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Coach Under Fire

Coach Dorian Delaney of Southern Carolina High School was in court today for charges of involuntary manslaughter and unlawful conduct towards a child. These charges stem from the August 8, 2024 death of junior Kylin Abbot, who collapsed at the end of track practice.

The prosecution's key witness, assistant coach Bailey Brown, described the events at practice on August 8, 2024, before relay team runner Kylin Abbott collapsed. Later in the trial, Delaney took the stand in her own defense, and testified the practice was rocky because of the relay team's poor performance, so she had them run ladders, a workout where distance increases in intervals over time. Weather reports from the day showed the temperature was 92 degrees with a heat index of 113 degrees.

"Delaney made it clear the first one to stop running would be cut off the team...I believe with all the ladders ran that day, the relay team ran over 1100 yards with no breaks," Brown said on the stand.

According to Brown, this was an important practice since college scouts were coming to a regional exhibition that weekend. Delaney assigned the relay team a second set of ladders, since "they weren't trying hard enough, and they kept getting distracted." Brown was left in charge of monitoring this drill, and it was clear to her the

runners were struggling, so when they asked her for a water break, she directed this request to Delaney, who ignored it.

Cameron Covington, a pathologist testifying for the prosecution who performed Abbott's autopsy, called Abbott's death preventable, stating, "If Kylin was not in those conditions or not running at all, she would still be here today." Covington concluded Abbott's cause of death was "total organ failure as a result of severe dehydration."

Covington performed a urinalysis test to determine Abbott's level of dehydration. Abbott's urine specific gravity (USG) was 1.024, which is in the range of mild dehydration. Covington explained that because Abbott was rehydrated on the way to the hospital, her USG would have decreased, and was likely higher when she collapsed.

Strenaxal, a drug Abbott was taking for anxiety and linked to heat strokes, was found in Abbott's bloodstream. Shay Erickson, a former pathologist testified for the defense, saying, "The amphetamines in Strenaxal interfered with the operation of Kylin's hypothalamus, culminating in a heat stroke."

Erickson claimed that since Abbott's USG was 1.024, she suffered from only mild dehydration, instead of severe dehydration, a condition reached at 1.030. Erickson shut down Covington's claims about Abbott's USG being higher, saying no one can be sure how much Abbott's USG might have decreased in the ambulance. Erickson testified there was no conclusive amount of Strenaxal found, Abbott was the only runner taking Strenaxal.

In closing arguments, the prosecution claimed that to Delaney, “winning is everything, not the health of her athletes.” The defense countered, “Delaney cared for Kylin and nurtured her ambitions.” The verdict is still out on Delaney’s fate.