

## 18 arrested in soccer brawl at Saxon Woods

Written by

**Rebecca Baker and Richard Liebson**  
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WHITE PLAINS — Westchester County police arrested 18 people at Saxon Woods Park Thursday night after a brawl erupted at a soccer game.

The brawl started on the county park's soccer field at 10:26 p.m., when players began punching and kicking each other, Westchester County police said.

Officer Marcelo Jimenez was jumped by several of the soccer players when he tried to break it up, police said.

A teenage boy, who did not want to be identified, said the officer used a taser on his brother, who was among the 18 arrested at the soccer match.

The boy, who was in White Plains City Court waiting for his brother to be arraigned, said that only one county officer was in the park when the fight broke out and that the officer ran onto the field, cursing and yelling.

"The cop grabbed my brother and tasered him," he said.

Within minutes, he said, the soccer field

was swarming with police. "They put everybody on the ground and arrested a lot of them."

County police confirmed that a taser was used in the incident. White Plains, Greenburgh, Scarsdale and Harrison police provided mutual aid.

Police charged all 18 men with first-degree riot, a felony. Two of those arrested, Victor Hernandez, 23, of Port Chester and Alvaro Melendez, 24, were also charged with second-degree assault in the attack on the officer.

Hernandez and Melendez are scheduled to appear in White Plains City Court today with two other arrested players, Ferdi Bori, 40 and Jose M. Gonzalez, 30. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency has detainers on Bori and Gonzalez, police said.

The other 14 were given tickets to appear in court at a later date. They were:

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- Julio Aopdaca, 22, address unavailable.
- Arturo Barajas, 20, New Rochelle.
- Jose Barajas, 27, New Rochelle.
- Mauricio Chaparro, 21, Mamaroneck.
- Saul Corado, 19, address unavailable.
- Christian Dominguez, 18, address unavailable.
- Elmer Fuentes, 19, address unavailable.
- Altin Haxari, 32, the Bronx.
- Louis Montoya, 32, Haverstraw.
- Linares Nhèmais, 26, Port Chester.
- Joan Novoa, 19, New Rochelle.
- Pedro Pazos, 53, New Rochelle.
- Enrique Rodriguez, 27, address unavailable.
- John Carlos Valencia, 20, New Rochelle.

The teenage boy who was awaiting his brother's arraignment said the fight started when his brother's team scored its third goal and angered the goalie of the other team.

"There was a corner kick and a guy from the other team threw an elbow at my brother," he said. "My brother taunted him, and the other team's goalie rushed out at

him."

He said both teams came together in a big crowd and began pushing and shoving each other. One of the players then started throwing punches.

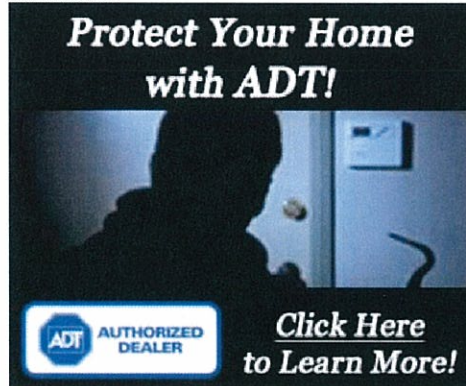
The brawl was the second outbreak of violence at a county park this week that led to mass arrests. On Tuesday, 15 Muslim parkgoers were arrested when brawl erupted at Rye Playland over a dispute about the park's policy of banning head scarves on certain rides.

Another witness to the soccer match, a man in his mid-30s who also refused to give his name, said the police response was overblown.

"It was not necessary to arrest anybody," he said. "Nobody hit a cop. There were no punches thrown at a cop. It was a soccer game. Passions were high. It happens all the time."

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