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Attorney of top SEC DB says star junior didn't throw punch



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Published: June 12, 2014 at 12:59 p.m.

The attorney for one of the SEC's top defensive backs, LSU's Jalen Mills, opened strong fire on the veracity of a police report identifying his client as the assailant of a woman who alleges Mills punched her in the mouth, resulting in four stitches.

Mills is charged with second-degree battery and has been indefinitely suspended from the Tigers' football program.

"He was not the person who struck the victim," Baton Rouge defense attorney Brent Stockstill told The Advertiser of Lafayette, La.

Stockstill said he has spoken with eyewitnesses that claim another woman threw the punch, and indicated romantic interest as the underlying cause of the incident, which is said to have occurred outside Mills' door at his apartment complex in Baton Rouge. According to redsticknow.com, Mills was identified in a six-person photo lineup by the victim and a corroborating witness.

Action from LSU was swift. He was indefinitely suspended less than 12 hours after his 2 a.m. booking Wednesday. He was released from jail Wednesday at 3:40 p.m. after a \$10,000 bond was posted, per a tweet from LSU beat writer Glenn Guilbeau.

If the district attorney files formal charges against Mills, the local court system could find itself under heavy scrutiny in the wake of the legal handling of former LSU running back Jeremy Hill. The Cincinnati Bengals rookie was charged with battery, while on probation for a previous arrest, after a video surfaced showing Hill sucker-punching a bar patron from behind outside a Baton Rouge nightclub. He did not serve time in jail, resulting in scathing criticism of the judicial system from both local and national media outlets.

If Mills is perceived to receive preferential treatment, as Hill was, there could be some tense news conferences in LSU head coach Les Miles' future.

According to the victim's statement to police, she knocked on Mills' door in search of a friend, and Mills opened, then closed the door. She knocked again, and when Mills did not answer, walked away, per the statement. She told police that upon hearing a voice behind her, she turned around, at which time Mills punched her in the face. According to the report, a felony arrest warrant was issued for Mills when he failed to show up for a scheduled meeting with investigators and did not respond to a subsequent phone call or voice mail.

Mills was a Freshman All-America cornerback for LSU in 2012, and last year made 67 tackles as a sophomore while playing both cornerback and safety. He made three interceptions and recorded three sacks, leading LSU defensive backs in both categories. He will likely populate various preseason All-SEC teams and could handle various roles, including safety, cornerback and nickel back, in the Tigers' defense this fall if reinstated.

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