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Charges dismissed against student accused of streaking

Elizabeth Murphy

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A Centre County judge on Friday dismissed charges against Elizabeth Burke, one of the students accused of partaking in the Mifflin Streak, as the prosecution did not present any evidence proving she offended or alarmed anyone, Burke's attorney said.

Centre County Judge Bradley Lunsford dismissed a misdemeanor open lewdness charge and a summary disorderly conduct charge against Burke (junior-English), who had been charged in connection with the annual Mifflin Streak.

The Mifflin Streak, a finals week tradition in which students run naked down Mifflin road, ended in seven arrests this past May. Burke, one of only two to take her case to court, contested the charges on the basis she did not "affront or alarm" onlookers, Stacey Parks Miller, Burke's attorney, said last week during a hearing which lasted about five hours.

Centre County District Attorney Michael Madeira said he does not agree with the ruling.

"We respectfully disagree with the underpinnings of the judge's factual and legal findings," Madeira said.

Parks Miller said she is "very pleased" with the ruling.

"Well like William Shakespeare said, it's 'much ado about nothing,' " Parks Miller said. "This is a harmless event that's been a tradition for decades."

Madeira said he has the option to appeal the ruling. A decision on an appeal can be expected within the next two weeks, he said.

Parks Miller said despite winning the case, the continuation of the Mifflin Streak tradition still faces roadblocks.

"I have a feeling the university might take certain steps now to stop the streak from occurring, period," she said.

Madeira said he expects a discussion with police on how to handle the Mifflin Streak in the future.