

Meggett found guilty of rape
By Robert Behre
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Ex-pro football player to serve over 25 years

A former NFL star running back who played to packed stadiums on Sundays and graced millions of television screens will spend more than 25 years in prison for raping a woman.

A Charleston County jury convicted David Meggett of burglary and rape Wednesday in connection with an attack last year inside a North Charleston home.



Dave Meggett

Circuit Judge Kristi Harrington sentenced Meggett to 30 years, to be served concurrently, on both charges. He won't be eligible for parole for more than 25 years. Meggett's attorney, Beattie Butler of the Charleston County Public Defender's Office, said Meggett will appeal.

Butler had argued that Meggett and the woman, a former College of Charleston student who was 21 at the time and now lives in the Upstate, had consensual sex that night and later argued.

Meggett, 44, didn't testify and also passed up a chance to speak to the court before Harrington sentenced him.

The victim, whose teary testimony lasted more than one hour Monday, appeared more serene Wednesday after the verdict. Assistant 9th Circuit Solicitor Culver Kidd hugged her afterward and told her she was "very brave."

At issue in the three-day trial was what happened inside a North Charleston home in January 2009.

The victim, who knew Meggett as Michael, said she had met him through her former roommate and that they had a brief, drunken, consensual-sexual encounter eight months before.

She also said she had borrowed \$200 from Meggett, and he asked her for the money back. When she told him she didn't have it, she said Meggett told her "he was going to take a down payment now" and began sexually assaulting her.

When Meggett was arrested in this case, he was free on \$50,000 bail in connection with an arrest the previous fall.

He still faces charges in that September 2008 incident in which a teenager told police she met Meggett through a mutual friend and he forced her to have sex at a Railroad Avenue home.

Assistant Solicitor Chad Simpson said prosecutors haven't decided whether they will pursue that case.

"They were similar allegations, but this (case) was what we felt was the stronger of the two cases," he said.

Since Meggett didn't take the stand, prosecutors could not mention Meggett's numerous prior sex-related brushes with the law, some of which date back to his playing days.

"I hope the jury feels good about the decision they made once they learn" of Meggett's past, Simpson said.

Meggett, a graduate of Bonds-Wilson/North Charleston High School, was best known as a kickoff and punt returner during his 10 seasons with the New York Giants, New England Patriots and New York Jets, but he also had many off-field problems.

Previous story

While with the Giants in 1990, Meggett was arrested in Baltimore on a charge of offering to pay an undercover female police officer for sex. The Patriots cut him in 1998 after his arrest in Toronto for allegedly assaulting an escort worker after a sexual encounter.

A trial on the assault charge ended with a hung jury in April 2000.

In 2001, Charleston police arrested Meggett for allegedly sexually assaulting an intoxicated 26-year-old woman after they left a downtown nightclub. That case was dismissed.

In 2006 he resigned from his job as parks and recreation director in Robersonville, N.C., after he was accused of sexually assaulting his former girlfriend.

He was convicted of sexual battery, a misdemeanor, a year later and received two years probation and allowed to move back to South Carolina in February and serve his probation here.