

Lots of people out there are calling for Southern Columbia to be crucified in the wake of racial incidents during the week and following the Tigers' 37-22 conquest of Pittsburgh Westinghouse in the 2A state championship football game.

All I can say is: Remember Chester. In 1959 when a group of Chester High School students attacked a kid from Scranton in the parking lot of the Palestra, the PIAA stepped in and barred the Clippers from competing in sports during the 1959-60 school year.

Chester had just lost to Farrell, 76-66, in the state championship game at the Palestra on the University of Pennsylvania campus in Philadelphia when this attack occurred. None of the child thugs were members or had anything to do with the basketball team. Being teenagers who thought they knew everything, the attackers mistook a kid from Kingston High School -- 125 miles *north* of Philly -- as a Farrell fan.

This 15-year-old boy sustained a severe concussion and was hospitalized for quite a while. The superintendent of his school district demanded Chester athletics be severely punished and he got his wish. No sports of any sorts for the Clippers -- and keep in mind they were favorites to win the state title in 1960.

But the PIAA, led by the iron-fisted Mark Funk, laid down the law and, as fate would have it, ruined Chester athletics for a few years. (The Clippers weren't in the playoffs again until 1964-65 when they reclaimed the District 1 title.)

Funk said Chester's punishment stemmed not only from the aftermath of the Farrell game, but a number of incidents involving Chester fans since 1956.

So, now we have Southern Columbia, which beat Westinghouse, 37-22, Dec. 9 for its sixth straight state title and 13th overall. Oddly, the win could be construed as an upset since the Tigers lost an unheard of three games this season, and in western Pennsylvania, at least, it was all Westinghouse, Westinghouse, Westinghouse. Why, the Bulldogs beat Farrell (there's that name again)! and they beat Steel Valley!

Actually, I'm not convinced Westinghouse nation wasn't more full of itself going into the game than Southern Columbia, which showed the Bulldogs they weren't invincible after all.

But, anyway, afterward, this racist Tik-Tok video surfaced featuring players? Regular students? Whatever, it casts Southern in a very dim light.

<https://twitter.com/GoonSquadFresh/status/1601568519639863298?s=20&t=dTAKo6tNFeDoGLaJu6wig>

(And talk about stupid. Post it on Tik-Tok for the world to see. Eyeball roll.)

What's more, there were some controversial signs at a Southern Columbia pep rally -- Whip Westinghouse with a whip pictured for one example.

Since then, the PIAA has asked Southern Columbia to look into these incidents. Uh-huh. We'll see what happens with that.

In the meantime, the sporting press is all over Twitter condemning Southern Columbia -- IMHO before they know all the facts.

All I'm saying is be careful before you go shooting off your mouths about Southern, which already has been tried and convicted in the court of public opinion and awaits only the sentencing.

(One wag wants Southern to be banned from post-season play for the next three years!)

The 1960 Chester Clippers were favorites to win the state title. One of its players, Emerson Baynard, was a state-class harrier. They had a pitcher named Lew Krause who was highly sought after by major league teams. (This was before the draft, but he was signed right out of high school for beaucoup bucks by the Kansas City A's who wasted no time rushing him to the majors.) But none of those athletes could play/run/pitch during the 1959-60 school year. Chester wasn't even allowed to compete against PIAA schools.

So, we'll see what happens to Southern Columbia.

Footnote – The district issued a response on Dec. 13, basically saying no harm was meant. That was the end of it – especially when 3A state champion Belle Vernon was found to be doing similar things.