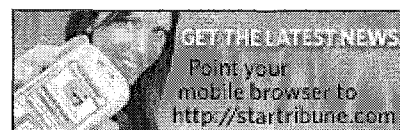


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Judge appears skeptical in U bid for new trial in Tubby Smith dispute

The university wants the verdict set aside and the amount awarded Jimmy Williams lowered to \$1 million.

By **ROCHELLE OLSON**, Star Tribune

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The University of Minnesota tried Friday to get a \$1.25 million jury verdict involving star basketball coach Tubby Smith thrown out, and lawyers for former assistant coach Jimmy Williams defended the verdict.

Hennepin County District Court Judge Regina Chu had a question for both sides during the appeal hearing:

"Have there been any settlement talks?"

Both said no.

Smith's and Williams' lawyers haven't agreed on much before, during or after the trial that culminated in the unanimous verdict for Williams in late May. The jury found that Smith negligently misrepresented his

authority to hire Williams as an assistant in 2007. In reliance on Smith's word, Williams quit his job at Oklahoma State, put his house on the market and prepared to head north.

But Gophers athletic director Joel Maturi stopped the hiring, citing NCAA infractions in the program during Williams' tenure as an assistant in the 1970s and 1980s.

Chu said she will rule as quickly as possible.

Williams, Smith and Maturi did not attend the hearing. Chu's ruling is almost certain to be appealed.

Williams lives in Houston and hasn't secured a job since the aborted hiring in 2007. He testified his reputation was unfairly tainted by Smith's actions.

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