

Both sides end case against teen charged in joyride death

By ART CHARLTON
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Two years ago, Nicholas Glosser was taking a late-night ride in the back seat of a Chevrolet Camaro when he dared the teenage driver to try to go 140 mph, the Warren County Prosecutor's Office says.

The high-speed joyride ended in the bloody death of 16-year-old Jason Lindner, who was thrown from the car when it crashed near his Rymon Road home in Washington Township on March 5, 1994.

Today, Glosser is on trial for what he is accused of saying moments before the speeding car containing five teens went airborne and slammed into trees at Bryans and Rymon roads. The prosecutor's office charged him with death by auto, contending the 20-year-old Belvidere resident egged on the driver to speed and drive recklessly, which caused the crash.

"Is there any dispute that Mr. Glosser said that? I submit to you there isn't," Prosecutor John O'Reilly told the jury during yesterday's closing arguments.

But defense attorney Leonard Artigliere said the driver, Glenn Howell Jr. of Hope, and one of two girls in the back seat, Kari Hackett, were unreliable witnesses for the prosecution.

Howell originally said he did not hear Glosser's remark, then changed his story, according to Artigliere. Howell, who was 18 at the time, was admitted to the county's pretrial intervention program, and as a result, the death-by-auto charge against him will be dismissed if he successfully completes the probationary program.

Artigliere also questioned why Howell, who was sober, would listen to Glosser, who was drunk.

"Will you buy that Howell blindly listened to what he had to say?" the defense attorney asked the panel of eight women and six men.

"Use your common sense in this case," he told the jury, adding the prosecution "is asking you to take huge leaps in this case."

Artigliere presented no defense witnesses and contends Glosser should not be held criminally responsible for the accident.

O'Reilly replied that Glosser's drunkenness does not absolve him of trying to incite Howell's reckless behavior, and said Hackett and Howell gave reliable information.

O'Reilly said Lindner called out the speeds as the 1984 Camaro accelerated on Bryans Road, and the last number he gave was 65 mph. Glosser then dared Howell to try to go 140 mph on the farm road, according to testimony, the prosecutor said.

Howell responded by going faster, but was close to the intersection of Rymon Road and tried to stop, O'Reilly said. Investigators found 113 feet of skid marks.

Meanwhile, the lawsuit filed by Lindner's

parents last week against Howell and the car's owner, Glenn Howell Sr., has been amended to include Glosser as a defendant.

The suit, filed by Elizabeth Triggs of Washington Township and Douglas Lindner of Scotch Plains, asserts Glosser negligently or recklessly encouraged, induced or otherwise caused Howell Jr. to drive in a reckless or careless manner.

Lindner's parents also claim Glosser should be held responsible for possessing and distributing alcoholic beverages to the minors in the vehicle, including Howell and Jason Lindner.

Other amendments to the original suit seek to hold Pipp's Tavern, also known as Scotty's Stadium Club, responsible for selling alcohol to minors, including Glosser, Howell Jr. and/or John Skinner. Skinner is accused of providing the alcohol to Lindner. Howell and Glosser, knowing they were too young to drink