

SMU suspends students for violating rules

DALLAS (AP) — Two Southern Methodist University basketball players are indefinitely suspended for violating team rules following a Western Athletic Conference tournament game in California.

University officials, describing what they called "inappropriate and disruptive behavior involving a few students" after the WAC tourney earlier this month, said Wednesday that two members of the SMU Spirit Squad were also suspended from their team.

The university said it took the action after receiving information from Fresno, Calif., police.

The Fort Worth Star-Telegram identified the suspended Mustang players as Jeryl Sasser and Renaldo Bratton.

Sasser and Bratton, both juniors, were questioned about incidents that took place in their hotel room at a party that included members of the SMU basketball team and Spirit Squad, according to a Fresno Police Department report.

SMU Athletic Director Jim Copeland and Coach Mike Dement suspended the basketball players indefinitely from participating on the team for violating team rules, the school said in a written statement.

But university officials did not return a telephone call today from The Associated Press.

According to the Fresno police report, officers were called early on March 10 to a Fresno hotel, where a woman told officers two members of the SMU men's basketball team "touched her through her clothes with their hands." The woman told police she did not want to file

formal charges, the report said.

In interviews with police, several basketball players and members of the spirit squad said they had been drinking, but denied the woman had been assaulted, the report said.

"We're handling it the same way we would handle any other potential violation of student conduct."

— Jim Caswell
SMU vice president of student affairs

The incident allegedly occurred hours after the Mustangs ended their season with elimination from the WAC tournament in the first round by Hawaii in a 87-82 loss March 9.

Several members of the team and the squad spent the hours after the loss drinking at the Radisson Hotel in downtown Fresno, according to the police report.

Sasser, a 6-foot-6 guard, was named first-team all-WAC and led SMU in scoring. Bratton, a 6-foot guard, played a reserve role.

The police report includes the names of four SMU

players. *The Dallas Morning News* reported that the university cited privacy laws in not naming the two players who were suspended.

Both Bratton and Sasser remained on the team as SMU competed in the National Invitation Tournament against Southwest Missouri State last Thursday.

Bob Wright, a SMU spokesperson, told the *Star-Telegram* the school received the police report Tuesday and did not take action against any players before the NIT game because "the police report contained information not given to us previously."

Darren McCoy, SMU spirit coordinator, voluntarily resigned from SMU in the early stages of the investigation last week in which three squad members were questioned, the *Star-Telegram* said. Police noted that McCoy had "bloodshot watery eyes, a strong odor of alcohol" and said he "attempted to obstruct police questioning of one of the spirit members."

University officials began their own investigation of possible violations of SMU's code of conduct during a school-sponsored trip, including documentation of underage drinking. The report includes instances of a 21-year-old player giving vodka to a 20-year-old squad member.

"We're handling it the same way we would handle any other potential violation of student conduct," Jim Caswell, SMU vice president of student affairs, said. "There needs to be some determination of university violations and what sort of response we need to pursue from there."

Supreme Court rules on parental abortion notices

AUSTIN (AP) — A pregnant girl who can show that her parents would cut off support and kick her out of the house would qualify for a "judicial bypass" to avoid notifying them before getting an abortion, the Texas Supreme Court says.

However, the court said that a judge can, within certain legal limits, weigh the girl's testimony, which is made in a confidential hearing with no witnesses to contradict her.

The decision is the latest in a series since the state's new law requiring parental notification of minors' abortions took effect.

Under that new law, physicians cannot perform an abortion on a pregnant girl younger than 18 without first telling a parent, unless a judge authorizes it. To bypass the parental consent, a girl must convince a judge that she meets certain conditions laid out in the law. The law also provides her with a lawyer.

The latest case involved a 17-year-old girl. On a 6-3 ruling on Wednesday, the court said a "minor's emotional well-being, the family structure and the parent-child relationship would be adversely affected if her parents withdrew support and severed all contact with her."

The ruling added, "If the minor's uncontroverted testimony to this effect were clear, positive and direct, and not impeached or discredited by other circumstances, the trial court would have to accept it as fact" and grant the judicial bypass.

Man opens fire in church, 4 shot

PASADENA, Texas (AP) — A man apparently spurned by a love interest opened fire during a meeting in a church office Wednesday night, wounding four people before killing himself.

Two of the wounded were hospitalized in critical condition Thursday. About 25 people were in the Pentecostal church at the time of the shooting, which came after Wednesday services.

Police were called to the scene about 9 p.m.

Injured were 18-year-old Leslie Contreras, her 38-year-old mother, Angela Contreras, an unidentified 32-year-old man, and Carlos Matamores, the 49-year-old pastor of Iglesia Cristiana Esposa Del Cordero, officials said.

The pastor and the woman's mother were in critical condition at Hermann Hospital in Houston. Matamores was shot in the chest, and Angela Contreras was shot in the abdomen.

Meanwhile, Leslie Contreras was listed in fair condition at Ben Taub Memorial Hospital in Houston with a bullet wound in her neck.

The 32-year-old man suffered a bullet graze and did not have to be taken

"I told myself that if I saw him at church tonight I would call the police."

— José Montana
church member

to the hospital, said police spokesperson Sgt. J.M. Baird.

News in Brief

Prison Board Chair: Guards could get raise by September

HUNTSVILLE, Texas (AP) — Prison guards who have been complaining about low salaries could be on their way to a \$10,000 raise soon, the chairperson of the Texas prison board said Thursday.

"I think it's all now just a matter of working out

some of the details," Mac Stringfellow said outside a meeting of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

Stringfellow said several plans were under review, and he was optimistic some kind of interim pay boost could be in effect as soon as September.

Eventually, he said, prison guards would be elevated to the national average of \$35,000 to \$36,000. Top pay now in Texas is \$26,700.

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The purpose of the award is to provide support for mentoring activities and recognition for excellence in mentoring. The winner of the award must be a member of AT Mentors who has demonstrated outstanding dedication and commitment to making a difference in students' lives.

If you would like to nominate a member of AT Mentors, send a letter to the AT Mentors program office at Mail Stop 1263. In your letter please indicate how the mentor you are nominating has "made a difference" in your life. Only currently enrolled students may nominate a Mentor for this award. Letters must include the student ID number of the nominating student and be no longer than one page with 12 point font. If you have any questions, call 845-6900 or email atmentors@tamu.edu.

A complete list of Mentors is available on the AT Mentors webpage at <http://mentors.tamu.edu>. All letters are due by April 7th at 5:00p.m.

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