

# Dexter Reid could face difficult return to NFL after arrest

By Jim Ducibella - The Virginian-Pilot

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Dexter Reid's road back to the National Football League may soon get much longer.

Reid, a 26-year-old safety from Norfolk who has won Super Bowl rings with the New England Patriots and the Indianapolis Colts, was freed on \$10,000 bail Monday in Virginia Beach during his arraignment on charges of carrying a concealed weapon and possession of marijuana.

He was arrested early Sunday when police say they discovered a handgun and half an ounce of marijuana in Reid's sport utility vehicle after stopping him on suspicion of drunken driving. A preliminary hearing is set for May 4.

Reid, who was arrested on a similar concealed weapon charge in Mecklenburg County on March 11, was ordered by General District Court Judge Gene Woolard to undergo random drug tests. Reid also would need court permission to travel outside of Virginia for any reason, which would include tryouts and physicals conducted by NFL teams.

Reid was waived by the Colts on Feb. 21, only weeks after winning a Super Bowl for the second time in his career.

How interested teams will be in Reid may be affected by changes to the league's Personal Conduct Policy that NFL commissioner Roger Goodell hopes to have in place by next month. NFL officials have expressed a growing concern that off-field actions by some players are tarnishing the league's public image.

In February, Tennessee cornerback Adam "Pacman" Jones was involved in his 10th encounter with police since coming into the

league two years ago. Police said Monday that Jones could face felony and misdemeanor charges from the triple shooting in Las Vegas. Chicago's Tank Johnson was sentenced last week to four months in jail on weapons charges, and in Charlotte, within hours of Reid's arrest, Carolina Panthers reserve guard D'Anthony Batiste was charged with carrying a concealed weapon.

Meanwhile, nine players from the Cincinnati Bengals were arrested last year on charges such as boating while drunk, spousal abuse and weapons violations.

At the NFL owners' meetings Monday in Phoenix, Goodell said he expects to have in place a stricter set of guidelines in time for the draft on April 28 and 29. The commissioner met recently in Indianapolis with Players Association executive director Gene Upshaw and about 10 players. All agreed that stronger, faster discipline is necessary.

According to the New York Daily News, punishments may include one-year suspensions that would require the player to apply for reinstatement. The NFL could hand down penalties even before the legal process is complete, especially for repeat offenders, a provision currently not a part of the league's discipline policy.

Players Association president Troy Vincent told the Daily News that the current system of fining players, put into place in 2000, is not getting the message across because the money players make today is "so enormous, it doesn't matter."

Taking away jobs for long stretches is seen as a stronger and more effective deterrent. The NFL's Personal Conduct Policy states that "detrimental conduct" includes "possession or distribution of a weapon in violation of state or federal law." Any player covered by that policy who is arrested automatically must undergo consultation and counseling.

Although Reid may not be covered under the policy because he is an unsigned free agent, his two arrests since March 11 almost certainly

would be affected to some degree by a league-wide get-tough movement as he tries to get back on the field.

Reid was accompanied to court Monday by family members and attorney **Benjamin Hamlet**, who told the judge his client was a high-profile professional athlete who needed a handgun for protection. Reid told Judge Woolard he would be staying with his mother in Chesapeake.

Reid's agent, Andrew Joel of Richmond, did not return two phone messages left at his office Monday. Meanwhile, Dave Hudak, Reid's former coach at Granby, seemed stunned by the sudden turn of events.

"All I can say is that he is a great person," said Hudak, who had not spoken to Reid since he attended the Super Bowl in February as Reid's guest. "I mean, this is an unfortunate situation, but as a person, to me he's still the same great guy. I still love him like a son, and I want him to know that I'll always be there for him."

*News researcher Ann Johnson and staff writer Duane Bourne contributed to this story.*

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