

UMass football player injured in knife attack

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KEVIN GUTTING

The University of Massachusetts Student Union, left, and W.E.B. Du Bois Library, right, are shown Sunday afternoon. Police are investigating two incidents on the campus Sunday morning about 2 a.m.: a fight outside the Student Union and the stabbing of two people, including a UMass football player, near the library.

AMHERST - A knife attack early Sunday following a fraternity party at the University of Massachusetts Student Union sent a UMass football player to the hospital and left another person injured, according to Ed Blaguszewski, director of news and information at UMass.

Johnny Evans, 19, of Durham, N.C., suffered several minor cuts along with a deep slash wound to his left buttocks, Blaguszewski said. Evans, who is a linebacker for the UMass football team, was in fair condition at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, a hospital spokeswoman said.

The other victim, whose name has not been released, refused medical treatment and was uncooperative with police, Chief Barbara O'Connor said.

'We know who he (the victim) is but can't tell because it's still under investigation,' O'Connor said.

Other witnesses were also uncooperative with police, O'Connor added.

Police are still looking for suspects and declined to release any descriptions of the attackers. They are asking for help from the public in identifying the perpetrators.

A football player who was at the scene and declined to be named said one stabbing victim said he felt numb where he was cut and was unaware he was stabbed until he noticed he was bleeding. The football team is advised by coaches to avoid violent situations, the football player noted.

Several hundred students gathered outside the Student Union after a dance early Sunday morning, Blaguszewski said. When police responded to a disturbance, a large group of people left the area before police broke up a fight, Blaguszewski said. A second fight broke out near the Du Bois library, where police found Evans, who was bleeding, Blaguszewski said.

Evidence indicates the violence stemmed from a conflict that began at the dance, O'Connor said.

The dance, titled Flirt, was presented by Kappa Alpha Psi, a fraternity at UMass. The event was held in the Student Union ballroom, where DJ Thommy Live from Philadelphia played music. Kenneth Summers, president of Kappa Alpha Psi, declined to comment about the stabbings.

'It's really unfortunate that something like this had to happen after a Greek event because it casts a negative shadow on the Greek community as a whole,' said Joseph Lavoie Jr., vice president of Sigma Phi Epsilon and a senior at UMass.

UMass students were emailed a campus safety alert that said students, faculty and staff could conduct their regular activities Sunday.

'We believe there is no danger for the community,' O'Connor said. 'We are looking for anyone who was in or around the area to come forward with information,' O'Connor said.

Police are asking anyone who has information about this incident to contact the detective bureau or 413-545-2121, or the tips line at 413-577-8477. Further information will be shared with the campus community as developments occur.

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