

Immigration service calls NHL's Probert a danger

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Body

Immigration and Naturalization Service officials and lawyers for Bob Probert paint contrasting pictures of the Detroit Red Wings player.

Probert was convicted and served a prison sentence for bringing a small amount of cocaine into the USA from Canada.

He has been ordered deported by the INS.

INS officials call him a danger to the public whose "rehabilitation must be questioned." Probert's lawyers say he is a "public figure ... similar to ... Babe Ruth" and "a benefit to the country."

Those differing pictures of Probert are found in documents filed with the Board of Immigration Appeals in Falls Church, Va., obtained by The Detroit News under the U.S. Freedom of Information Act. The documents were part of Probert's appeal of a ruling by the INS denying his latest request to be allowed to travel to Canada to play hockey.

Probert is barred from leaving the USA, unless he is willing to do so permanently. He is appealing the deportation order to the Board of Immigration Appeals.

The newspaper disclosed Probert had amassed more than a dozen tickets and suspensions, half of them after his 1989 cocaine conviction, and received repeated breaks from police, prosecutors and judges. In one instance, he was clocked at 95 mph in a 55 mph zone but was allowed to plead guilty to doing 60.

Although Probert's driving record is of minimal importance compared to his cocaine conviction, the government argued, his "repeated brushes with the law are indicative of his true attitude toward society and rehabilitation."

His lawyers hope to show that Probert drank and used drugs because of a medical condition, an attention deficit disorder, and was wrongfully judged to be an alcoholic - thus removing one of the reasons for the deportation order.

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