

Verbal fireworks at LTUSD meeting regarding coach

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Unified School District's board meeting got a little rowdy Tuesday night, so much so that audience members were told they had to leave the room for a bit.

There was no middle ground on what people think of Mark Salmon, South Tahoe High School girls' soccer coach. The love and the hate were clearly felt at the June 13 meeting as an equal number of people spoke for and against him.

Parents and athletes were at the meeting to express their opinions about Salmon. This comes on the heels of **Lake Tahoe News' June 9** story about the disharmony within the soccer community.

As high school student Ahlyssa Gonzalez started to break down, someone from the audience shouted a profanity about Salmon. That is when board President Barbara Bannar insisted the room be cleared.

However, she let three high school staff members stay – Brian Hogan, Holly Greenough and Amy Jackson.

Gonzalez said Salmon has instigated bullying and gets the girls to harass her. Soccer, for her, is no longer fun. After the meeting, her mom, Victoria Gonzalez, told *Lake Tahoe News*, "You can't base anything off of two minutes when this has been going on for 10 years."

Hogan, who is the girls' assistant junior varsity coach, tried to refute what the younger Gonzalez was saying but was cut off by Bannar because he already had his two minutes to talk. During his time he said had never seen any drinking at away

games, which had been mentioned earlier.

While parent Paul Palant mentioned an incident of marijuana laced brownies being consumed by players while out of town, Hogan said it wasn't brownies, but then added no one admitted guilt.

The district earlier told *LTN* it has investigated the allegations of bullying, inappropriate texts, drinking by players and Salmon, and academically ineligible players being allowed to play. The findings have not been made public. The end result, though, is Salmon would be allowed to keep coaching at STHS. A letter was supposed to go to those who brought the charges, but even as of June 13 not all had not received one.

The board members were rather stoic as the drama played out.