

NMAA Appeals Review Committee Hearing
West Las Vegas High School
March 16, 2026
9:00 a.m. - Virtual

Welcome - Meeting called to order by Mr. Paul Benoit, NMAA Appeals Review Committee Chairman, at 9:05 a.m., Mrs. Alissa Wesbrook, Assistant to the Executive Director, conducted roll call and the following members were present:

Mr. Brian Stacy
Mr. Keith Durham
Mr. Paul Benoit

Not Present:

Ms. Freda Daugherty
Mr. Mike Chambers
Mr. Vance Lee
Mr. Gerry Washburn
Mr. Bill Green

3 members were present representing a committee quorum.

Approval of the Agenda:

Mr. Benoit asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Stacy made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Durham seconded. A vote was taken and passed unanimously (3-0).

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Benoit asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 17, 2026, appeal review hearing. Mr. Durham made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Stacy seconded. A vote was taken and passed unanimously (3-0).

Closed Session (unless family requests hearing to be in open session)

Mr. Benoit asked the appealing party if they wished for the appeal hearing to be in open session or closed session. The appealing party requested the hearing be conducted in open session.

Mr. Benoit- the appeal hearing will be open as per the family's request.

Background and Ruling

Isaac is a sophomore at West Las Vegas High School and has participated in Soccer and Basketball this school year for the Dons. On August 16, 2025, Isaac was ejected from a varsity soccer match versus Ruidoso HS. The ejection resulted from receiving two yellow cards. One was for a dangerous play and the second for pushing an opponent with two hands from behind. On October 2, 2025, Isaac was again ejected from a varsity soccer match. This took place after their contest versus ATC and was the result of a red card given for disrespect and profanity towards an official. On February 12, 2026, Isaac was ejected for a third time during a JV boys basketball game versus St. Michael's HS. An official reported that he saw Isaac throw a punch at a player on the opposing team and this resulted in his ejection. On February 23, I met with Isaac, his parents, and school staff to discuss the three incidents and talk about next steps. At

that time, it was communicated that the sanction for a student's third ejection during a school year is suspension from all activities for 365 days. Based on the February 23rd meeting and upon further review of all facts, the NMAA issued a more lenient suspension which included a full sit out for the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year and 25% of contests during the 2026-2027 soccer and basketball seasons. That would be 5 matches in soccer and 6 games in basketball. It should be noted that the lesser sanction was given based on two factors: The first was the nature of the initial soccer ejection in August. And the second was the fact that the NMAA did not hold a meeting with the student and school after the second ejection which is typically done per NMAA bylaws.

Appealing Party Summary

Mr. Benavidez stated the game against St Michaels, the official stated that he threw a punch, he did not throw a punch, and they didn't specify that he was ejected. He was able to finish the game and was allowed to play in the varsity game right after. Apparently, the officials went after the fact and the coaches stated that someone reported it. The other ejections were all during a play and there is video on those. He never threw a punch at another player.

Ms. Benavidez stated she is concerned about the different processes of how things are communicated. He is on a 504 plan and feels it wasn't explained to him in a timely manner and in a matter that he could understand. Communication to parents was not done very well, she makes sure her son is doing what he needs to do. There needs to be more accountability on everyone's part. She is confused about certain contacts and what is appropriate and what isn't. Clips she sent in shows inappropriate shoving and pushing by many players and it wasn't called so she is confused if it's just certain schools. It was claimed that he punched someone and how he was treated in these games was not fair. If the officials controlled the game, then things wouldn't escalate.

Mr. Benavidez- when he did get the yellow cards, he already took the online class that he had to take and feels that he is being punished, like double jeopardy. He has already sat out the games since the last incident. Feels these sanctions are very harsh and he has already served his time. He would like this to be overturned so he can compete in track and other activities.

Tripp- he did ask the coaches to submit a statement, and the basketball coach did, but the soccer coach was out of state so he was not able to.

Committee Questions

Stacy- did he play last year as a freshman.

Mr. Benavidez- Yes he did, he has attended WLW since 7th grade.

Stacy- he is a 10th grader and played last year, did he have any issues last year.

Isaac- No non last year.

Stacy- so what happened this year.

Isaac – stated he was it was all in the heat of the moment in the games and things get to him now more than last year. Trash talking and getting hit, escalates his reaction.

Ms. Benavidez- they also lost their son a year ago and her mother is battling cancer so he has a lot to process and is going through some things at home.

Stacy- How are Isaac's grades.

Tripp- A little above average. He has a 3.1 right now.

Stacy- it was stated that he has a 504 and this is a punishment of double jeopardy. 504's are based on academics, they can put sports in with academics, but 504 plans are handled through the school and has

nothing to do with athletics. It was also stated that this is a double jeopardy and should be wiped clean, there is tier system to stop the behavior. It was stated by the father Isaac is taking class after class online as a result of his actions, so what is he learning from that.

Mr. Benavidez- stated where do the coaches come into play. They help to build that fire, and everyone turns their back on him. No one is helping him in this situation.

Stacy-- it was stated there are issues going on at home, what help is he getting from home.

Mr. Benavidez- he gets family support, help him to stay on top of his grades, has things to do at home. He is also seeing the counselor at school for anxiety.

Stacy- Have they tried communicating to coaches.

Ms. Benavidez- she speaks with the coaches regularly and always makes sure he interprets what is being told to him correctly. The head basketball coach is very good with the communication. The soccer coach is not very approachable and feels like that where things transpired.

Stacy- being an athlete, it doesn't get any easier. How will he react or change his behavior and what is he going to do.

Isaac- he is going to keep his cool and not overact and not worry about others.

Stacy- he has two more years of playing, if he gets ejected again, what is the proper punishment.

Mr. Benavidez-The problem is NMAA staff needs to go and watch some of these game and see how these games are being played and situations are being handled. The refs let it go. Their son is not the only one that gets frustrated. When they see St Michael's play they will see that they push left and right and speaking to the officials all the time.

Durham- did the coaches say anything to him about getting ejected. The soccer doesn't visit with him about anything.

Durham- he watches a lot of soccer. How long has he played.

Isaac- For 12 years.

Durham- when a professional soccer player gets a yellow card what do they do.

Isaac- they change their play so they don't get another yellow coach.

Durham- Soccer is a physical game and he understands that but the adjustments need to be made so they can play.

Benoit- does Isaac participate in anything in the spring.

Mr. Benavidez- Track, he does long jump and the 100 meter.

Benoit- how many high schools does the NMAA serve in NM.

Mr. Dusty Young-158 member schools includes public, private, BIE, charter, and alternative.

Benoit- Is it standard for the NMAA to get out and see all the sport games.

Young- it is very hard to get out and see every regular season game, they are a staff of 13 so that would be tough, but we do get out as much as we can.

Benoit- he also broadcasts football and travels a good part of the state and often runs into he and his staff.

Dusty- a piece of what they do is visit with the schools and do get out.

Benoit - asked Mr. Tripp how many concerns from the school about quality of officials were sent to the NMAA from WLVI.

Tripp- He stated none.

Benoit - do the parents understand that 3 ejections in a year call for a sit out period of 365 days of no participation. That this rule was backed off by 75%, having Isaac miss 25% of his sports season rather than 100% of the seasons next year and the remainder of this year, so Mr. Young's sanctions were lenient.

Mr. Benavidez stated yes, they understand.

Executive Session

Mr. Benoit asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session for discussion purposes only. A motion was made by Mr. Stacy and seconded by Mr. Durham to go into Executive Session at 9:43 a.m. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Yes/For	No/Against	Appeal Review Committee Member Name
X		Mr. Paul Benoit
X		Mr. Brian Stacy
X		Mr. Keith Durham

Mr. Benoit asked for a motion to go back into open session. A motion was made by Mr. Durham and seconded by Mr. Stacy to go back into open session at 9:55 a.m. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously (3-0). Mr. Benoit stated there was no action taken during Executive Session.

Yes/For	No/Against	Appeal Review Committee Member Name
X		Mr. Paul Benoit
X		Mr. Brian Stacy
X		Mr. Keith Durham

Action Items

Vote On Student Eligibility: Mr. Benoit asked if there was any need for further discussion, if not he asked for a motion to uphold, amend or overturn the original decision for the West Las Vegas High School appeal. A motion was made by Mr. Stacy to uphold the decision of the New Mexico Activities Association. Mr. Durham seconded. A roll call vote was taken and unanimously passed (3-0).

Yes/For	No/Against	Appeal Review Committee Member Name
X		Mr. Paul Benoit
X		Mr. Brian Stacy
X		Mr. Keith Durham

Adjournment

Mr. Benoit asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Mr. Durham and seconded by Mr. Stacy. A vote was taken and passed unanimously. (3-0) The meeting was adjourned at 9:56 a.m.