

WARREN, SUSSEX & MORRIS

ELSEWHERE

IN HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Rivals Mountain Lakes and Delbarton advance to the state lacrosse tournament finals. Page 53

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The Star-Ledger

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LAW & ORDER

Passer-by alerts cops to fatal accident

VERNON: A passer-by yesterday spotted the partially hidden wreckage of a car that crashed about 50 feet off Route 515, killing the driver, according to police.

The 51-year-old victim from New York City was not identified pending notification of his next of kin, police said. Autopsy results are pending.

The rented Pontiac Sunfire careened up an embankment, hit a tree and came to rest behind brush, obscuring it from view, said Police Chief Roy Wherry.

"I'm surprised somebody saw it," he said.

Wherry said a passing motorist saw the tracks leading off the road and alerted police at 8:40 a.m.

Sussex County road crews were working in the area Wednesday and did not see the wreckage. As a result, investiga-

Passenger in shootout enters not-guilty plea

BY KATIE WANG
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

The man who was riding along with Justin McCarthy the night McCarthy shot a Washington Township police officer three times pleaded not guilty yesterday to various weapons offenses.

Damon S. Mammaro, 23, made his first appearance in Superior Court in Belvidere yesterday to answer to charges of possession of a controlled dangerous weapon, possession of an assault weapon and possession of magazine cartridges used to store ammunition. If convicted, the maximum sentence he faces is 15 years in prison, officials said.

Mammaro, dressed in khakis

and a navy blazer, did not say anything in court yesterday, standing silently next to his attorney, Leonard J. Artigliere, who entered the not guilty plea.

After the brief appearance, the Franklin Township resident rushed out of the courtroom with his parents and declined comment. Mammaro is free on his own recognition.

Artigliere released a statement expressing sympathy for Washington Township police officer Jon Schramm and his family. Schramm, who was shot three times on May 30, remains in serious condition at St. Luke's Hospital in Bethlehem, Pa.

"Damon Mammaro and his en-

tire family have Officer Jon Schramm in their thoughts and prayers," said Artigliere. "We join the entire community in praying for Officer Schramm's complete recovery."

Artigliere said media reports identifying the two men as friends were erroneous, but he refused to say how the two men knew each other. Mammaro's mother, Diane, said in an earlier interview with The Star-Ledger that the two had met through a previous job.

Diane Mammaro declined comment yesterday.

Artigliere also maintained his client's innocence.

"We are confident that when the investigation is complete, that



STEVE KLAVER/THE STAR-LEDGER

Damon S. Mammaro, right, appears in court with his attorney, Leonard J. Artigliere, yesterday in Belvidere.

Mr. Mammaro's absolute innocence in this incident will be confirmed," Artigliere said.

Police stopped McCarthy's car in the early hours of May 30 after residents reported hearing gunshots. Police said Mammaro and McCarthy fired dozens of rounds of

ammunition from the car as they drove down rural roads.

When police pulled the car over in Franklin Township, McCarthy started to fight with Schramm, then pulled out a .45-caliber handgun from a bulletproof vest he was

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SHOOTING

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wearing and shot Schramm in the face, neck and arm, police said.

Two New Jersey State Police troopers who also responded to the scene, shot McCarthy, killing him.

Police confiscated two weapons from McCarthy and the car on the day of the shooting, and later found 97 marijuana plants and additional weapons in McCarthy's Lebanon Borough home earlier this week.

John Hagerty, spokesman for the state Division of Criminal Justice, said investigators have also learned that McCarthy purchased

a six-pack of beer before the shooting. But he said they are still waiting for results of toxicology tests to determine if alcohol played a role in the shooting.

Hagerty also said authorities have traced the .45-caliber handgun and semi-automatic weapon that were confiscated from the shooting, but declined to say to whom the weapons were traced.

"We know who the guns are registered to, but we are not going to be in the process of releasing tidbits of information to the media," Hagerty said.

Mammaro's next court appearance is scheduled for July 17.

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