

# High school basketball coach and player dismissed after their team allegedly hurled antisemitic rhetoric against opponent

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Mark Vergari/The Journal News/USA Today Network

By Samantha Beech and Maria Sole Campinoti, CNN

**(CNN)** — A girls' public high school basketball coach and one of the team's players have been dismissed after antisemitic comments were made to the

opposing private Jewish school team during a game last week, according to a statement from the school system and the mayor of Yonkers, New York.

An investigation into the incident is ongoing, officials said, adding other people possibly involved could be disciplined.

The game took place Thursday between the girls' varsity teams from The Leffell School, a private Jewish school in Hartsdale, and Roosevelt High School Early College Studies, a public school in Yonkers.

During the third quarter, members of The Leffell School team were injured by what Leffell player Robin Bosworth called "the other team's physical style of play" according to an op-ed for her online school newspaper, The Lion's Roar.

Players on the opposing team shouted "antisemitic slurs and curses at us," Bosworth wrote, adding the Leffell School team ended the game early, after the third quarter.

"Attacking a team because of their school's religious association is never acceptable, but especially due to the current war in Israel and the world's rise in antisemitism, this felt extremely personal to me and many members of my team," Bosworth wrote.

Since fighting intensified in early October between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, there have been troubling spikes in reported antisemitic – and anti-Arab or anti-Muslim – incidents in the United States.

There were more than 2,000 antisemitic incidents reported in the two months after October 7, a 337% increase over the same period last year, according to the Anti-Defamation League. And the Council on American-Islamic

Relations reported more than 2,000 requests for help and reports of bias following October 7.

## Officials say hate speech won't be tolerated

"The Yonkers Public Schools along with the City of Yonkers sincerely apologize to the students and community of The Leffell School for the painful and offensive comments made to their women's basketball team during a recent game with Roosevelt High School- Early College Studies," Yonkers Public Schools Interim Superintendent Luis Rodriguez and Mayor Mike Spano said in a statement Sunday condemning the incident.

"Collectively, we do not and will not tolerate hate speech of any kind from our students and community. The antisemitic rhetoric reportedly made against the student athletes of The Leffell School are abhorrent, inappropriate and not in line with the values we set forth for our young people."

An initial investigation was conducted by Yonkers Public Schools involving game officials, coaches, students and school officials from The Leffell School, the system said.

"After a thorough review of videos taken at the game and interviews with those who witnessed the incident, the Yonkers Public Schools dismissed the coach and one player from the Roosevelt basketball team," the statement said. "The investigation is ongoing. Should the District determine other students were involved in the incident, further action would be taken by the school District where appropriate."

“Along with Mayor Spano’s convening of religious, educational and civic leaders, Yonkers Public Schools also will administer further counseling and guided training sessions amongst the school community so to prevent this from happening again,” officials said in the joint statement.

CNN has reached out to representatives from both schools and the department of education for comment.

Officials have not identified the coach or the player.

In addition to removing a player and dismissing the team’s coach, restoration efforts between Yonkers Public Schools and The Leffell School are underway, according to Yonkers Public Schools spokesperson Akeem Jamal, who added the two schools will soon meet to discuss those measures.

Bosworth has “played a sport every athletic season throughout my high school career, and I have never experienced this kind of hatred directed at one of my teams before,” she said in her op-ed.

“If a team shows blatant disrespect towards my team and our school community’s values, it should not be tolerated or forgotten immediately following the game,” Bosworth wrote.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul on Saturday shared a link to [a news story about the incident on X](#), formerly known as Twitter, noting: “A high school basketball game.

**This cannot be who we are as New Yorkers. No one should ever be subjected to antisemitism or any kind of hate.”**