

Before Arrest, NFL's Hernandez Had Brushes With Violence

BOSTON (AP) — When Aaron Hernandez first went before a judge to face a murder charge, a defense attorney said the former New England Patriots tight end had never been accused of a violent crime. But Hernandez is apparently no stranger to violence.

Since he was arrested last week in the shooting death of a friend whose body was found a mile away from his home, a portrait has emerged of a man whose life away from the field included frequent connections with police-related incidents that started as long ago as his freshman year at the University of Florida.

An acquaintance who sued Hernandez, claiming he was shot after a fight in a strip club earlier this year. A 2007 bar fight that left a restaurant worker with a burst ear drum. An unsolved double murder at a Boston nightclub last summer. All violent incidents, all with possible ties to the once-dominating athlete who now sits in a private cell for his own protection.

Hernandez has pleaded not guilty in the shooting death of 27-year-old Odin Lloyd, whose body was found June 17 not far from Hernandez's North Attleborough, Mass. mansion. His defense team has called the case circumstantial and has said Hernandez looks forward to clearing his name.

But even before the 23-year-old's recent arrest, public records and interviews show he had been involved in police inquiries in the past, first in Florida and then in the Boston area.

A sworn court complaint from Florida's Eighth Judicial Circuit details Hernandez's apparent involvement in an April 2007 fight at a restaurant called The Swamp in Gainesville, Fla. The partially redacted document says the restaurant worker told police that Hernandez, who was then 17, punched him in the head while he was escorting the subject out of the business after a dispute about an alleged non-payment of a bill.

Tim Tebow, now a member of Pa-

triot and at the time Florida's star quarterback, is listed as a witness. The report said Hernandez asked him to intervene in the verbal dispute before the assault.

The complaint classifies the offense as "felony battery." It wasn't clear Tuesday how the case was resolved.

Also in 2007, Hernandez was among three Florida football players and another who had gone on to the NFL questioned by Gainesville police after a double shooting that happened after a Florida loss. Police said the players provided the information investigators wanted. No charges were ever filed.

A request for comment left with a spokesman for Hernandez's legal team Tuesday evening was not immediately returned.

Although Hernandez is facing a murder charge, his current legal troubles may not end there.

Police in Hernandez's hometown of Bristol, Conn., said Tuesday that Boston police asked for their help

with a double homicide investigation linked to the former NFL star.

Bristol Police Lt. Kevin Morrell said the request was based on evidence developed through the investigation of Lloyd's slaying. He said police were asked to search the same home in Bristol for both investigations, and they seized a vehicle at the address Friday.

Two men died in the shooting in Boston's South End on July 15, 2012 and another was wounded. Witnesses reported seeing gunfire coming from a gray SUV with Rhode Island plates. Authorities said 29-year-old Daniel Jorge Correia de Abreu and 28-year-old Safiro Teixeira Furtado were killed, the third man was not identified.

Boston police have declined to comment on whether Hernandez is being looked as a possible suspect in that case from last summer.

Hernandez has been connected to still more incidents involving guns, although none have resulted in criminal charges against him.

Owens: Time To Rid Ourselves Of Jersey Culture

BY SHANNON J. OWENS

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(MCT) A good friend told me a few years ago he would not allow his kids to wear sports jerseys unless their name was on the back.

His philosophy is simple. You have your own name and you know what it represents.

While it made sense, I still thought his stance was radical, especially considering my friend, Phil Burton, was a sports anchor for WFTV and has a great affection for sports. Coincidentally, he happens to be the son of former Patriots player Ron Burton — the first player the franchise formerly known as the Boston Patriots ever drafted.

Then Aaron Hernandez happened.

Overnight, he transformed from a celebrated Patriots tight end to another disgraced athlete in handcuffs. New England cut ties with Hernandez after he was charged with the murder of his 27-year-old friend Odin Lloyd, and the team is offering fans the opportunity to trade in Hernandez's No. 81 jersey for another player's jersey this weekend with no receipt.

Sounds like a simple enough solution and a brilliant public-relations move. But instead of trading jerseys, maybe it's time to consider turning them in completely.

Whether you purchased a \$200-plus football jersey, bought a yellow Livestrong wristband, donated to a cancer charity in the name of a superhero cyclist or just bought the glossy story of a paralympian and his super-model girlfriend living happily ever after, aren't you spent on believing in fairytales?

It's been quite the eye-opening year for sports stars and their reputations. Lance Armstrong admitted to doping. South African sprinter Oscar Pistorious, who made headlines as the courageous "blade runner" in the 2012 London Olympics, is awaiting trial for allegedly murdering his lover. Chad "Ochocinco" Johnson crossed over from likable goof to shameful goon when he head-butted his wife.

On a much less serious note, Serena Williams — despite her loss Monday — is making tennis history for her incredible feats on the court as the oldest No. 1 women's player but even that's been overshadowed by her seemingly reckless mouth.

Athletes aren't gods. They are just flawed human beings with talents that we lift up to unworthy thrones when we glorify their names and identities on things like jerseys.

This isn't a new concept, of course. And yet the crazy cycle of building and destroying stars continue.

Interesting enough, more than a few people are clamoring to buy Hernandez's jersey on eBay. One jersey owner said he originally asked for \$50 for his Hernandez jersey but bids reached almost \$230 by mid-afternoon Monday, according to ABC News. He originally paid about \$250 for the jersey.

I'm not sure what's sillier — the fact that someone out there still wants to pay \$200 for Hernandez's jersey or the fact that someone was willing

JERSEYS | PAGE 13

AP: Wolves Lock Up Budinger, Kevin Martin

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The Minnesota Timberwolves entered unrestricted free agency with two priorities at the top of their list — add a shooting guard with range and bringing back Chase Budinger.

Within the matter of a couple of hours on Tuesday, new team president Flip Saunders accomplished both of those goals.

The Timberwolves agreed to a four-year, \$30 million deal with shooting guard Kevin Martin and a three-year, \$16 million with Budinger, according to two people with knowledge of the deals. Budinger's deal includes a player option for the final season. The people requested anonymity because an official announcement has not been made.

The agreements, which can't become official until July 10, were two strong moves to address the team's woeful outside shooting last season. The Wolves ranked dead last in 3-point shooting percentage last year, and Saunders made it a point to get more shooters to complement point guard Ricky Rubio's slick passing.

Both players are intimately familiar with coach Rick Adelman's corner offense, a system that is predicated on quick passing and moving without the ball. Martin played for Adelman in Sacramento and Houston before taking a bench role in Oklahoma City last season. He averaged 14.0 points and shot 42.6 percent on 3s last season and was looking for a chance to get back into a starter's role.

The 6-foot-7 Martin will get that in Minnesota, which has been looking for a bigger shooting guard after playing the undersized Luke Ridnour and J.J. Barea in that role for most of last season.

Budinger averaged 9.4 points and shot 32 percent from 3-point range last season. He only played in 23 games thanks to a knee injury that derailed a promising start to the year, but Timberwolves coach Rick Adelman and new President Flip Saunders made no secret of the fact that they badly wanted Budinger back in Minnesota.

The Timberwolves paid Budinger a visit at his San Diego home on Sunday night, arriving just after the market opened at 9:01 p.m. on the West Coast. Budinger also entertained an offer from the Milwaukee Bucks, but ultimately decided to remain with the Timberwolves and a coach he has grown very fond of in his short time in the league.

Showing Off His New Threads



ABOVE: New Boston Celtics Lance Colton Iverson (37) and Kelly Olynyk (41) show off their new jerseys during a media event on Monday in Boston. Iverson, a Yankton native and Colorado State graduate, and Olynyk were acquired by the Celtics in separate draft day moves on Thursday.

LEFT: Iverson, left, and Olynyk address the media during Monday's event. On the right end of the podium is Boston Celtics general manager Danny Ainge.

STEVE BABINEAU/BOSTON CELTICS PUBLIC RELATIONS

AP Sources: MLB Umpire Let Go After Drug Violation

NEW YORK (AP) — A Major League Baseball umpire was recently dismissed for what was believed to be the first known drug ouster among umps, two people familiar with the situation have told The Associated Press.

MLB announced on June 14 that Brian Runge was no longer on the staff and that a Triple-A umpire had been promoted, but didn't give a reason. Only once since 2000 had such a change been made in midseason, and that was because of an injury.

The two people said Runge failed at least one drug test, then reached an agreement so

he could remain on the umpire roster. When he failed to comply with those terms, he was released.

The people spoke on condition of anonymity because MLB didn't publicly say why Runge was gone.

It could not be independently determined by the AP what drug was involved.

Joe West, president of the World Umpires Association — the union representing umps — declined comment Tuesday.

The AP was unable to contact Runge through the union or other umpires.

Like players, umpires are subject to random drug tests.

Oakland pitcher Bartolo Colon, Philadelphia catcher Carlos Ruiz and San Diego catcher Yasmani Grandal all missed time this season because of drug suspensions imposed last year. In addition, 26 players have been suspended this year under the minor league drug program.

The 43-year-old Runge didn't work in the majors after last Aug. 30 while dealing with a knee injury. He called spring training games this year and later did several Triple-A games, but hadn't been back in the big leagues during the regular season.

Lance Armstrong Commits To RAGBRAI

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Disgraced cyclist Lance Armstrong says he'll return to his bike later this month for a state-long trek across Iowa.

Armstrong tells the Des Moines Register (<http://dmreg.co/19V5mEa>) that he and staffers from his Austin, Texas-based bicycle shop will ride for "three or four days" in RAGBRAI, an annual event sponsored by the newspaper that runs from the Missouri to Mississippi rivers.

This will mark the fifth visit to RAGBRAI for Armstrong, who told interviewer Oprah Winfrey in January after years of denials that he doped for all seven of his Tour de France wins from 1999-2005.

Lakers Take Two From Sioux Falls East



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D
Yankton Lakers baserunner Justin Leader starts back toward first base as the Sioux Falls East first baseman prepares to take the throw during the second game of their VFW Teener baseball doubleheader on Tuesday at Yankton's Riverside Field. Yankton won the opener 10-8 and rolled to a 12-2 victory in the nightcap.

The Yankton Lakers pounded out 22 runs in completing a doubleheader sweep of Sioux Falls East in VFW Baseball action on Tuesday at Riverside Field.

In the opener, Yankton held on for a 10-8 victory.

Nathan Hein had three hits and two RBI to lead the way. Michael Heine, Jordan Payer and Cade Larsen each had two hits. Jordan Kathol posted a hit and two RBI. Nate Stephenson, Chase Vogt, Hunter Camenson and Justin Leader added hits in the win.

Cameron picked up the win. In the nightcap, three different Laker hitters had three hits each in a 12-2 victory.

Heine had three hits and five RBI, and Hein had three hits and two RBI to lead Yankton. Stephenson also had three hits, driving in one. Kathol posted two hits and a RBI. Payer had a hit and a RBI. Tyler Strahl, Cameron and Leader recorded hits in the victory.

Stephenson picked up the win.

The Lakers, 14-8, travel to Tabor on Saturday.

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