

SUMMARY STATEMENT

State v. Haws
Docket No. 47800

Darius Haws pleaded guilty and was convicted of delivery of a controlled substance and battery on a police officer. His plea agreements contained waivers of his right to appeal both his convictions and sentences. While the district court initially retained jurisdiction over Haws, Haws performed poorly, and the district court relinquished jurisdiction. On appeal to the Court of Appeals, Haws argued that the district court abused its discretion in relinquishing jurisdiction. In response, the State sought to have Haws' appeal dismissed because of the waiver of the right to appeal contained in Haws' plea agreements. The Court of Appeals dismissed the appeal based on Haws' appellate waiver while also affirming the district court's decision to relinquish jurisdiction.

On appeal to the Idaho Supreme Court, Haws first argued that his sentences were excessive; second, that the Court of Appeals erred in dismissing his appeal because it was the State's obligation to assert the applicability of an appellate waiver; and third, that the district court abused its discretion in relinquishing jurisdiction. The Idaho Supreme Court affirmed the district court's decision, noting that Haws did not challenge the voluntariness of his plea, but rather its applicability regarding the waiver of his appellate rights. In response to the State's argument that Haws waived his right to challenge the district court's decision by failing to raise it in his opening brief, the Court first held that the State must invoke the application of the waiver, and the defendant must be afforded an opportunity to respond, therefore allowing the Court to reach the merits of Haws' argument. Second, the Court held that a misstatement by the district court regarding the contents of a plea agreement did not modify Haws' validly obtained appellate waiver. Finally, the Court held that the district court did not abuse its discretion in relinquishing jurisdiction over Haws because of his significant criminal record and poor performance during the period of retained jurisdiction. Accordingly, the Idaho Supreme Court dismissed Haws' appeal from the sentences imposed (given the language contained in his plea agreements) and also affirmed the district court's decision to relinquish jurisdiction.

This summary constitutes no part of the opinion of the Court, but has been prepared by court staff for the convenience of the public.