

Ohio Man Charged After WNBA Game Assault in Brooklyn

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New York, A Dayton, Ohio, man has been charged with two counts of assault after authorities say he threw a sex toy during a WNBA game at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, striking a 12-year-old girl.

Charles Burgess, 32, voluntarily surrendered to New York authorities after traveling from Ohio. He pleaded not guilty and was released pending his next court appearance, scheduled

for December, according to his attorney, Paul D’Emilia.

The incident occurred on August 5 during a matchup between the New York Liberty and the Dallas Wings. Video from security cameras reportedly shows the object striking the young spectator in the stands, causing leg pain but not requiring medical attention.

Burgess’s lawyer told WDTN Channel 2 that he expects the charges could be dropped. “I think eventually they’re going to be dismissed. I can’t imagine why they charged, for example, the felony charge, attempted assault in the second degree,” D’Emilia said. He noted that Burgess owns an auto body shop, has six children, and has no prior criminal record. Burgess intends to contest the charges.

Officials emphasized the seriousness of the conduct. The New York Police Department said it is coordinating with local and federal authorities to pursue appropriate actions, including arrest and prosecution where applicable, against anyone engaged in this behavior.

The league has condemned the incidents and highlighted safety concerns for players and spectators. WNBA officials have asked venues to increase security measures to prevent further disruptions.

The event is part of a series of similar disturbances at recent WNBA games. Since late July, spectators have reportedly thrown sex toys at games in Atlanta, Los Angeles, and Chicago, leading to multiple arrests.

Legal experts note that the charges reflect New York’s strict approach to public safety and assault, even when intent to injure is difficult to prove. The case underscores concerns about spectator behavior at professional sporting events, particularly when children are involved.

Burgess’ case continues as he awaits his December court date. Authorities and league officials have urged fans to maintain safe conduct at sporting events, warning that reckless behavior may result in criminal prosecution.

This reporting is based on original coverage by WDTN Channel 2 and statements from the New York Police Department.