

Schoolyard 'boob tag' lands middle-schooler in trouble

Rocky Mountain News

By Felix Doligosa Jr. on May 18, 2006

A game of tag at a middle school in Golden has police investigating a 14-year-old boy for unlawful sexual contact. The game played at Bell Middle School is called "boob tag," and kids choose who's "it" by touching a breast.

"This is not appropriate, but it's a game of consent," said Lynn Sharpe, the mother of the suspect, Cole Sharpe. "It should be punished, but not prosecuted."

Golden police declined to release details about the case and would say only that there is an investigation. The inquiry started last week when an eighth-grade female student told school officials that Cole touched her breast. A group of friends that included Cole, another boy and seven girls have been playing "boob tag" during lunch breaks since December, Lynn Sharpe said. The girls often called themselves "The Bisexuals," Cole said.

"It's just like tag, except you, like, poke the breast area," Cole told CBS 4 News. Jefferson County Public Schools officials interviewed students and found no proof of any unlawful sexual contact, said Casey Mahon, spokesman for the school district.

The school's resource officer filed a routine report that apparently caught the interest of police, Lynn Sharpe said. Cole was taken to the police department Tuesday night for questioning, his mother said. He was also booked and released, she said. The Golden Police Department would not confirm what Lynn Sharpe said.

The teen, who likes to skateboard and practices sword play, has told his friends to watch out because they also could get in trouble for taking part in the playground game. Cole admits playing "boob tag," but said he's never played it with the accuser. "The girls are consenting to the game," Lynn Sharpe said. "Girls are not being violated."

Cole will continue attending the school, but his mother is worried that the accusations of unlawful sexual contact will stick with her son forever. **A minor convicted of unlawful sexual contact could face probation or up to two years in youth detention.** "I don't want my son to be a registered sex offender," Lynn Sharpe said. "We're throwing him into this category."