

Youth convicted of swarming assaults, robbery

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The last member of a "wolf pack" of youths that swarmed victims in Toronto parks, the TTC and at bank machines has been convicted of two counts of robbery.

Youth Court Justice Ellen Murray convicted the teen — who cannot be named because he was 17 at the time of the summer 2007 attacks — in the robbing of a man in Dufferin Grove Park and of a foreign tourist at the Bay subway station.

Both men were assaulted.

One of the robber's co-accused testified that the gang of 16 and 17-year-olds called themselves Grown Men Business.

"And the business of this group was to commit robberies," the judge said.

Ten other co-accused have either pleaded guilty, agreed to peace bonds or entered extrajudicial programs.

At the time of their arrest in August 2007, a police officer said they acted in a "wolf-pack style," overpowering helpless, unsuspecting victims.

Police said 27 victims, ranging in age from 16 to 50, were beaten, bruised and in some cases had bones broken in 15 separate robberies.

Most crimes occurred in west end parks, including Christie Pits, but one happened as far east as Riverdale Park.

Most of the gang of young males were friends from high school in the St. Clair and Dufferin St. area, and several had summer jobs, including at the Canadian National Exhibition, court heard.

Murray acquitted the-now 19-year-old man of seven other robbery counts, finding that the evidence of Crown witnesses did not definitively mark him as involved, though he was identified as being at the scene.

Two of his co-accused, subpoenaed to testify against their friend, were evasive, claiming to have only a hazy memory of robberies they admitted to committing, the judge said.

In the Bay subway robbery on Aug. 5, 2007 — on Caribana weekend — the gang surrounded a foreign tourist on the platform, assaulted him and robbed him of his iPod. One of the attackers pulled his own pants down and told the tourist to "kiss his a--," court heard.

In the robbery at Dufferin Grove on Aug. 13, 2007, gang members repeatedly kicked a man and robbed him of his laptop.

The accused returns for sentencing on Aug. 28.