

LOCAL

Fairfield beating death case begins

Teen could face 15 years to life in prison

By JESSICA BROWN
BUTLER COUNTY BUREAU

HAMILTON — A Springfield Township teenager's murder case may hinge on whether the jury believes he acted in self-defense when he repeatedly hit another teen who later died.

Adrian Reynolds, 17, of Meredith Drive, is on trial this week for allegedly beating 17-year-old Brandon Mitchell, of Fairfield, to death during on Aug. 13, 2004 fight behind a Fairfield apartment complex. If convicted, Reynolds would face 15 years to life in prison.

The JournalNews is naming Reynolds because he is being tried as an adult.

The defense and prosecuting attorneys presented opening statements Tuesday afternoon to the three-man, nine-woman jury in Butler County Common Pleas Court. The trial is scheduled to resume today in Judge Patricia Oney's courtroom.

Butler County Prosecutor Robin Piper said the evidence will show Mitchell was savagely beaten to the point he was barely recognizable.

During the fight at Fairfield Point on Danube Drive, Piper said Reynolds struck Mitchell five to 10 times, knocking him to the ground. Once down, Reynolds continued to hit and kick Mitchell, Piper said.

Mitchell suffered numerous blunt trauma blows to the back of

the head and neck, internal bleeding and a torn artery, Piper said.

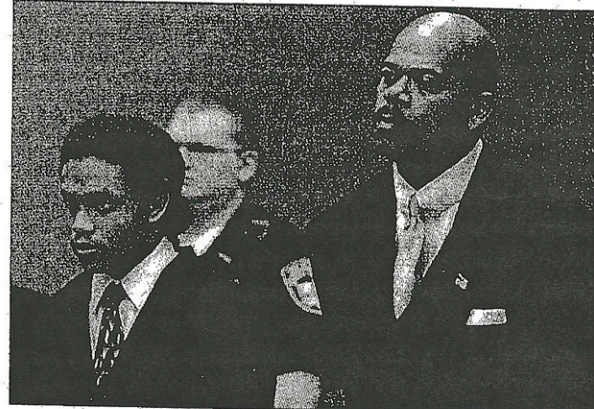
Mitchell died of a skull fracture, according to the Hamilton County Coroner's Office.

"The evidence will show beyond a reasonable doubt that Brandon Mitchell died needlessly and you'll be firmly convinced beyond a reasonable doubt of the truthfulness of the charge," Piper told jurors during his opening statement.

Reynolds' attorney, Clyde Bennett, said his client acted in self-defense and did not intend to kill Mitchell.

"This case is not about a murder or a felonious assault. This is about age. It's about immaturity. It's about two young men mutually agreeing to fight each other.

Please see **REYNOLDS** | C2



GREG LYNCH/JOURNALNEWS

Adrian Reynolds, 17, stands with attorney Clyde Bennett after jury selection in Butler County Common Pleas Judge Patricia Oney's courtroom Tuesday. Reynolds is accused of killing Brandon Mitchell, 17, during a fist fight.

Reynolds

Teen on trial for allegedly beating 17-year-old to death

Continued from C1

They did not realize the consequences of their acts. They did not know it could result in death," Bennett told jurors in his opening statement.

Bennett said Mitchell provoked the fight and Reynolds "honestly believed he was defending himself and moreover was provoked to defend himself," Bennett said.

Jurors also heard testimony from Mitchell's best friend John Schaefer, 17, who was with Mitchell when the fight occurred.

Schaefer said he, Mitchell

and another friend had walked to Jungle Jim's International Market to buy baby bottles for his nephew. They were on their way back to Schaefer's home in the Fairfield Point apartments when they saw Reynolds and three other juveniles walking about 50 yards in front of them, Schaefer said.

He said Reynolds challenged Mitchell to a fight because Reynolds mistakenly thought someone in Mitchell's group had cursed at someone in Reynolds' group.

Schaefer said at one point during the fight Mitchell was down

on his hands and knees and Reynolds "runs up and kicks Mitchell in the side of the neck."

"Brandon falls down and doesn't move again," Schaefer said.

He demonstrated to jurors how he said Reynolds straddled Mitchell and continued to punch him after he was on the ground.

Schaefer said a friend hit Reynolds in the side of the head with a glass soda bottle to get him off of Mitchell.

Contact Jessica Brown at (513) 820-2189, or e-mail her at jebrown@coxohio.com.