

Teen gets 5 years for beating Woodridge boy

By Don Grigas

Staff writer

Phillip Valerio, 19, the Downers Grove teen accused of beating a 13-year-old Woodridge youth with a metal baseball bat in March 2004, accepted a plea agreement Jan. 13 for a five-year prison term. The sentence will be shortened by 654 days he already served while awaiting trial.

Paul Darrah, spokesman for the DuPage County state's attorney's office, said Valerio, who was 17 at the time of the incident, agreed to plead guilty to a charge of aggravated battery, a Class III felony punishable by up to five years imprisonment.

Valerio's address at the time of his arrest was the 5600 block of Carpenter Street in Downers Grove. He was held on \$1 million bond while in the DuPage County Jail since his arrest in 2004.

Valerio was charged initially with one count of attempted murder and five counts of aggravated battery. Had he been convicted of all charges he faced, he would have faced between eight and 35 years imprisonment.

Prosecutors contended Valerio was in a pickup truck driven by another Downers Grove youth on the evening of March 30, 2004, when they spotted 13-year-old Ocheion Wilson Jr. and two others standing near a driveway in the 7800 block of Janes Avenue.

According to investigators, witnesses said Valerio approached Ocheion, identified himself as a gang member and then struck Ocheion with a metal baseball bat, knocking him to the ground before repeatedly striking the defenseless boy as he lay there.

Ocheion was a student at Jefferson Junior High in Woodridge at the time of the attack. He suffered a fractured skull, lacerations and other injuries in the assault.

Authorities said Valerio was an admitted gang member and may have mistaken Ocheion for someone else. Ocheion's parents told police their son was not involved in gangs.

The driver of the pickup truck, Patrick C. Dill of the 600 block of 55th Street in Downers Grove, entered a guilty plea on a charge of aggravated battery in DuPage County Criminal Court in August and is serving a five-year sentence in Vienna Correctional Center.