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### **Friends left to wonder at former star's plight**

Ex-soccer standout at Shen going on trial for murder this week

By Anne Miller

Staff Writer

The soccer trophies in Shenendehowa High School bear the names of childhood best friends who won state titles and the top ranking in national polls.

The name of Miles Joseph, Olympian, former professional soccer player and current assistant Siena College women's coach, is there. So is that of David Woodrow, a Cornell University dropout accused of murder in Schenectady's Hamilton Hill neighborhood.

"This is one of my best friends that I grew up with," Joseph said. "I know Dave, the person he is, and it's tough to believe some of the things that you read."

Woodrow is scheduled to stand trial this week in Schenectady County Court on charges that he killed James Holland, who was shot Dec. 2, 1999, at Craig Street and Lincoln Avenue. Holland was 33.

Roy Pfeil, who coached Woodrow, remembers him as a dedicated young man from a supportive family. Court papers offer a different picture: that of a marijuana dealer accused of murder.

Pfeil, who teaches health classes at the high school, coached both Joseph and Woodrow in a Clifton Park league.

"He was a starter. He was a leader. He was just a superb player," Pfeil said. "He was always a quiet, polite kid."

Woodrow's attorney, Mark Sacco, said a key to his defense will be showing jurors that "truth is a very fluid concept on the streets," and that there were at least two people firing guns that day.

According to witnesses, Holland, aka Frank White, and a friend were running from three or four other men. Bullets struck a pickup truck, a van and a convenience store's front door before a slug found Holland, who was from Queens.

"I went over to him and there was this big hole where his eyebrow should have been, and the blood was coming out like a faucet," an unnamed witness told the Times Union at the time.

On Dec. 19 that year, Detective Robert Glasser asked Woodrow to visit the police station, according to court documents. They talked for about an hour, and Woodrow was released. The case languished.

Five years later, Woodrow was back in the police station, this time in handcuffs after being arrested in a vice squad raid of a Schenectady Street residence on Jan. 14, 2005. Information gleaned in that investigation prompted detectives to question Woodrow about the killing, but he refused to answer, according to court records.

Police charged him with having marijuana. Woodrow made his \$10,000 bail and skipped his arraignment.

But interest in the homicide investigation was renewed. At first, no one talked. But police continued to piece together details and, slowly, witnesses opened up. Soon, several identified Woodrow as a suspect.

Then, in March 2005, even as Woodrow remained on the lam, a county grand jury returned a sealed indictment charging him in the murder. That same month, Dayton, Ohio, police tracked him to a house in a run-down neighborhood of that city. They arrested him after a five-hour standoff that ended with tear gas.

Woodrow, who was 31 at the time, was extradited to Schenectady, and the murder charge against him was made public. He was arraigned on the charge in Schenectady County Courthouse in early June. The once cleanshaven teenager with a neat flattop had a beard and long, thick dreadlocks.

Woodrow's parents, Phil and Blossom Woodrow, supported him at the appearance, sitting in the benches in the courthouse's smallest room.

Pfeil, who was Woodrow's first coach, said at least one of his parents attended every game. The Woodrows took turns with the other parents hosting huge carb-loading pasta dinners the night before big games.

Woodrow was a skilled goal scorer on Shen teams that won state championships in 1990 and 1991 and were voted best in the nation under coach Mike Campisi. It was one of those times when personalities and skills mesh, Pfeil said.

"The chemistry brought that team together," he said. "The technical level of all these kids, everything about them was just above and beyond everybody else."

Colleges heavily recruited the entire team, Pfeil said. Woodrow landed at Cornell but, from there, his story fades.

Woodrow saw little playing time during his two years on varsity, and he dropped out of Cornell after his sophomore season. His former coach, now with the Chicago Fire Major League Soccer team, did not return requests for interviews.

Woodrow returned to the Capitol Region, took a few local college classes and landed in Schenectady.

He lost touch with his close childhood friends, like Joseph, who graduated from Clemson University, played for the 1996 Olympic team and played professional soccer in the United States for several years before returning to the area. Today he works for Anaconda Sports.

High school feels like another lifetime, said the married father.

"Because our group was so close, no one did anything outside of focusing on soccer and school," Joseph said. "Our success - it shows that there wasn't really much outside distraction. We were on a mission."

Now, Joseph said, it's impossible for him to see Woodrow as a criminal.

"I was shocked," he said. "This is one of my best friends that I grew up with - it's still hard to believe, until a judgment is made."

Woodrow's parents, reached at their Clifton Park home, said they wanted to check with their son's attorney before speaking with the press. They didn't call back.

In addition to murder, Woodrow was charged with a gun felony, but that was dropped after Judge Polly Hoyer ruled the statute of limitations on the charge had expired. Murder has no statute of limitations. Jury selection is expected to begin Tuesday, with opening statements Wednesday or Thursday.

Prosecutor Paul Clyne, who is handling the case for the Schoenectady County District Attorney's office, did not return telephone calls. Clyne, a former Albany County district attorney, now works for the New York Prosecutors Training Institute, which offers training and assistance to district attorneys' offices statewide.

The trial is expected to last at least two weeks.