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Martial Arts Champion Denied Bail

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The Moscow City Court on Tuesday denied bail to a Dagestani-born mixed martial arts champion charged with killing a 19-year-old police college dropout with a single blow.

A lower court on Monday authorized Mirzayev's release on bail of 5 million rubles ($172,000), but prosecutors and investigators appealed the decision, Interfax said.

Mirzayev's bail request was backed by 18 Dagestani lawmakers, four State Duma deputies and a number of sports stars. He will remain in custody until at least Friday, when a court will rule on whether to extend it.

A district court said Monday that Mirzayev should be released because he had reached a plea bargain, but a Moscow City Court spokeswoman said the plea report was "premature" and added that the athlete might flee abroad.

Mirzayev was set to debut in the United States this fall, but his career plans may come undone over the blow he delivered on Aug. 13 to Moscow resident Ivan Agafonov, who died in the hospital four days later.

Mirzayev, 25, holds titles in four martial arts, including sambo, but the Russian Sambo Federation said in a statement Tuesday that it has disqualified him indefinitely.

That means Mirzayev will not be able to participate in a world championship in Vilnius in November. It remained unclear what would come of his U.S. debut.

Mirzayev said Agafonov was flirting with his girlfriend outside the Garage nightclub on Pushkin Square.

Initial reports said Agafonov was a student, but Itar-Tass said Tuesday that he was expelled from a police college and was under investigation in connection with the robbery of a Moscow lottery club last year.

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