

Nifong admits abuse of power in rape case

by UPI

RALEIGH, N.C. - North Carolina prosecutor Mike Nifong admitted violating professional conduct rules in investigating rape allegations against Duke University lacrosse players.

The athletes were cleared of the alleged March 2006 crime and the Durham County, N.C., district attorney is on trial in Raleigh, N.C., for ethics violations.

Nifong could lose his law license for his vigorous pursuit of student-athletes Reade Seligmann, Collin Finnerty and Dave Evans -- even after DNA tests failed to link them to the alleged rape of an exotic dancer during a party thrown by team members at an off-campus house.

Testifying before the North Carolina State Bar Friday, Nifong said some of the statements he made to media during the investigation, which coincided with his political campaign to keep his post, "clearly were" violations of the rules of professional conduct.

Nifong said it was unintentional but, looking back, he made comments such as the one complaining about the team's "stone wall of silence" in an effort to get witnesses come forward.

Investigators assured him the alleged victim was "very believable," Nifong said.

He said one of the players matched the DNA found in the alleged victim's fingernails.

If found guilty of the charges, Nifong could wind up losing his license to practice law in North Carolina.

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