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Lewis' doctors trial begins

Widow's suit charges malpractice in death of Celtics star

BOSTON (AP) — Six years after Boston Celtics star Reggie Lewis died while shooting baskets, a malpractice suit went to trial Monday in an attempt by his widow to restore his reputation and collect the millions he could have made.

Donna Harris-Lewis contends her husband's doctors, some of the city's most respected physicians, misdiagnosed and mistreated the basketball player's fatal heart rhythm disturbance.

The doctors say Lewis used cocaine and lied about it, making an accurate diagnosis impossible. The lawsuit is against Dr. Gilbert Mudge, who led the specialists, and Drs. Mark Creager and Peter Friedman, who were consultants. A third consultant, Dr. John Rutherford, recently reached an undisclosed settlement with Harris-Lewis.

"If the proper treatment had been given, Reggie Lewis would be here today," plaintiff attorney Robert Harley said.

Harris-Lewis is suing to recover money Lewis would have made had he lived past 27. Estimates of his potential earnings have ranged from \$40 million to more than \$100 million. Her attorneys contend Lewis could have continued playing by wearing a defibrillator or taking medication or could have held other positions like broadcaster or product pitchman.

William Dailey Jr., Mudge's attorney, said in his opening statement that Lewis lied to doctors about his cocaine use until two weeks before he died, and the lack of full disclosure early in the treatment

process made a proper diagnosis impossible.

"It would be the same as if I went in with a stomach ache and never told my doctor I'd eaten a 2-week-old meatloaf," Dailey said.

Harris-Lewis has adamantly denied her husband ever used drugs.

But Dailey said there was strong motivation to lie: Lewis' three-year, \$9 million contract would

Celtic pride

Reggie Lewis' statistics for 1991-92, his final season: Season highlights:

Points per game 20.8 Rebounds per game ... 4.8 · Named to 1st All-Star Assists per game 2.3 game (East reserve) · Led Celtics in scoring, Free throw % 85.1 steals and blocked shots NBA Player of the Week

have been nullified by illegal drug use.

Superior Court Judge Thayer Fremont-Smith imposed a gag order and none of the main participants in the case would comment publicly

But the story of Lewis' death and the fingerpointing that followed has played itself out very publicly in a city that loved its Celtics and adored the team's brightest star when he died.

In 1993, Lewis collapsed during a playoff game against the Charlotte Hornets. A "Dream Team" of New England Baptist Hospital doctors assembled by the Celtics diagnosed him with arrhythmia, a potentially life-threatening, career-ending heart

The grim conclusion led Lewis to seek a second opinion from one of Boston's most respected car-diologists — Mudge, of Brigham and Women's

Mudge reported Lewis suffered from a neurological disorder that causes fainting spells. With proper treatment, he said, Lewis could return to basketball. Three months later, Lewis died while shooting hoops in the offseason.

The state medical examiner listed the cause of death as adenovirus 2, a virus that could have caused inflammation of the heart, scarring of tissue and, ultimately, a fatal cardiac arrest.

Kidd, Carter **Popovich** wi NBA award Hur

NEW YORK (AP) -Kidd of the Phoenix Suns Carter of the Toronto Rap and coach Gregg Popovich San Antonio Spurs are award winners in the NB

Kidd was picked as pla the month after account more than 40 percent Suns' offense during the as Phoenix qualified for playoffs for the 11th consecutive season. He aver-

20.1 10.4 assists, 6.7 rebounds and during the and

had two triple-doubles, ing his league lead to seve Carter, who led all firs players in scoring and blocking during April, was

sen as rookie of the mo averaged 20.6 points, 5. bounds, 4.2 assists and blocked shots. He was the player chosen in last Ju lege draft.

Popovich's Spurs ha best record in the NBA for at 13-3 - including 9-0 at — making him coach month. San Antonio beg lockout-abbreviated NBAssimprove at 6-8 but has improved ham, the 13, challenging the Utah Jan Massact first place in the Midwest has been seen as he

The Spurs defeated six of top Western Conference to including Utah, Portland, H ton, the Los Angeles La Phoenix and Minnesota.

San Antonio began May important victories over land on Saturday and Uta Sunday.

If the Spurs win their any oth two games — at Portlan Bay Sta Tuesday and Golden State Wednesday - San Antonio own the best record in the and have homecoun adv throughout the playoffs.
Other candidates for Coa

the Month were Pat Riley ami, Chuck Daly of Or Larry Brown of Philad Rick Adelman of Sacra and Jerry Sloan of Utah.

Pete Rose to instru Steelhead

Pete Rose, baseball's ban reer hits leader, will be ba uniform on a field next we

The Sacramento Steelh the Western League said M they are hiring Rose as a sp hitting and infield instruct spring training. The Ste start their first season May

Rose, expected at camp 10, agreed to a lifetime ban organized baseball in August 1989 after an investigation by baseball commissioner Bartlett Giamatti, who concluded the then-Cincinnati Reds manager bet on games involving his teal

charge Rose still denies. The following year, pleaded guilty to two counts ing false income taxes by to report income and was tenced to five months in J three months in a halfway and 1,000 hours of com service.

HAZ

Rose applied for reinstat to baseball in September but commissioner Bud Selig not ruled on the application unlikely Selig will ever ag Rose's reinstatement, many ball officials have repeal call &

His ban does not apply! Steelheads because the We League is not affiliated with Call & nized baseball — the leagues and the National ation of Professional Ba Leagues, which is the gover body for the minors.



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