

Lebanon High football will not hold spring practice or scrimmages after it was determined the program violated TSSAA rules concerning off-season workouts.

Football coach Troy Crane is also subject to "immediate dismissal" should he be found to violate any TSSAA rules in the future.

By self-imposing these sanctions and cooperating with the TSSAA, Lebanon High avoided the possibility of more stern penalties being handed down by the governing body of Tennessee athletics.

According to a letter sent to LHS Principal Myra Sloan dated April 18, from TSSAA Executive Director Bernard Childress, it appears the team was working offense and defense on alternating days after school hours during a time when only weight training, conditioning and open facilities are permitted.

A total of six organized practice sessions were held at Nokes-Lasater Field in violation of the TSSAA calendar -- some utilizing a football disguised and wrapped in a towel.

"All the facts were turned in to the TSSAA, nothing was left out. We're going to move on and make sure nothing like this happens again," Crane said Tuesday morning. "We're going to do a better job of understanding TSSAA bylaws for any activity we do as a football program.

"I thought we were within the guidelines of the TSSAA. As the head football coach at Lebanon High School, it's totally my responsibility -- no other assistant coach, administrator whatever -- it's my responsibility to know what you can and can't do.

"I let the football team down and I let the community down. I'm sorry for that, but we're going to continue to work hard in the weight room as we get transitioned over to the new facility. We're going to be ready come August when we open up the season."

"I was operating in what I thought was an acceptable practice, and obviously it was not," Crane said. "Anytime you get something put in your personnel file, your job and livelihood depends on it," Crane said.

The coach had planned to hold formal spring practice sessions Monday, April 30 through Friday, May 11 with a May 7 scrimmage at Coffee County High and a Blue - White game on May 11.

"We have a motto here at Lebanon that says, 'Pride, Spirit and Tradition'. I'm not sure violating rules lives up to that motto," said Wilson County Director of Schools Mike Davis.

"He (Crane) told me that he didn't feel like he was violating a rule at the time. He says he wasn't aware that there was a violation. But it appears it was.

"That's something that Coach Crane is going to have to sort through. If you violate a rule, you should expect to be sanctioned," Davis said. "I hope we can move forward from this point and learn from the mistakes and live up to that motto."

When asked about Crane's status as head coach of the Blue Devils, Davis said, "I expect he (Crane) will continue as head coach. That's up to the principal and her staff. I don't anticipate any change right now. It's unfortunate that the kids are the ones who are going to be suffering because of these sanctions."

The violations by Crane and his staff are believed to be the first at Lebanon High going back at least to the late 1960s.

"We want to abide by any and all rules, whether they are TSSAA rules by federal law -- whatever," Principal Sloan said. "We want to be known as a school that abides by the rules."

## **PREP FOOTBALL -- LHS self-imposes football sanctions**

Tuesday, April 24, 2012

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Crane is coming off a 2-8 campaign in 2011, his first at Lebanon High after replacing Bobby Brown. Now an administrator in the Lebanon Special Schools District, Brown was let go after going 44-51 in nine years as the head coach of the Blue Devils.

A native of Red Bay, Ala., Crane held a teaching position at Wilson Central High at the time of his hiring at LHS -- but was coaching quarterbacks at Cumberland University on Dewayne Alexander's staff.

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