

## **Police: Frustrated Man Swats Kid with Tennis Racket, Charged with Felony**

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A 43-year-old Darien resident, who appears to be the father of a boy, was playing tennis with him at the high school when, frustrated, he hit him on the butt with a tennis racket, leaving a welt.

That resulted in the man being charged with a felony.

Darien police described the incident and arrest with this account (including accusations not proven in court; Darienite.com is not publishing the man's name):

Police were called to the tennis courts at Darien High School at 6:45 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 12 by a person, apparently not the boy, who told police of having witnessed the incident.

At the courts, police found the man and the boy, who appeared to be upset and may have been crying. The man said he went to the courts with the boy at about 4:30 p.m. to play. The boy became discouraged, but the man told him to keep trying and keep playing, but the boy started to walk away.

That made the man upset, and, he told police, he hit the boy on his butt. He said he only hit him with the soft part of the tennis racquet.

The boy told police he was playing tennis with the man when the man became upset and hit him both on the butt and on the back of his leg with the soft part of the racquet.

But police saw a red, raised welt on the back of his right leg, and it looked like the curvature of a tennis racket. Police took the boy to a private room in the high school to photograph and see the back of his legs. A picture was taken about 30 minutes after the officers arrived.

The man told police that a bystander was near the tennis court where the two were playing and the bystander began to yell at him after he struck the boy.

Asked if the man had ever hit him before that day, the boy said he hadn't. (Police, under state law, don't identify the relationship of a family member in a domestic violence situation, but the description of the incident is consistent with a father-son relationship or at least an adult man and a boy within the same family.)

The boy's mother was called and arrived on the scene. She said this was the first time she heard of the man using either his hands or an object to strike the boy. She said there were no weapons in the house and she felt safe if the man went home with her and the boy.

The man was charged with third-degree assault and second-degree breach of peace, both misdemeanors, and risk of injury to a minor, a felony. He was released at 9 p.m. from Darien Police Headquarters on a promise to appear Oct. 13 in state Superior Court in Stamford.

Police informed the state Department of Children and Families of the incident.