

News Writing

Invitational B Meet • 2025



You are a reporter for the **Leaguetown Press**, the student newspaper of Leaguetown High School.

From the given information, write a **news story** as you would for the high school newspaper. You may use statements attributed to individuals as **direct or indirect quotes**. You may not change the meaning of a statement. You have **45 minutes**.

Do not write your name or the name of your school on this sheet or your entry. **Put your number on your paper.**

Leaguetown High School has 2,877 students enrolled in grades 9-12. Since crosstown rival Southside High School opened in 2007, the two schools have played against each other in every sport in the same UIL district. Each game is known as the Crosstown Showdown. Leading up to each match up, students from each campus also have engaged in pranks and online trash talk. However, before the second Crosstown Showdown boys basketball game of the season, three students were arrested for multiple incidents involving vandalism. One student arrested was from Southside, and the other were two from Leaguetown.

One custodian was treated at the emergency room after being hit in the face with a paintball that was shot through a school window at Southside. A family near Southside had their front porch damaged with mayonnaise, eggs and paint. Additionally, four car owners near Leaguetown High School called police after finding bricks had been thrown through their windshields in the middle of the night. The bricks had been painted with Southside colors — red and black.

Because of the concern for student and community safety, administrators from both campuses made the decision to cancel the Crosstown Showdown basketball game scheduled for this Friday, Feb. 7. The game will be rescheduled to be played at a neutral site, Leaguetown Events Center, on Saturday, Feb. 22, with no fan or family participation. Only players, coaching staff, athletic trainers, administrators and officials will be in attendance. You are writing for the issue of the press to be distributed Feb. 5.

■ NICHOLAS BONSU, principal

“I’m just embarrassed for our community. Our Crosstown Showdown events are supposed to be a time to bring the community together in the interest of good sportsmanship. What we have is a joke. Now, our players don’t even have the opportunity to show what they can do because we have some kids from both schools who think this is about them. These events are about students learning to be better athletes and better humans.

“The purpose of the pep rallies and tailgate parties is to show our athletes how much we support them and to show the rest of Leaguetown what being a Leopard is all about. It’s a shame that we’ve let the immaturity and the bad judgment of a few students get in the way of what is supposed to be a positive experience for students. That’s not who we are.

“After we play the rescheduled game, we’ll have to meet with administrators and coaches at Southside and evaluate whether we can transform our Crosstown Showdown into a more positive event in the future.”

■ GRAYSON KAKKAR, senior basketball player

“Our coaches tell us to focus on what’s happening on the court, not what’s happening off the court, and our team is doing what they ask. No player has been involved in any of the vandalism incidents. We go to practice every day and focus on winning the next game, no matter who the opponent is.

“We need the other students in our community to rally behind us and realize that playing stupid pranks on Southside doesn’t just hurt the people who own the property, it also makes us players look weak. I appreciate the students who show up to support us at every game, not just the Crosstown Showdown match ups. We’re going to stay focused on beating Southside and try to keep our undefeated record intact as we head toward playoffs. Hopefully we won’t have any more of our students arrested in the process.”

■ BRENT KIRBY, sheriff’s deputy

“We used to do simple pranks with rival schools when I was in high school, but when you damage property or hurt another person, it can become criminal mischief or assault really quickly. Those aren’t harmless pranks. If we see any further escalation from either of the two campuses, we will impose a community curfew for minors out after 10 p.m. We already have one person with a serious injury and three students who have gone to jail. It is not worth it to spend a night behind bars just to do a stupid prank on another school. Being in jail is not fun. It is not easy. We hope that students think before they make a choice that they can’t take back.”

■ MARY JIMENEZ, parent of a basketball player

“I can’t believe the school is going to make me pay the penalty for other students’ stupid behavior. I’m not the one who damaged property. I’m not the one who shot a paintball gun into the school and threw bricks into people’s cars. I’m not the one who slathered mayonnaise, paint and eggs on someone’s front porch. Now I can’t watch my son play basketball because of their carelessness and stupidity. This is not a fair solution to this issue, but I do hope it makes the rivalry nonsense calm down. I just want to watch my son play basketball.”

■ PAUL WOOLHEATER, Southside senior basketball player

“I know the kids who threw those bricks into cars, and I can’t believe they did it. We’ve had the rivalry for years. We post stupid memes about the games on Instagram. We send stupid things in a big group chat we’re in. But we’ve never been in a situation where people are getting hurt and having their property damaged. I’m sorry to the people who have been hurt by all the pranks. However, Southside players are just focused on trying to beat Leaguetown. They’re undefeated. Our record is pretty good as well. It was always going to be a good game, and I think despite everything else going on, we can win this one.”

DO NOT DISTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST!

Invitational B Meet • 2025 News Writing Contest Tips and Sample Story

Contest Director: Give one copy to each judge to use during judging. Also, staple one copy of the contest and one copy of the contest tips to each student's returned entry. The purpose of the tips is to provide immediate feedback to students. However, it is not meant to replace written comments from the judge.

1. Open with the most timely lead, given the current circumstances, probably the future event or events. In this instance, the story will be published before the basketball team must reschedule a rivalry game because of student pranks.

Friday's boys basketball Crosstown Showdown has been rescheduled to Saturday, Feb. 22 at the Leaguetown Events Center and students, fans and families will not be permitted to attend.

The changes come after three students — one from Southside and two from Leaguetown were arrested for vandalism and damage to property during pranking incidents.

2. Use direct quotes and use those quotes early in the story. Start with the most important interview to the story. After you introduce quotes, use the transition/quote formula. Be sure you attribute the quote. An attribution should be: subject of attribution followed by the verb of attribution ("Bonsu said," not "said Bonsu.") Avoid putting two or more quotes from different people together without placing a transition between them (stacking quotes). Also, make sure transitions provide information to help the story flow, and that the quote does not repeat information revealed in the transition.

transition

A Southside custodian was treated at an emergency room after being hit with a paintball students shot through the school window, and a nearby house was damaged with mayonnaise, eggs and paint. Meanwhile near Leaguetown's campus, four car owners reported that students had thrown bricks painted with Southside colors through their windshields.

direct quote

"Those aren't harmless pranks," Sheriff's Deputy Brent Kirby said. "We already have one person with a serious injury and three students who have gone to jail. It is not worth it to spend a night behind bars just to do a stupid prank on another school."

transition

Kirby said if law enforcement sees any further escalation of the incidents, they will impose a community curfew for minors after 10 p.m.

direct quote

“Playing stupid pranks on Southside doesn’t just hurt the people who own the property that gets vandalized, it also makes us players look weak,” senior basketball player Grayson Kakkar said. “We’re going to stay focused on beating Southside and try to keep our undefeated record intact as we head toward playoffs. ”

3. Use third person. Don’t say “our students” or “our principal” or “Some of our students.” Also, do not editorialize. For instance, you should not say “This idea probably won’t work...” or “The district should ...” without attributing that quote to someone. These statements are personal opinions and cannot be made in a news story.

4. Note how in the earlier example of transition/quote, each quote is its own paragraph. Journalistic writing consists mostly of one- and two-sentence paragraphs.

5. End with a strong quote that wraps up the story.

SAMPLE STORY

Friday's boys basketball Crosstown Showdown has been rescheduled to Saturday, Feb. 22 at the Leaguetown Events Center and students, fans and families will not be permitted to attend.

The changes come after three students — one from Southside and two from Leaguetown were arrested for vandalism and damage to property during pranking incidents.

"I'm just embarrassed for our community," Principal Nicholas Bonsu said. "Our Crosstown Showdown events are supposed to be a time to bring the community together in the interest of good sportsmanship."

A Southside custodian was treated at an emergency room after being hit with a paintball students shot through the school window, and a nearby house was damaged with mayonnaise, eggs and paint. Meanwhile near Leaguetown's campus, four car owners reported that students had thrown bricks painted with Southside colors through their windshields.

"Those aren't harmless pranks," Sheriff's Deputy Brent Kirby said. "We already have one person with a serious injury and three students who have gone to jail. It is not worth it to spend a night behind bars just to do a stupid prank on another school."

Kirby said if law enforcement sees any further escalation of the incidents, they will impose a community curfew for minors after 10 p.m.

"Playing stupid pranks on Southside doesn't just hurt the people who own the property that gets vandalized, it also makes us players look weak," senior basketball player Grayson Kakkar said. "We're going to stay focused on beating Southside and try to keep our undefeated record intact as we head toward playoffs. "

Basketball parent Mary Jimenez said the restrictions are unfair to parents.

"I'm not the one who shot a paintball gun into the school and threw bricks into people's cars," she said. "I'm not the one who slathered mayonnaise, paint and eggs on someone's front porch. Now I can't watch my son play basketball because of their carelessness and stupidity."

Southside basketball player Paul Woolheater said his team is prepared to win the Crosstown Showdown, but that he's never seen the pranks get this extreme.

"We post stupid memes about the games on Instagram," he said. "We send stupid things in a big group chat we're in. But we've never been in a situation where people are getting hurt and having their property damaged."

Bonsu said after this game, administrators from both campuses will meet to determine the fate of future rivalry games.

"It's a shame that we've let the immaturity and the bad judgment of a few students get in the way of what is supposed to be a positive experience for students," he said. "That's not who we are."