

The Palm Beach Post

July 20, 2002

RODGERS SAYS HE DIDN'T HIT HIS WIFE

By Todd Archer

MIAMI -- Nearly 24 hours after he was arrested on charges of aggravated battery, simple battery and resisting without violence, Miami Dolphins linebacker Derrick Rodgers was released from Miami-Dade County Jail Friday after posting a \$10,000 bond.

"I'd like to apologize for the embarrassment that I may have caused my family and the distraction I may have caused my team members and the people who support the Dolphins," Rodgers said after his release. "That's pretty much all I want to say about the incident."

He did not answer questions and returned to his Weston home.

While Rodgers' attorney, Ed O'Donnell, does not dispute an incident occurred between his client and William Peguero, he denies that Rodgers' wife was struck. Kareff Rodgers has denied that her husband kicked and punched her during the altercation.

Kareff Rodgers was in court Friday with family members, a pastor, Stu Weinstein, the Dolphins team security investigator, and Harvey Greene, the club's Senior Vice President-Media Relations. She sobbed as her husband appeared on a closed-circuit television wearing a blue jump suit.

Rodgers, who has been instructed to have no contact with Peguero, is scheduled to be arraigned Aug. 8. The aggravated battery charge, a felony, carries a maximum 15-year penalty.

On Thursday afternoon, Kareff Rodgers was at Lario's on South Beach when she was talking with Peguero. According to the police report, Rodgers slammed a metal chair over Peguero's head, causing a cut that required four stitches. Then Rodgers allegedly punched and kicked his wife.

"He never punched her or anything like that," O'Donnell said. "In the melee, it may have appeared that way, but eyewitness perceptions have proven time and time again to be frail. One person may see one thing and another person may see something else. I don't think anybody is lying, but when something happens fast you can perceive things one way. I think that will be borne out in the end."

In accordance with NFL rules, Rodgers must undergo an evaluation and he could face a fine or suspension if he is convicted or pleads to a lesser charge.

"I'm looking out for Derrick's best interests, whatever that may be in the end," O'Donnell said, "so I don't ever let league policy interfere with the way I represent a client."