



OCEAN LAKES HIGH SCHOOL

885 Schumann Drive • Virginia Beach, Virginia 23454-6878 • (757) 648-5550 • Fax: (757) 721-4309

Virginia High School League Appeals Committee Outcome for Ocean Lakes High October 28, 2009

STATEMENT OF CHERYL ASKEW, PRINCIPAL OF OCEAN LAKES HIGH SCHOOL

Today a committee of the Virginia High School League (VHSL) Executive Committee met to hear an appeal from Ocean Lakes High School regarding the recent decision of a Beach District panel requiring that the Dolphins football team forfeit six games due to an ineligible player. While I believe that Ocean Lakes made a strong case, the VHSL Committee did vote to uphold the penalty of forfeitures.

Obviously, we are very disappointed in the outcome. It is indeed a heartbreaking turn of events for student athletes who have played superbly, but most importantly, have been the epitome of grace under pressure. In the wake of this decision, I know that many will want to know the details of the appeal, especially as it relates to the discussion of eligibility issues. I will not address questions about the particulars of this case because to do so would put a member of our football team and his family in a highly defensive situation. I have been advised that the members of the VHSL committee will also respect the confidentiality of the case for that same reason.

I anticipate the inevitable question: Where does Ocean Lakes go from here? Our answer: The Dolphins will continue to play great football, pure and simple. Despite what is now their official record, their prowess is undeniable. Some have asked me if the required forfeiture is going to hurt individuals' chances of scholarships or playing football in college. My answer has been and remains, "no." These young men have handled disappointment by playing football as if a championship were imminent, refusing to give into fatalism and recriminations. That speaks volumes about their character – to college scouts, college admissions officers and the larger community of Hampton Roads.