

TEAM TURMOIL

BACKGROUND

Greenwood School has a well earned reputation as a leader in inter-school basketball competition.

Pat and Alex decided to try out for the 15A School basketball team. Both students are keen basketball players and were trying for the same position.

Jamie, a senior student at the School, coaches the 15A team and is responsible for selection of the members. Jamie also happens to be a sibling of Pat.

In the trials, both Pat and Alex played well.

Jamie selected Pat over Alex for the position in the team.

THE INCIDENTS

Pat did not play particularly well during the first competition game. After the game, Alex's parents sought out the parents of Pat and Jamie and an argument ensued about the selection criteria and Jamie's decision to select Pat. They maintained that Jamie was guilty of favouritism and said that Alex should replace Pat in the team. The argument became very heated and was observed by Alex and Alex's friend Chris who is a member of the team.

Chris was very unhappy about Alex missing out on selection and telephoned their mutual friends and told them about Pat's lacklustre performance during the game and the argument between the two sets of parents.

On the following school day Alex and Chris were met by their friends in the school quadrangle and the friends loudly claimed that Pat was only selected because of the family connection.

Pat heard the angry accusations and was very upset. Pat was supported by friends and an angry brawl ensued between them and Alex, Chris and their friends .

Jamie heard the ruckus and tried to restrain the fighting students.

When teachers were called, the brawl quickly subsided.

THE AFTERMATH

Alex's parents have made a complaint to the Principal, Ms Cartwright, claiming that Jamie had made a partial and unfair decision in selecting Pat for the team. They have proposed to provide an extra basketball court for the School and are now indicating that what had happened has dampened their enthusiasm about the School. They have told Ms Cartwright that they may reconsider their proposal.

Ms Cartwright was furious about the whole matter. She thought that, in view of the family connection, Jamie should have arranged for someone else to make the selection between Pat and Alex. She was also concerned about the possibility of Alex's parents withdrawing their proposal to provide a much needed additional basketball court for the School.

The excellent cooperative spirit which the team had previously enjoyed had clearly been damaged by the incidents. Also, the loud argument between the parents had been observed by the other team and spectators from the other school. This might have damaged Greenwood's good reputation.

Alex was deeply upset about everything that had happened. Alex regretted having telephoned friends after the game and felt that this had made the problem much worse than it might otherwise have been, particularly after it was learnt that Pat was not well during the game.

Ms Cartwright has told Jamie, Pat, Alex and Chris that she is considering taking serious action about the incidents but invites them to participate in mediation to achieve an outcome which could lead her to change her mind.