



# Harford County Public Schools

## NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

### Mariners forfeit games, remain on track for play-offs

Joppatowne High's ineligible player cost 2007-08 regional championship; plus three games this season

As a result of the October 28<sup>th</sup> Appeal Hearing regarding a player's residency status, the Maryland Public Secondary School Athletic Association has upheld the sanction forfeiting ten games from the 2007 Regional Championship football season and the first three games of the 2008 football season at Joppatowne High School.

Upon learning, after the third game of the 2008 season, of a potential ineligible player, Joppatowne High School initiated an investigation and made disclosure to the Maryland Public Secondary School Athletic Association. Despite the discovery of falsified residency documentation that was submitted by the parent, an appeal that was based on the school having exercised due diligence was denied by the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association's Appeal Committee.

Joppatowne High School cooperated fully with the investigation, knowing that it is invariably the players, coaches, and students who suffer most from this type of incident. Superintendent Haas has directed Mr. Zorbach, our Supervisor of Athletics, to analyze this situation and to work with the county's athletic directors to determine what procedural measures might be considered to avoid a similar reoccurrence in our schools.

With increasingly mobile family dynamics, Harford County is not alone in the struggle to maintain accurate residency records. Other counties in Maryland have dealt with residency-based eligibility violations in recent years. The complexities of this dynamic will only increase with a struggling economy that necessitates frequent family relocation and the impending influx of BRAC related residents. School communities are placed at additional risk of sanction and further victimized when adults attempt to circumvent residency requirements and intentionally enroll their children in illegal jurisdictions.

Joppatowne High School has a proud tradition of athletic excellence and this decision in no way diminishes the present or past character and accomplishment of its coaches and players. Going into this Friday's game against Rising Sun, the Mariners remain in contention for a play-off berth with a 5 - 3 record.

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