

DA drops case against Cowboys Michael Irvin

■ **NFL:** Officials said there was not enough evidence to prosecute the Dallas wide receiver

The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Prosecutors said Monday they will not file assault charges against Dallas Cowboys wide receiver Michael Irvin over an incident at a San Francisco nightclub last month.

"The DA's office has reviewed all the evidence presented to us by the police department and we are declining prosecution," said Assistant District Attorney Chuck Haines.

He said the case came down to Irvin's word against the complainant, Aaron Waller, 31, who told police the All-Pro receiver punched him and held him captive in a club basement after a dispute over a cellular phone.

"There is not enough evidence to prose-

cute the case," Haines said.

Prosecution could have been a serious blow for Irvin, 31, who is on probation for cocaine possession in Texas.

Irvin, who could have faced kidnapping and battery charges, strenuously denied the accusation at a news conference last month in Dallas after the complaint was made public.

"No, there was no exchange. I did ask an individual if he took my phone," Irvin said. "Kill me today God if I'm lying."

The incident that led to the complaint occurred June 1, but Waller did not file charges until almost two weeks later. He said he wanted to confer with his attorneys.

Haines said Monday that Waller had not withdrawn the complaint and he knew of no agreement between Waller and Irvin.

Waller told San Francisco police he was accompanied by two strippers, identified

only as Angela and Joanne, when he met Irvin and another man at a supper club early on the morning of June 1, said the report written by officer Daniel Murphy.

Irvin later allowed Waller to use his limousine to take his companions to the 1015 Folsom club, but Irvin did not accompany them.

When the limousine returned, Irvin discovered his cell phone was missing, and came to the club to confront Waller, the police report said.

Waller's account indicates that when he arrived at the club, Irvin was accompanied by a man described as 6-foot-5, 265 pounds. Waller denied taking the phone and an argument ensued "where Irvin and the other subject dragged Waller to the basement."

The complaint said Irvin refused to let Waller leave, and punched him in the chest, and stated that "Irvin appeared to be

'wacked-out' [sic] on drugs and alcohol."

But Irvin said the limousine driver had only pointed to the man he had allowed in the vehicle. When the man denied having the missing phone, Irvin said he walked off.

Last year Irvin was found in a hotel room with two topless dancers and drugs. He later pleaded no contest to a felony cocaine possession charge and is serving 800 hours of community service as part of his probation.

He also was fined \$10,000, and the NFL suspended him for five games last season.

In December, topless dancer Nina Shahravan accused Irvin of holding a gun on her while teammate Erik Williams raped her. No charges were filed. The woman later recanted and now faces perjury charges. Williams and Irvin have sued the Dallas police and the television station that first reported the woman's allegations.

Eastern Washington residents welcome Seahawks back

■ **NFL:** The team's training camp move was for football and political reasons, officials said

The Associated Press

CHENEY, Wash. — More than a decade ago, Carrie Lewis' parents served copious amounts of beer and pizza to Seattle Seahawks players. Now, she's preparing to resume the tradition as the 1997 team opens camp here Tuesday.

A dozen years after they left for newer digs in Kirkland, the Seahawks are returning to Eastern Washington University's hot practice fields, where coach Dennis Erickson hopes fewer distractions can help improve records and hasten conditioning.

About 80 players were expected to report for a 7 p.m. team meeting Tuesday, with a month of practices beginning Wednesday.

Signs welcoming the Seahawks have sprouted across town.

Lewis' parents, Chuck and Ann Thomas, bought the Savage House Pizza downtown, about four blocks from the EWU campus, in 1980. Players and coaches will live in dormitories on campus and take their meals at a campus dining hall.

The pizza parlor was a team favorite when the Seahawks held summer training camp from 1976-1985.

Daughter Carrie Lewis now manages Gattos, the Thomas' new pizza restaurant, and hopes the 28-inch "Honken" pies, as well as pasta and salads, will attract the current Seahawks.

It's the same at most businesses in the small downtown section of this college and farm town of 8,000 situated among wheat fields about 20 miles west of Spokane.

"We're hoping it's kind of like the old days, be-

cause it was fun when I was little," Lewis said Monday. "I still have a napkin signed by Jim Zorn," Seattle's popular quarterback from 1976-1984.

The Savage House and other watering holes were popular because former coach Jack Patera had a rule banning drinking water on the practice field.

"A lot of them would come down and, mainly, they were looking for stuff to drink because they were so dehydrated from the practices," Thomas said. "But they loved Cheney. It was good and hot and it cooked 'em good ... toughened them up."

Players and some coaches always could be found at Showies, another downtown bar that has grown in the years since the Seahawks left. Once a dimly lit tavern, the place has expanded to include a bistro and kitchen area, as well as a game room and dance floor.

In hopes of attracting a new crop of players, owner Tom Showalter distributed coupons for free food for Seahawks rookies, manager Chad Staples said.

"I think they're going to make it back," Staples said. "Just having the fans means more business."

Already, patrons have popped in to inquire when the Seahawks are coming, he said. By some estimates, as many as 1,000 people a day may watch the Seahawks practices, which are open to the public.

The fan-friendly camp is to include autograph sessions and an "NFL Experience" area, where fans can toss footballs, kick field goals and get their pictures taken in a Seahawks uniform.

Zorn, an assistant last season at the University of Minnesota, will conduct camps for kids after practices.

The Seahawks one-year move to Eastern Washington was for both football and political reasons, team officials have said.

Prosecutor: Driver had marijuana in system

■ **NHL:** The results came from a second toxicology test done by an out-of-state laboratory

The Associated Press

PONTIAC, Mich. — The driver of the limousine that crashed last month injuring three members of the Detroit Red Wings had marijuana in his system, a prosecutor said Monday.

A second toxicology report that came back Monday from an out-of-state independent laboratory showed traces of the drug in Richard Gnida's system, Oakland County prosecutor David Gorceyca said.

He added the second test was more intensive than the first toxicology test, which came back last week showing no signs of drugs or alcohol in the driver's system.

The new test does not contradict the first test, Gorceyca said. He said traces of marijuana can stay in the bloodstream for up to a month, so more testing will be done to see how long and how much was

in Gnida's system.

The new information helps explain Gnida's erratic driving the night of the June 13 accident.

The prosecutor said "something didn't make sense," about the way Gnida crossed three lanes without braking and ran headlong into the tree.

Red Wings defenseman Vladimir Konstantinov and team masseur Sergei Mnat- sakanov sustained head injuries and were left in comas.

Both remain in serious but stable condition at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, a hospital spokeswoman said. Doctors say Mnat- sakanov has emerged from his coma while Konstantinov remains in a coma but showing signs of improvement.

Defenseman Viacheslav Fetisov was less seriously injured in the crash.

Birmingham Police Inspector David Schultz said the second tests were run because of some conflicting reports regarding Gnida's condition the night of the accident.



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