

No Charges in Death of Michigan Wrestler

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DETROIT — No criminal charges will be filed in the death of University of Michigan wrestler Jeff Reese, who collapsed Dec. 9 after a severe weight-loss regimen, a prosecutor said Friday.

Washtenaw County Prosecutor Brian Mackie announced the decision after a two-week investigation into a case that has helped generate cries for reform in the intensely competitive world of collegiate wrestling.

"The reports submitted and all of the other information regarding the tragic death of this young man do not support a finding of criminal wrongdoing," Mackie said.

Reese, 21, a junior from Wellsburg, N.Y., suffered kidney failure and heart malfunction while wearing a rubber suit during a 2-hour workout in a 92-degree room. He had been trying to lose 12 pounds in a single day.

Also Friday, a committee of the Michigan athletic department formed in the wake of Reese's death issued its recommendations to Athletic Director Tom Goss. The seven recommendations include the ban of rubber suits, instituting a weight-monitoring program and checking wrestlers' weight on a daily basis.

"With these recommendations, we have come up with steps we will implement immediately at Michigan," Goss said. "We wanted to do this quickly to make sure something was in place before our student-athletes return to competition."

An autopsy found that Reese died of a "metabolic derangement" from his efforts to rapidly shed pounds to qualify to wrestle in the 150-pound weight class.

Among the reports the prosecutor's office was examining was an allegation that a Michigan assistant coach waited about an hour before calling 911 the night Reese became sick and died. A review by the university's Department of Public Safety found no evidence of an unnecessary delay, said Walter Harrison, university vice president.

It was the third death in six weeks of a college wrestler undergoing a rapid weight-reduction program. A 22-year-old wrestler at Wisconsin-La Crosse who collapsed and died last month was also wearing a rubber suit to help with his weight-loss effort during a 4-hour workout.

The NCAA also has asked each school to investigate and report the findings to Dan Gable, who is taking this season off as wrestling coach at Iowa. He'll study the findings and report to the NCAA Wrestling Rules Committee.