

News briefs

Court rules players can sue

Two former Rutgers University basketball players and a former team manager who say they were forced to run sprints in the nude can sue their former coaches for violating their privacy, a New Jersey appeals court ruled.

The decision, issued Tuesday, July 3, overturned part of a lower court's ruling that dismissed the suit from Earl Johnson Jr., Josh Sankes and manager Juan Carlos Pla.

The recent decision upheld a lower court's dismissal of sexual harassment allegations against Rutgers University, its trustees and board of governors, university President Francis Lawrence,

Athletic Director Robert Mulcahy and former Athletic Director Fred Gruninger.

The trio alleges that former coach Kevin Bannon and former assistant coach Tod Kowalczyk forced players to participate in a strip free-throw contest, where players lost an article of clothing for each shot missed. The players have said they thought the December 1997 drill would end with undershorts.

"A reasonable student athlete would find the required nudity of the strip free-throw contest and wind sprints, although brief in duration, was offensive and inappropriately invaded (the young men's) right of privacy," the appellate court panel wrote.

Tribune Media Campus

Smoking ban

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very faithful to us," he said outside the council chambers. "But they don't stay there for long. They'll have one drink and go somewhere else to smoke."

Some other newly smoke-free bars reported little or no change in sales during the past week.

The Black Forest Tavern, The Tiny Tavern and the Duck Inn reported no significant loss in business since they told customers to smoke outside.

"We have the usual number of complainers, but I don't think it's going to affect us as much as we thought it would," said Barbara Zybach, who owns the Black Forest Tavern.

Bar owners and employees mentioned somewhat of a slowdown this week, but said it's possible more people were drawn to Fourth of July celebrations and to Eugene's Art & the Vineyard festival than to smoke-friendly Springfield and Eugene taverns.

They say the real test will come this winter, when rain and wind might make smoking porches and parking lots unappealing.

"I'm sure that will be different when it gets cold," said Claire Hutton, a bartender at Good

Times Cafe & Bar.

Tracy Olsen, the owner of Doc's Pad, said he plans to build a patio and has begun looking into noise, litter and liquor control issues. He said he'll hold onto his six-month exemption as long as possible because he isn't certain a patio will be enough to retain his smoking customers.

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Barbara Zybach
owner,
Black Forest Tavern

"It's still early to tell," he said. "I hope people can just live with the rule, but that remains to be seen."

Elian Howell, a bookkeeper at Groucho's Restaurant & Bar, was more optimistic. Groucho's has been smoke-free since it opened in 2000.

"I don't think it's hurt us at all," she said, adding that the bar's clean atmosphere and live music have drawn a loyal clientele.

But that loyalty at other bars

might be challenged this winter, said Wes Kelley, who owns the Alibi Tavern in Springfield.

"Some people might be devoted for a while, but they might come drifting over here," said Kelley, who said he didn't notice more customers last week. "It depends on how much people want to drive around to smoke."

Bartender Cheryl Welch at The Brick House in Springfield said she saw "a lot of new faces" last weekend.

"Usually Saturday nights aren't too good for us, but this one was better," she said.

Bar owners and restaurant lobbyists hoped the Oregon Legislature would overturn Eugene's smoking ordinance, but a late-session compromise only reinforced Eugene's ban.

Last Tuesday, the Legislature banned smoking in all workplaces, excluding bars and taverns, and blocked localities from passing smoking laws stricter than the state's. However, the 17 smoking laws passed in Oregon municipalities before this month were protected.

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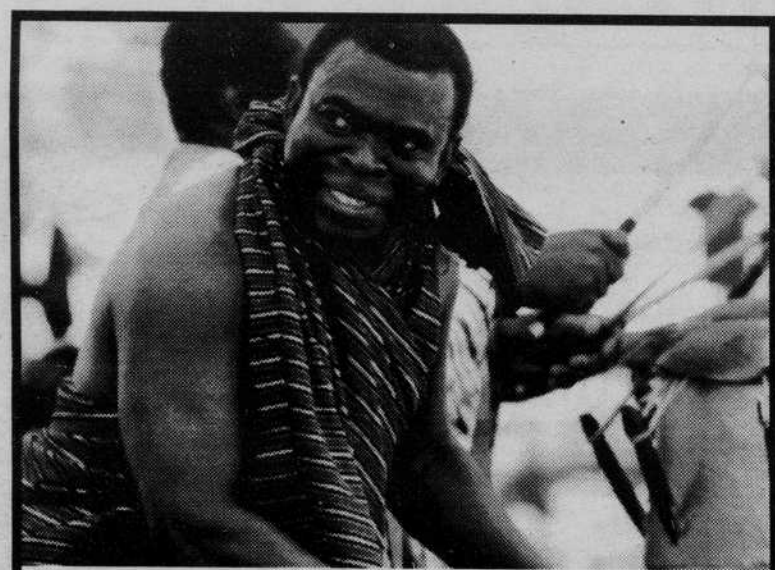
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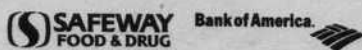
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