

## Ex-Coach Receives Probation

Daily News-Record (Harrisonburg, VA) - February 22, 2001

### Chou Sentenced In Sex Case

By ALAYNA DeMARTINI

News-Record Staff Writer

A 23-year-old former girls' soccer coach has been placed on probation but given no jail time for making proposals for sexual contact with a 13-year-old girl he met via the Internet, then visited and had illicit contact.

The victim gave a tearful testimony in court Tuesday before Brian Wei-Yang Chou was sentenced. She said she was friends with several of the girls on the Harrisonburg Soccer Club's youth team, for which Chou was an assistant coach. She testified she has suffered nightmares and has been reluctant to even give her father a hug. She said she had developed an irrational fear of Asian men.

### Lewd Proposals

Chou made at least 11 proposals for oral sodomy, intercourse or illicit touching, Rockingham County Commonwealth's Attorney Marsha Garst said in court Tuesday.

"There were very vivid arrangements to sneak out and have intercourse," Garst said of Chou's proposals. Chou admitted to each of them, she said.

Garst argued at Chou's sentencing that he deserves to serve time in jail. She would not comment on Judge John J. McGrath's decision not to require any.

"I want to be crystal clear that this was the judge's sentence," Garst said.

Chou pleaded guilty in December to a felony count of taking indecent liberties with a minor, which carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison. He also pleaded guilty to misdemeanor sexual battery against the girl, a charge reduced from a felony count of aggravated assault.

### Meeting At A Halloween Party

The first Internet conversations between Chou and the girl, then 13 and now 14, occurred when she was at a Halloween party with her friends on the soccer team. Chou had an online conversation with the girl during the party, and shortly after that visited her at her Rockingham County elementary school and drove her home, according to the prosecution's evidence.

When he drove her home, there was contact, but attorneys disputed whether the two kissed or whether a genital area was touched.

Chou and the girl had three conversations via the Internet that the girl saved and were presented as evidence in the case.

".. No matter what kinds of conversations juveniles are willing to engage in, your responsibility (as an adult) is to not initiate and to walk away. I'd be surprised if he hasn't learned that lesson," Attorney John Holloran said of Chou, his client.

### On Probation

On both offenses, Chou entered Alford pleas of guilt, meaning he does not admit he committed the crimes, but he acknowledges the state has sufficient evidence to convict him.

Chou, a James Madison University senior, has been placed on probation for three years. During this time he is barred from having sexual conversations on the Internet with minors. Even off the Internet, he cannot have contact with the 14-year-old girl or anyone on the soccer team. Also, he must go through sexual counseling.

Chou was arrested in January 2000. The case involved a state police investigation by a group that specializes in Internet crime.

- Record: 109E3E38C2DDCF81
- Copyright: Copyright (c) 2001, Byrd Newspapers, All Rights Reserved.