

Maris kin lose round with brewer

An Associated Press report

GAINESVILLE — Dealing the family of deceased baseball slugger Roger Maris a blow, a judge Monday dismissed half of the eight counts his relatives are pursuing against Anheuser-Busch in a lawsuit.

The decision by Circuit Judge Buzz Green in Alachua County eliminates the opportunity for the Maris family to seek punitive damages against the world's largest brewer.

In their original lawsuit, the Marises accused the company of defamation by making up bad evaluations about their distributorship and of breach of contract for taking away their Ocala-

Gainesville business in 1997. They had been seeking \$1.3 billion dollars in damages.

Anheuser-Busch attorneys claim that Maris Distributing repeatedly violated the terms of its agreement by repackaging outdated beer, falsifying reports and having dirty warehouses.

"As with other plaintiff claims that were dismissed before the trial began ... we have always maintained that the plaintiff did not have any evidence to support these claims," John E. Jacob, Anheuser-Busch's executive vice president and chief communications officer, said in a statement.

Attorneys for the Maris family said they will seek compensatory damages of \$300 million.