

METRO

Ex-UC basketball player gets probation in attack on girlfriend

BY DAN HORN
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Former University of Cincinnati basketball player D'Juan Baker avoided jail Monday but got a lecture about how to be a better role model.

Mr. Baker, a senior guard on the team last year, was sentenced to three years' probation on an aggravated assault charge for striking his ex-girlfriend in the head with a flower pot.

Before imposing the sentence, Hamilton County Common Pleas Judge Ralph Winkler told Mr. Baker that his actions harmed more than just the victim.

"You have got to keep in mind that you're in the public eye," Judge Wink-



ler said. "You should be setting a positive example instead of standing here in court."

The judge said the only reason he did not impose a jail sentence was the victim's plea for leniency.

The woman, Kara Jackson, has said she feared Mr. Baker would be unable to support their baby daughter if he were sent to jail.

Mr. Baker's attorney, Clyde Bennett, said his client regrets

his actions and would not make the same mistake again. Mr. Baker had no comment.

"Mr. Baker understands that what he did on the day in question was wrong," Mr. Bennett said. "He accepts full responsibility for his actions."

He also noted that his 21-year-old client had no criminal record prior to the July 29 incident.

The former UC player was arrested when police were

called to break up a dispute at Ms. Jackson's apartment in Clifton. Prosecutors say he threw a flower pot across the room and struck Ms. Jackson in the head, cutting her above her eye.

Judge Winkler said such behavior sets a bad example for children.

"I'm not pinning any medals on you," he said. "Thousands of kids follow basketball. They look to you, and you need to remember that."