and keeping it for most of the match.

"They're a very explosive

## SOCCER

team," Invaders' coach Mario Mantz of the Bucks. "They have a lot of good players, a lot of experienced players who have played at the highest level."

"They controlled the midfield, that was the difference. Chris Sawyer was a giant in goal (for us)."

He was, but he couldn't prevent the Bucks from knotting the score in the 36th minute. After relentlessly pressing inside the Invaders' zone, Pat Noonan fielded a pass from Brose and punched a shot past Sawyer to tie at 1-1.

The Bucks continued to get the better chances through the second half and both 10-minute, sudden-death overtimes, but could not convert. Ryan Mack (Birmingham) got a shot past Sawyer in the 79th minute but Indiana defender Jerry Ryback was there to block it, and with five minutes left in regulation Sawyer got just a piece of Stephan David's shot, sending it into the post and out of bounds.

Mid-Michigan had an 8-4 shot advantage in the first half and a 9-7 edge in the second.

The draw had an adverse affect on the Bucks' playoff chances. They got just one point, giving them 40 for the season with an 8-5-2 record; West Michigan's 6-2 triumph at Dayton improved its record to 8-6-0 with 39 points, and the Edge have played one fewer game.

The Chicago Fire Reserve have just about clinched the title in the Great Lakes Division with a 12-1-1 mark and 54 points

(through Sunday). The Bucks are clinging to second place, the last playoff berth, but both West Michigan and Indiana (with 30 points in 13 games) are in the hunt.

"We always kill ourselves," said Brose, his team having allowed 31 goals, the second-highest total in the division. "On certain days we do (play well), but we're very inconsistent."

"We've had so many changes in our lineup. There aren't too many people who have solidified their spots."

Which is why Brose, who was starting for the MLS-champion San Jose team prior to getting injured last season, has been forced to insert himself into the Bucks' lineup.

"I'd rather have those guys out there," he said. "But we have people injured, people suspended, people on vacation. For the Fourth of July."

In the Bucks' case, it seems some guys have been on vacation longer than that.

Notes: The Bucks went into Sunday's match with a 1-1-0 record in overtime games. Now they are 1-1-1, with an earlier draw against Indiana in a match suspended by foul weather. . . .

As if they didn't have enough trouble. Midway through the first 10-minute overtime, Bucks' forward Pat Noonan, who scored their only goal in the match, and Invaders' defender Oscar Lopez got tangled up and some pushing and shoving ensued. Both were red-carded and ejected, which means neither can play in their team's next game.

Noonan is the Bucks' leading scorer with seven goals and two assists (16 points). The Bucks play a pair of non-division matches against Thunder Bay in Sault Ste. Marie this weekend. . . .

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