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### Former deputy's trial on hold

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The Charleston County Sheriff's Office agreed to pay a \$250,000 settlement to end a lawsuit stemming from an incident in which a former deputy allegedly roughed up a motorist during a traffic stop last year. Christopher Davis, 27, who recently resigned from the Sheriff's Office, was scheduled to go to trial Friday in a criminal proceeding related to the November incident, but the proceeding was postponed to an undetermined, later date. Davis faces a charge of third-degree assault and battery.

Affidavits stated Davis hit 19-year-old Devante Pittman several times in the face after the deputy stopped him in West Ashley. Davis said Pittman grabbed him first.

Lionel Lofton, Pittman's attorney, has said his client did nothing to provoke the deputy. He said Friday that Pittman has received the negotiated settlement in the civil case and "he is glad to get this portion of the case behind him."

Sandy Senn, an attorney for the Sheriff's Office, said the state's Insurance Reserve Fund paid the settlement bill. She has maintained that it was in the department's best interest to resolve the suit in light of a video of the incident and investigative reports.

"We thought settlement was best done at the outset rather than after years of litigation, which would only increase defense costs and prolong wounded feelings for the officers and Mr. Pittman alike," she said.

Before becoming a sworn deputy in April 2011, Davis had worked at the Cannon Detention Center for less than a year and at the Dorchester County jail for nearly two years.

Assistant Sheriff Mitch Lucas said the agency handled the case by the book.

"Our internal investigation was opened immediately and before Mr. Pittman ever complained," he said. "Once SLED likewise finished its investigation, we completed our duty, which ended with the officer's resignation."

Davis' attorney, Andy Savage, has said that Davis was simply restraining a motorist who had assaulted the deputy first. Savage and Davis left the court without comment Friday.

Reach Glenn Smith at 937-5556.

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