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COLTON MOORE SENTENCED TO 45 YEARS FOR MURDER OF DEREK PITTS JR.

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces the Honorable Meredith Charbula sentenced Colton Moore to 45 years in Florida State Prison followed by five years of probation for the 2023 murder of Derek Pitts Jr. Moore previously pleaded guilty to one count of Second-Degree Murder (Discharging a Firearm Causing Injury or Death) on July 16, 2025; his sentencing hearing was Sept. 9, 2025.

On Dec. 29, 2023, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office responded to an Old St. Augustine Road apartment complex after receiving calls about someone being shot. They found 16-year-old Pitts in the parking lot with a gunshot wound to his chest; he was transported to the hospital but died from his injury. Investigators found 24 9mm shell casings and several witnesses were located. The witnesses told investigators that Pitts was involved in an altercation with an unknown black male at the party who was talking about switches and firearms. Shortly after, a rumor circulated that the party was about to be shot up, which caused people to leave. As Pitts was leaving, the masked gunman pulled a firearm and began shooting multiple rounds while running through the complex. Numerous First Coast Crimestoppers tips identified Moore as the shooter. While in jail on unrelated charges, Moore was recorded confessing to the crime. Detectives later discovered that Moore was friends with the unknown black male and purposely went back to the party to confront Pitts.

The case was investigated by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and prosecuted by Assistant State Attorney Jackie Blair.