

Former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson walks out of Judge Helene Abrams court room at the Maricopa County Superior Court complex in Mesa, Ariz. on Monday.

Fighter admits to drug possession

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Former heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson pleaded guilty to drug possession and driving under the influence in an Arizona court on Monday.

His plea stemmed from an arrest last December in which authorities said Tyson, who has a long history of legal problems, admitted to using cocaine that day and to being addicted to the drug.

He now faces up to three years and nine months in prison for the felony possession charge and up to six months in jail for the misdemeanor DUI count. The 41-year-old boxer is scheduled to be sentenced on November 19.

Dressed in a light blue shirt and dark blue trousers during a brief appearance in Maricopa County Superior Court, a somber Tyson quickly answered a series of questions by the judge about the plea agreement, responding, "guilty" when asked how he pleaded to each count.

Tyson was arrested in December 29 in Scottsdale, Ariz., after being spotted driving erratically upon leaving a nightclub and nearly colliding with a sheriff's vehicle, authorities said.

Prosecutors on Monday said Tyson had 2.16 grams of cocaine in his possession and traces of marijuana in his system at the time of his arrest.

"Mike admitted to possessing bags of cocaine and said he uses any time he can get his hands on it," the arresting officer wrote in his report.

Tyson's attorney, David Chesnoff, said the controversial boxer is undergoing substance abuse treatment at a California rehabilitation facility and has been sober for eight months. Tyson in April sold his home in the posh Arizona community of Paradise Valley.

"He took the bull by the horns and has managed to deal with his addictions and stay sober for an extended period of time," Chesnoff told reporters after the hearing.

"He's not in denial. He's acknowledged that what he did was wrong."

Tyson served three years in an Indiana prison following a 1992 rape conviction. In 1999, he was sentenced to one year in jail after pleading no contest to two misdemeanor assault charges in Maryland. He was released after 3-1/3 months behind bars.

The prize fighter once known as "Iron Mike" was banned from boxing for a year after biting a chunk out of rival Evander Holyfield's ear in their world title bout in Las Vegas in 1997. Tyson retired two years ago with a 50-6 record that included 44 knockouts.

Vick, co-defendants indicted

Former QB tests positive, judge imposes restrictions

SUSSEX, Va. (AP) - Michael Vick already had an expanded legal fight on his hands. In recent developments, Vick tested positive for the presence of marijuana in his system. The judge has imposed additional restrictions on Vick, who is out on bond, pending his trial.

The Atlanta Falcons quarterback was indicted on state charges related to a dogfighting ring operated on his Virginia property. He pleaded guilty to dogfighting con-

spiracy charges in federal court last month.

A Surry County grand jury indicted Vick and three co-defendants Tuesday, charging the NFL star with beating or killing or causing dogs to fight other dogs and engaging in or promoting dogfighting. Each felony is punishable by up to five years in prison.

The grand jury didn't indict the 27-year-old Vick and two co-defendants on eight additional counts of killing or

causing to be killed a companion animal, felonies that would have exposed each of them to as many as 40 years in prison if convicted.

Vick's defense attorney, Billy Martin, said in a statement that the state charges concern "the same conduct covered by the federal indictment for which Mr. Vick has already accepted full responsibility."

Martin said lawyers will "examine these state charges and will aggressively protect

his rights to ensure that he is not held accountable for the same conduct twice."

Arraignments are set for Oct. 3.

Vick, who also admitted to bankrolling the dogfighting operation on property he owns in Surry County in his written federal plea, is scheduled for sentencing Dec. 10.

In the federal case, Vick was convicted of a conspiracy count, while the state indictment deals with the act

(See Vick, Page 11)

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