

ABC News

Player Gets Nearly \$1M in Offerman Bat Attack Case

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AP

A minor league baseball player hit by former major leaguer Jose Offerman in a 2007 baseball bat attack won nearly \$1 million in a lawsuit on Tuesday, an attorney said.

A jury awarded \$940,000 to former Bridgeport Bluefish catcher Johnathan Nathans, who had sought \$4.8 million, his lawyer Josh Koskoff said. Nathans is still affected by a head injury he suffered in the attack, though he has made some recovery and is now an attorney in Portland, Maine, his lawyer said.

"What we really were looking for after seven years was accountability for Mr. Offerman," Koskoff said.

The lawsuit said Offerman, playing for the Long Island Ducks in a major league comeback bid, was hit by a pitch and then charged the mound with his bat and hit Nathans and pitcher Matt Beech. Nathans' injury ended his baseball career, and Beech broke the middle finger on his non-throwing hand.

Offerman, who played for the Boston Red Sox, the Los Angeles Dodgers and other teams during a 15-year career that ended in 2005, testified he didn't swing his bat at the two players. The Ducks, also named in the lawsuit, denied responsibility.

Offerman's lawyer Frank Riccio II said the verdict is complicated because the jury found that Offerman committed an assault by making Beech, not Nathans, fear he was about to be hit but also determined that Offerman did not commit battery. In addition, the jury did not find the Ducks liable, Riccio said.

"I think the verdict is inconsistent and a bit perplexing," he said. "Mr. Offerman is certainly happy seven years later that a jury said he did not strike Mr. Nathans."

He said further litigation is possible.

"How is Mr. Offerman liable for damages if (the) jury found he never struck him?" Riccio asked. "It's an interesting question that has to be resolved before it gets to its final end."