

Sports Star Cleared of Domestic Violence Charges

After a three-day hearing, Sydney Roosters NRL star Shaun Kenny-Dowall has been cleared of all allegations that he engaged in illegal violence against his former girlfriend, Jessica Peris.

The charges related to alleged assaults and threats to Peris, as well as the destruction of her property.

Facing eleven charges in total, the legal battle overshadowed the star's day-to-day life and football career. The specific allegations included head-butting his girlfriend, pushing her, pulling her hair, putting her in a deadlock, destroying her mobile phone and causing a bruise by grabbing her arm tightly.

The proceedings took a heavy toll on Mr Kenny-Dowall, who had to deal with suspicions of guilt, relentless media attention and even criticism from the NSW Premier Mike Baird, who saw fit to put in his two-cents worth by saying Kenny-Dowall should stand down. After the charges were laid last year, the devastated 28-year-old attended hospital to help him cope with the stress.

During the hearing in [Downing Centre Local Court Sydney](#), Mr Kenny-Dowall was accused of being jealous and overprotective of his girlfriend. He admitted locking himself in the bathroom and going through his partner's phone because he suspected her of cheating on him. Ms Peris alleged that when he finally came out, he threw her phone at the wall, pinned her to the side of the room and punched a hanging picture. She claimed to have sustained a bruise as a result of the incident.

But Mr Kenny-Dowall said he was acting in self-defence after Ms Peris got angry and attacked him.

In the midst of the proceedings, the Sydney Roosters were criticised for allegedly trying to keep the allegations under wraps. The court heard that Ms Peris contacted the club after the breakup in June last year in order to negotiate terms for her silence, leading to speculation she had fabricated her version of the events to make money. Evidence was given that Ms Peris moved out of Mr Kenny-Dowall's apartment following the breakup, and then contacted Brian Canavan, CEO of the Roosters, asking for accommodation, the use of a car for six months and one-month's income.

The court also heard that Ms Peris was offered accommodation and a car for one month, but ultimately turned it down and went to police. Peris testified that she was given a brown paper bag filled with \$5,000 "in lieu of wages".

[Magistrate Grogin was not impressed with the demands Ms Peris made of the football club, stating:](#)

"if a labourer or a lawyer or an apprentice were to have committed a domestic violence offence, would one expect the victim to approach the employers for such material support? I think not."

He found Ms Peris' to be an unreliable witness and did not accept her version of the events, concluding:

"Without any evidence of immediate complaint [about the abuse], without explanation in relation to the bruise on her arm... and in light of her extremely unusual approach of going to the Roosters before the police... we are left with nothing more than suspicion."

Since guilt must be proved beyond reasonable doubt, Mr Kenny-Dowall was found not guilty of all eleven charges.

With the court case behind him, it is hoped Mr Kenny-Dowall can get on with doing what he does best, playing footy.