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Jerome Simpson indicted on drug charge

COVINGTON — Four months after a package of marijuana was delivered to Jerome Simpson's home, the Bengals wide receiver was indicted on a drug charge Thursday in Kenton County.

Simpson was indicted on one count of trafficking marijuana in excess of eight ounces, a felony punishable by one to five years in prison. Prosecutors have requested Simpson be served a summons to appear in Kenton Circuit Court. His arraignment is scheduled for Jan. 30.

A path leading to Simpson's Crestview Hills townhouse began Sept. 19, according to authorities. A narcotics unit devoted to detecting suspected marijuana shipments flagged a package, which originated in Eureka, Calif., at a Sacramento shipping center. The information was passed on to Kentucky authorities who tracked its delivery to Simpson's residence in the 2700 block of Mansion Place.

California law enforcement official told the Enquirer in September that the package contained 2.5 pounds of marijuana and an additional six pounds of marijuana, scales and smoking devices was found in the townhouse. Kenton Commonwealth's Attorney Rob Sanders said Thursday afternoon California officials gave out the

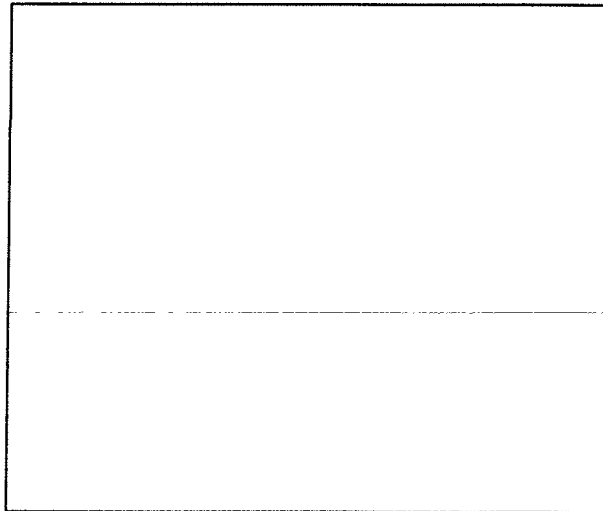
wrong information and that the total marijuana recovered was just under three pounds. He said he could not comment further on the details of the case other than to say Simpson had cooperated with authorities.

Covington lawyer Shannon Sexton, who is not representing Simpson, said someone found guilty of a felony trafficking charge in Northern Kentucky normally gets some kind of jail time. Often the punishment is a split sentence, meaning the defendant serves some time in jail and the rest of the time on probation.

Exceptional circumstances could result in a variance from the norm, Sexton said. Those circumstances could include a defendant cooperating with authorities or a difficult case for prosecutors to prove.

Simpson's attorney, Burr Travis of Florence, was in Florida Thursday but said during a telephone interview that sentences vary depending on what substance was being trafficked. He said defendants trafficking in

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drugs such as cocaine, methamphetamine or heroin typically receive harsher punishments.

“Our goal is simply that Jerome Simpson be treated as anyone else would be in the same or similar situation as an individual with no prior criminal history,” Travis said.

He said there is no no allegation that Simpson was selling marijuana. He said Kentucky’s criminal statute allows someone to be charged with trafficking if they are in possession of more than eight ounces even through authorities can not prove a sale took place.

“The Commonwealth is not alleging he made a sale at any time,” Travis said.

“There is no allegation. It is only the inference by statute that makes it applicable to Jerome Simpson.”

Bengals spokesman Jack Brennan said the team was aware of the developments but as is their policy the team would not comment on the matter until it is resolved through the normal legal channels.

Due to the charge, Simpson would be subject to the league’s substance abuse policies. The 2010 agreement between the league and the NFL Players Association on the Substance Abuse Policy states that a player “will normally be subject to discipline up to and including suspension for four games for a first violation of the law related to substances of abuse.”

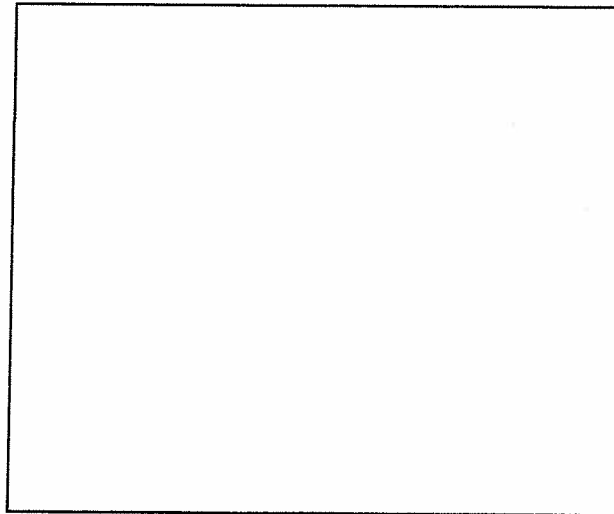
Emails to Simpson’s agent, Dave Butz, were not returned.


Simpson, who was drafted in the second round in 2008, worked his way into the starting lineup this season after struggling for most of his first three seasons in the league. He played all 16 games, with 14 starts, and was second on the team in yards (725) and third in receptions (50) during the regular season.

He did play in the Sept. 25 game against San Francisco, which came less than a week after the raid on his house. He did not face any suspension from the Bengals, who release a statement that week saying: “Jerome’s legal situation with regard to events of the past week remains completely unresolved, and the Bengals believe it is not appropriate to act on any presumption of what may transpire.”

Simpson gained national attention in December with his 19-yard catch-and-run for a touchdown against Arizona that included a somersault flip over Cardinals linebacker Daryl Washington from the 2-yard line into the end zone.

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Simpson is scheduled to be an unrestricted free agent when the new league year begins on March 13.

This is the second Bengal this week to be the subject of court proceedings. Adam "Pacman" Jones pleaded guilty Wednesday in Hamilton County Municipal Court to one count of resisting arrest. The 28-year-old Georgia native was sentenced to one year of probation, a \$250 fine, 50 hours of community service and ordered to stay out of the Scene Ultra nightclub. When police officers arrived, Jones cursed at police.

Trouble started for Jones after an argument broke out July 10 at the nightclub in the 600 block of Walnut Street Downtown. When they tried to handcuff him, he waved his arms and tensed his muscles to try to prevent that.

Reporter Joe Reedy contributed.

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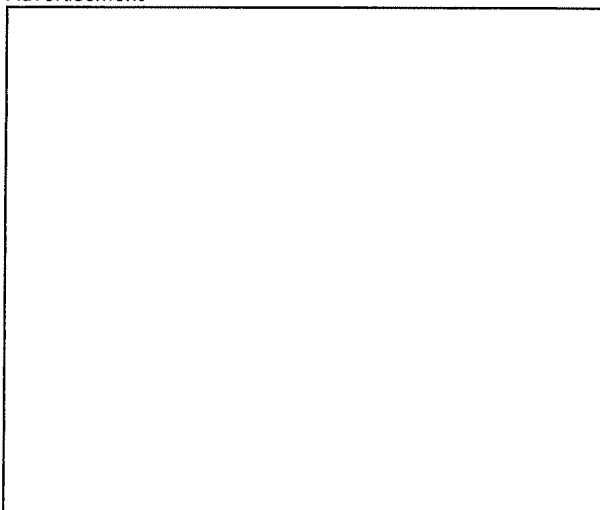
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