

Ron Artest Cleared of Dog Abuse Charges

Basketball star Ron Artest was cleared of dog abuse charges after a vet revealed his dog's weight loss was due to a leg infection.

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Sacramento Kings basketball star Ron Artest has been cleared of animal abuse charges related to allegations that he withheld food from his Great Dane, Socks.

Deputy District Attorney Jeff Wilson said he won't file charges against Artest or his wife, Kimsha, because veterinarian examinations revealed that Socks had a bone infection in a leg that contributed to her weight loss and lack of appetite.

"I'm glad the district attorney decided not to file charges," said Artest in a statement. "I love Socks and have always tried to make sure she was being well-cared for.

"I feel so bad that she was sick and I didn't know about it. If I knew, I would have taken her to the vet immediately."

Artest said he has asked his lawyer, Shannon Baker, to find Socks a new home. "I think it would be best for Socks to live with a family that has a consistent schedule so that she can get the special care she needs," said Artest.

Baker took charge of Socks through an agreement with Placer County Animal Services in March. California Penal Code makes it a crime to deliberately withhold food or water from an animal.

Prosecutor Wilson said Artest was not at his Loomis, Calif., home when Socks began to lose weight. Artest had hired two people to care for his animals while he was out of town.

Artest also owns an American Bulldog named Harley, who Baker says is healthy.

Wilson said that after Socks was treated for the bone infection, she regained her appetite and health.