

Dallas County Jury Returns \$140 Million Verdict in Davis v. NCAA

Six-year case brought by the family of 1950s SMU football player J.T. Davis enters punitive damages phase Monday following compensatory verdict

DALLAS, TX, UNITED STATES, April 27, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A Dallas County jury returned a verdict of 30 million dollars this morning in the case of Davis v. NCAA, Cause No. CC-20-01121-D, in the District Court of Dallas County, Texas. The compensatory verdict follows a six-year proceeding; a punitive damages phase is scheduled to begin Monday. J.T. Davis, who played football for SMU in the 1950s, died after an almost two-decades long battle with CTE dementia. His wife Karol Davis quit her job to care for J.T., suffered a stroke, and passed away before the trial. J.T.'s son, John Mark Davis testified at trial about the toll CTE took on his father. "Players like my dad should have been warned about the risks of playing college football, and the NCAA should have done more to study the issue," said John Mark Davis.

According to evidence introduced by plaintiffs at trial and described in court filings in Cause No. CC-20-01121-D, plaintiffs alleged that NCAA leadership was aware of the long-term consequences of repetitive head trauma, including CTE, and did not warn players such as Mr. Davis. Plaintiffs further alleged that the NCAA did not follow a provision of its own constitution requiring it to study sports. Trial exhibits introduced by plaintiffs included internal NCAA documents which, plaintiffs argued, indicated that NCAA medical experts had information dating back to the 1930s regarding progressive neurodegenerative disease in college football players.

At trial, the NCAA argued that there is a lack of evidence that CTE is caused by repeated head hits and disputed that CTE causes symptoms. The NCAA stated that CTE is a "hypothetical" disease. Plaintiffs introduced internal communications attributed to former NCAA Chief Medical Officer Dr. Brian Hainline that, plaintiffs argued, addressed CTE-related clinical symptoms and the risk profile of college football players.

John Mark Davis was represented by Bill Horton, D'Arcy Rapp, Jim Hartle, Gabriela Lopez-Ruperto, and [Justin Shrader](#) of Shrader and Associates LLP in Houston, Texas.

The NCAA was represented by Victor Vital, Lauren Brogdon, Julia Peebles, and Chelby Sterling of Haynes and Boone, Christopher Schmidt and Grant Glazebrook of Bryan Cave, and Jeff Levinger of Levinger PC.

The punitive damages phase of the trial is scheduled to begin Monday, May 4, 2026.

Update: On Monday, April 27, Dallas County jurors added 110 million dollars in punitive damages in an attempt to force the NCAA to tell the truth about CTE.

CASE INFORMATION

Karol Hargis Davis and John M. Davis, Individually and on Behalf of The Estate of John Thomas Davis, Deceased, Plaintiffs

vs

National Collegiate Athletic Association, Defendant

Cause No. CC-20-01121-D, Dallas County, TX

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Daniel Royer

Shrader and Associates LLP

+1 713-782-0000

[email us here](#)

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