

Running up the score is poor lesson

To the Editor:

Athletics should be a learning experience. The recent abusive score that Camden High School imposed upon Camden County Institute of Technology (in a boys' basketball game in which a Camden High player was allowed to score 100 points in a lopsided game) made regional, and possibly, national headlines, and was a poor lesson for the losing team and the winning team.

Not only was there (such a disparity) between the teams' scores, but this was about how the difference was imposed. Why did Camden High "press" the opposition when the winner was determined early in the game? The results could be termed "competitive abuse." Yes, winning is the objective of sports, but there should be ethics included.

The losing team had to experience an aura of severe defeat and insult. Their effort must have been without any degree of satisfaction. Athletics are supposed to be fun, teach sportsmanship and develop self-esteem. This certainly could not have been the case in this statistical impropriety for the losing team.

The winning team showed no respect for the losing team, and probably was a victim of distorted, escalated egos. This would have been a great opportunity for its reserve team, which also

comes to practice every day...to get playing time. This would have been a "payback" for being called "second-string" and would have been a more appropriate match of abilities.

Competition has a lot of benefits to offer — when one does his best and receives self- or group satisfaction. Let us continue to promote competition in all areas of a young person's life, whether it be athletics or academics, but within reasonable circumstances.

The above reactions come from a former basketball coach.

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