

Footballer jailed over assaults

FORMER Wycombe Wanderers footballer Chris Zebroski has been jailed for four years and four months for two alcohol-fuelled incidents of assault and attempted robbery.

The 28-year-old striker played for the Chairboys between 2008 and 2010, before moving on to Torquay United.

Judge Recorder Ian Lowrie said the former Wycombe star squandered "whatever talent he may possess" due to his alcohol addiction and failed to use his opportunities.

Following the hearing, his current club Newport County issued a statement saying they had "no other option" but to terminate Zebroski's contract.

The footballer admitted a "road rage" incident in which he assaulted and attempted to rob a taxi driver and robbed an onlooker of his mobile phone in Swindon in December last year.

Zebroski also pleaded guilty to assaulting a man with intent to rob him of money and attempting to rob the man's friend on February 8, while on police bail.

Recorder Lowrie at Swindon Crown Court said last Friday: "You've had opportunities.

"Opportunities for a successful, professional career.

"Opportunities to make good money.

"Opportunities in the course of doing that to set an example to youngsters.

"You failed in all those regards."

The judge added that if the custodial sentence brings Zebroski's football career to an end that is a "matter of regret" but said the consequences lie in his own hands.

He added: "You've gone from youthful obscurity to alcoholic's decline without passing through fame and achievement."

The court heard the first incident took place around midday on December 14 outside Swindon Magistrates Court, where Zebroski, still drunk from the

night before, tried to squeeze his BMW between two other vehicles, causing damage to a taxi.

Prosecuting, Colin Meeke said the taxi driver Kowalik Wlodzimierz was offered cash for the damage by Zebroski.

Another driver Bala Maddu also stopped his car, fearing it had also been hit and began taking photographs of Zebroski and his car.

Mr Meeke said: "That seems to have upset the defendant."

The court heard there was talk of the police being called and Zebroski became more agitated as he wanted to leave, claiming his girlfriend was pregnant and was about to give birth.

Mr Meeke added: "As it was clear he was intending to leave, Mr Maddu said 'it's alright, I've got his photograph on my phone'. That prompted the defendant to start demanding Mr Maddu's phone."

The court heard Zebroski then struck Mr Maddu and smashed his phone and then pursued the taxi driver in a bid to take his phone as well.

Mr Meeke said: "He pushed him to the ground, held him by the front of his jacket and started to punch him ten or more times."

In interview, Zebroski admitted lying about his girlfriend being pregnant and admitted he was a "bit over the limit".

The second incident happened while Zebroski was on police bail on February 8 on Victoria Road in Swindon.

Mr Meeke explained that two men were walking down the road when Zebroski approached them and said "give me your money or I'll hurt you".

Recorder Lowrie sentenced Zebroski to two years for each charge in the December incident to run concurrently and two years four months for the February incident to run consecutively.

He will serve half of his time before being considered for release.



Chris Zebroski playing for Wycombe Wanderers.