

Court clears way for Elliott suspension

BY SCHUYLER DIXON
ASSOCIATED PRESS

FRISCO, Texas — A federal appeals court cleared the way Thursday for the NFL to impose a six-game suspension on Dallas Cowboys star Ezekiel Elliott over domestic violence allegations, siding with the league in the latest high-profile fight over its ability to punish players for off-field behavior.

In a 2-1 decision, the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals

panel in New Orleans granted the league's emergency request to set aside an injunction and ordered a district court in Texas to dismiss Elliott's case.

The NFL announced that the suspension was effective immediately, though further appeals were possible and the Cowboys are not playing this weekend.

"We are currently exploring all of our legal options and will make a decision as to what is

the best course of action in the next few days," Elliott attorney Frank Salzano said.

The Cowboys don't play again until next Sunday, Oct. 22, at San Francisco. If Elliott's legal team can't put the suspension on hold again, he won't be eligible to play until Nov. 30 at home against Washington, a Thursday night game the week after Thanksgiving. Elliott played the first five games as Dallas went 2-3 in a disappointing start.

A federal judge in Texas issued the injunction blocking the suspension last month, agreeing with NFL players' union attorneys who argued that the investigation of the allegations in Ohio and a subsequent appeal were unfair to Elliott, one of the league's standout running backs.

The NFL countered that it followed procedures under the league's labor deal and that the union improperly filed a lawsuit before the appeals pro-

cess was complete.

The most likely destination for further legal challenges from players' union attorneys representing Elliott is with the Southern District of New York. The NFL filed in that federal court after Elliott's appeal through the league was denied by arbitrator Harold Henderson last month.

Last year's NFL rushing leader as a rookie, Elliott was

SEE ELLIOTT/PAGE B3



LOGAN ULRICH/Dispatch photo

Northern Vance sophomore Emaní Foster serves the ball during a home match. Foster has been a star for Northern Vance in her sophomore season, setting a new North Carolina record for kills in a game earlier this season by notching 48.

Passing game a concern for Blue Devils

BY JOEDY MCCREARY
ASSOCIATED PRESS

DURHAM — Duke's passing game hasn't exactly earned a passing grade lately.

A combination of leaky protection, inaccurate throws and dropped balls have led coach David Cutcliffe to lament that "the passing game is not what you want it to be" with Florida State visiting on Saturday.

In four wins to start the season, Duke (4-2, 1-2 Atlantic Coast Conference) completed nearly 63 percent of its throws and averaged 243 yards passing. Then the Blue Devils averaged just 145 yards passing with a 41.6 percent completion rate in losses the past two weeks to No. 11 Miami and Virginia.

Quarterback Daniel Jones completed just 33 percent of his attempts against the Cavaliers, the second-worst mark of his college career — surpassed only by last season's game against Army played during Hurricane Matthew.

The recent downturn had Cutcliffe making some unspecified tweaks to the practice plan ahead of the Seminoles' visit.

"If you don't like what you're getting, then you change what you're doing," he said. "We didn't drastically change formats, but we looked at the actions that we're doing at practice and balanced them with the results you're getting, or the results you want."

Maybe a matchup with Florida State's struggling secondary will help the Blue Devils fix things.

Safety Derwin James and

SEE PASSING/PAGE B2

The total package

Foster emerging as a star for Northern Vance

BY LOGAN ULRICH
SPORTS EDITOR

Emaní Foster has to think carefully. From the entire lexicon of the English language, she's been told to select only three words to define herself.

The sophomore at Northern Vance High School sits in the gym and ponders, looking out at the court and back toward the rest of the school, classrooms emptied for

the day. Intelligent is the first word she picks. She makes straight As and her favorite subject is science. Her mother, Dee, found out she was pregnant during her second stint in college at UNC-Chapel Hill. She was studying to become a dental hygienist and spent most of her time with her nose in a textbook. Her husband, Greg, thinks all that reading filtered down to the baby.

Corny is the second word she picks. She and her

father are both quiet and soft spoken, but both their eyes light up remembering their favorite movies: "Dumb and Dumber" for him, "Napoleon Dynamite" for her.

Determined is the final word. Beneath the placid exterior she inherited from her father is the same drive that powered her mother back to school — a fire that's not content at being anything but the best she can be. The first time she

put her hands on a volleyball at age 9, she refused to settle for serving underhand like the rest of the girls, but instead practiced and practiced until she could swing and send the ball over the net.

"She works hard at everything that she does," Greg said. "She always wants to be the best, whether it's in school or athletics or whatever she does."

SEE PACKAGE/PAGE B3

Sources: NCAA to release ruling in UNC case Friday

BY AARON BEARD
ASSOCIATED PRESS

The NCAA infractions committee panel handling North Carolina's multi-year academic case plans to release its ruling Friday, three people with knowledge of the investigation said.

The people said the NCAA notified parties involved in the case Thursday morning. They spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because neither the school nor the NCAA have comment-

ed publicly on the release.

The ruling comes roughly eight weeks after UNC appeared before the infractions panel in August in Nashville, Tennessee, for a two-day hearing that included Chancellor Carol Folt, athletic director Bubba Cunningham, men's basketball coach Roy Williams, football coach Larry Fedora and women's basketball coach Sylvia Hatchell. The school faces five top-level charges, including lack of institutional control.

While a ruling could provide resolu-

tion, the delay-filled case could still linger if UNC pursues an appeal or legal action in response to potential penalties that could include fines, probation, postseason bans or vacated wins and championships.

In an email to the AP, NCAA spokeswoman Stacey Osburn said the NCAA would send out a media advisory on the morning of an announcement but had "nothing further to share before then."

UNC spokeswoman Joanne Peters Denny declined to comment in an

email, referring questions to the NCAA.

The focus is independent study-style courses in the formerly named African and Afro-American Studies (AFAM) department on the Chapel Hill campus. The courses were misidentified as lecture classes but didn't meet and required a research paper or two for typically high grades.

In a 2014 investigation, former U.S. Justice Department official

SEE RULING/PAGE B2

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