

Red Wings fan beats legal rap

Lawyer helps man skate for octopus throw in Denver

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Here's one last octopus tale from the Red Wings' run to the Stanley Cup.

Mike Timmer, a 26-year-old Michigan transplant in Denver, got tossed from Pepsi Arena after he tossed an octopus on the ice late in the second period during Game 4 of the Wings-Avalanche series. Timmer smuggled the mollusk under his shirt and jacket.

He understood getting the boot during the May 1 game. But the citation was a bit much.

"It was ridiculous," he said.

Denver's finest cited Timmer, who grew up in Grand Haven, for "throwing stones or missiles," a municipal violation.

Here's what the statute says: "It shall be unlawful for any person to throw any stone or other missile upon or at any vehicle, building, tree or other public or private property, or upon or at any person in any public way or place which is public in nature, or on enclosed or unenclosed ground."

If convicted, he faced fines and even jail time, although that was unlikely.

So Timmer, a business sales consultant for Wells Fargo, enlisted Denver lawyer, Dearborn native and Wings fan Russell Hebets.

Hebets found the case to be so outrageous that he agreed to represent Timmer for free.

"It's not like he had any intent to hurt someone," Hebets said. "His intent was to cheer for his team."

Last week, Hebets got the case dismissed in a Denver city court in front of Magistrate Catherine Cary.

"I talked to the supervisor in the city attorney's office, and we basically agreed that it was a silly charge," Hebets said. "I explained to the judge that it's a hockey tradition, and she said, 'OK. Don't do it again.'"

The tradition began in 1952 when a fish merchant threw an octopus on the ice in Detroit because eight victories were then needed to win the Stanley Cup playoffs.

Timmer, who met Hebets in February when he helped set up a credit card processing system for Hebets' law firm, said he was grateful.

But he's still a little miffed at the Pepsi Center security.

"I understand getting kicked out," he said. "But a ticket seemed over the top."

He said the Denver cops didn't want to issue a ticket but took their direction from Pepsi Center staff.

"The cops didn't even care," he said. "Actually, one of them was from Detroit."

Timmer got the last laugh. The Red Wings swept the Avalanche in four games. By the time he was kicked out, the Red Wings led 6-1 and won the game, 8-2.

Timmer finished watching the game in a Denver bar frequented by Wings fans.

"Everyone paid for my drinks the rest of the night," he said.

Would he toss another octopus?

"Absolutely, but probably not in Denver," Timmer said. "If I make it back to the Joe, I'll definitely do it."

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