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## Boy disputes coach's claim in game brawl

STOCKTON - Brian Woods, 13, wants everyone to know that he didn't want to become a news item. And he disagrees with an assistant coach for a rival football team who suggested that Woods' team, the Stockton Bears, had a pattern of making late hits on opponents during a game Saturday that turned into a brawl involving adults and children.

"They're trying to blame it on us," Woods said Monday during an interview at his Stockton home, where he is nursing swollen fingers on his right hand.

A referee had just called a penalty on Woods, who weighs 116 pounds, when the father of the boy he tackled charged out on to the field and assaulted Woods, witnesses said. Woods said he was walking back to the huddle.

"He caught me from behind. I was just about to take off my helmet," Woods said.

Cory Petero, an assistant coach for the Riveroak Redskins, was arrested Saturday night on a charge of felony child abuse and could face up to a year in County Jail or two to six years in prison if convicted.

Witnesses said that the rest of the crowd on the game's sidelines came charging out after seeing the attack, triggering a brawl that lasted until police arrived.

Mortified Riveroak coaches and parents later apologized to the other team and to their own children. But another Riveroak assistant coach, Rodney Garcia, said that Petero was frustrated from seeing "one too many late hits" on his child.

Other Riveroak parents and fans, who declined to identify themselves, also said they believed that the Stockton team was being rough on the Riveroak Redskins. At the time, only about a minute remained in the game and the Redskins were ahead 16-6.

Daniel Champion, Woods' stepfather, said he watched the whole game and had no idea that anyone would see anything in it but a typical Pop Warner matchup.

"It was random. I didn't sense anything like that," he said of the perception by Riveroak fans of rough play.

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