

On Saturday August 5th, 2017, our team was participating in the Nike 3-on-3 basketball tournament in downtown Los Angeles, when I was assaulted by Mr. Horry at around 1:40pm. I am still in shock over this incident, but in order for you and your viewers to understand all that happened that day, I will start from the beginning.

When my team and I arrived to the court in preparation for our game, I noticed Mr. Horry standing on the sideline. A lifelong Lakers fan, I recognized him immediately. I wanted to thank Mr. Horry for taking the time out of his day to be there in support of youth basketball. I knew that his son was on the opposing team, but I also know that for all the kids playing in this tournament, seeing a 7-time NBA champion watching their games would be an experience that they would never forget.

So I approached Mr. Horry and offered him a greeting and a handshake. I thanked him for being there and mentioned how impactful his presence was for all the children. A bit surprisingly, Mr. Horry was not receptive to my conversation. He reluctantly took my handshake, but did not respond to my expressions of gratitude. In summation, he was a bit stand-offish. At the time, I didn't think much of it, and I figured his attitude toward me was likely a result of many people trying to engage him during the course of the tournament and he was perhaps a little tired of that. It was only after the events of the day unfolded that I thought

back to our first encounter and realized that Mr. Horry had no intention of being friendly with me--the opposing coach--or the opposing players.

As the game got underway, it was clear that Mr. Horry was trying to use his stature, both physical and otherwise, to gain an advantage for his team. From the beginning of the game Mr. Horry was being verbally abusive to all involved, including his own players. He berated his players--including his own son--as well as berated the official.

Having more than a decade of coaching experience, I know that being verbally abusive is not the most productive way for a coach to get his or her message across. Many times I have seen players, parents, and officials challenge a coach who was being verbally abusive. In this case, however, due to his being a former NBA star and physically imposing, no one challenged Mr. Horry's words or behavior.

In my mind I thought, "As long as he doesn't abuse my players, it isn't any of my business."

Then, to my shock and dismay, I heard Mr. Horry yell to his son, in reference to my player, "that motherfucker ain't

that good, why you letting him score on you?" At that point, I was in a bit of a quandary.

Coaching youth basketball provides many opportunities to help kids rise to challenges and put all fear aside in pursuit of athletic excellence. Many times my team has played against teams with older, bigger kids, and my message has always been that they shouldn't be intimidated. They must meet these challenges head-on and then, no matter what the outcome, they can accept it and be proud of themselves.

Mr. Horry is a large and imposing man, but just as I teach my players, I couldn't let that intimidate me, or let them be intimidated by the fact that this former NBA star was calling them 'mother fuckers.' As any coach will attest, protecting your players from abuse, whether physical or verbal, is our top priority. So I told my team, "Everything is okay. Just keep playing your game..." and so on; standard coach speak in a situation such as this.

A few minutes later, I decided to make a substitution. Mr. Horry was standing next to the scorer's table with his player and I walked over to the scorer's table with my player, giving my player instructions as we walked. Our path to the scorer's table required us to walk in front of and past Mr. Horry, in between him and the court. I put my

hand in the air to make sure the official saw that a player was at the scorer's table and ready to enter the game. When I walked back toward my original coaching position, again needing to pass in front of Mr. Horry, is when the video you aired began.

In the first second of the video is where you can see Mr. Horry's outstretched arms on my back, pushing me from behind as I passed him. While doing so he yelled, "You can't walk in front of me, mother fucker!" At this time, the ball was dead and everyone there was watching what was happening on the sideline. Again, I had a choice to make. I could either ignore Mr. Horry's assault on me, which all my experience as a coach has taught me would result in my team losing all confidence and courage, or I could confront Mr. Horry.

Obviously, considering Mr. Horry's size and athleticism, I did not want to enter into a physical altercation with him. But more importantly, I did not want to enter into a physical altercation in front of two teams full of 10 year-olds. That is not the message we, as adults, should be sending the kids. Nevertheless, I knew that I had to do something, so I pushed him back, which is clearly visible on the video you aired.

In my naiveté, I thought that would be the end of it. Passions often run high on a basketball court, and I have seen people push each other a couple of times in the heat of the moment and then continue playing without further incident.

However, as I retreated back from my defensive push back on Mr. Horry, I was surprised to see him coming toward me. Even more shocking was the look on his face. I knew at that moment that Mr. Horry intended to do bodily harm. At that moment I was terrified. I knew there was no way I would be able to stop a man with that much size and that much anger from hitting me. Instinctively, I took my backpack off, which is also clearly visible on the video. My weight was still going to backwards, as I had not yet given up hope that I might be able to avoid being further assaulted by Mr. Horry if I could retreat quick enough. But my backpack scarcely hit the floor before Mr. Horry attacked me, swinging at my head and face and attempting to knock me out.

Here is a guy who I once admired; a guy who I thought was there in support of the kids, and I am desperately trying to retreat and protect my head, face and neck from his powerful blows. I was not successful in my efforts, as Mr. Horry landed several punches and scratches, of which I have documented evidence. As I mentioned at the

beginning of this correspondence, I am still in quite a bit of shock and disbelief that this really happened.

Adding to my confusion as to why this all happened, is the fact that it happened in front of young children; 10-year olds who looked up to Mr. Horry as a role model. As coaches, we have to do better than this.

After the incident, Mr. Horry left immediately. I was allowed to line up with my team and shake the opposing players' hands. While thus engaged, Mr. Horry's son apologized to me for his dad's actions and said his dad was "retarded".

There were several witnesses to Mr. Horry's frightening behavior. In fact, both the official of the game and the tournament director told me after the attack that they would be witnesses on my behalf.

I plan on continuing to coach so all I want is for the truth to come out and a public apology from Mr. Horry to admit his wrong doing in this case.

Thank you for taking the time to read my side of the story. I wholeheartedly believe that as unfortunate as this

incident was, we can use it as a learning experience for all involved, specially the children.