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Charlie Davies sues nightclub, Red Bull

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WASHINGTON -- D.C. United's Charlie Davies is suing the owners of a Washington nightclub and the drink company Red Bull for \$20 million, claiming they are responsible for a fatal car crash that ended the MLS player's hopes of joining the 2010 U.S. World Cup team.

Davies, now 25, was a passenger in the car driven by a woman who has since pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter and drunken driving in the 2009 one-car crash that killed a second passenger. The lawsuit claims the Shadow Room and Red Bull served excessive alcohol to driver Maria Espinoza.

The crash killed 22-year-old Ashley Roberta and Davies suffered a number of broken bones and lacerated bladder, making him unable to play in the World Cup.

"A bar or restaurant or establishment has a duty, once they believe someone is visibly intoxicated, to stop serving them," said Davies' attorney, Jon Pels, in a telephone interview Wednesday.

A Red Bull spokesman had no comment. A telephone message left for the nightclub's chief operating officer was not returned.

According to the lawsuit, Davies, Espinoza and Roberta were at the Washington club on the night of Oct. 12, 2009, for a private event hosted by Red Bull.

The lawsuit said that despite Espinoza being obviously drunk, the club continued serving her alcohol. It claims the club and company "carelessly and negligently" served drinks to drunken guests.

Espinoza later drove Davies and Roberta from the club and crashed her car on the George Washington Memorial Parkway. In March, Espinoza was sentenced to two years in prison.

Roberta's family also sued Red Bull and DAS Enterprises, the owner of the Shadow Room, in federal court in Virginia on Oct. 13.

Davies' lawsuit was filed Oct. 12 in D.C. Superior Court in Washington. An initial hearing in the case is scheduled for Jan. 13. The lawsuit was first reported by The Washington Post.

Davies was substituted early out of Wednesday night's game against the Portland Timbers and had left the team clubhouse before it was open to the media, according to a team spokesman.