

Accused policemen enter innocent pleas

By MARK BERGSTROM

Sentinel Staff Writer

Two current and three former Santa Cruz police officers this morning pleaded innocent to felony charges of conspiracy, brutality and assault with a deadly weapon.

Officers Joe Sanchez and Ed Chevalier, who are on paid leave from the department; former officer Mike Redus and former Lt. Rick LeMarquand entered their pleas before Superior Court Judge Rollie Hall.

Attorney Phil Liberty entered the plea for the fifth defendant, former Lt. Don Hollen, who, Liberty said, recently moved out of state. Hollen left the force on a disability retirement in October.

Attorneys told Hall they would be filing motions challenging the validity of the charges. A hearing on those motions was set for Jan. 24.

Hall set the case for jury trial on Feb. 28.

All of the policemen are charged with conspiracy to punish persons, mainly transients, they felt were undesirable in Santa Cruz.

In addition, Sanchez, Chevalier,

Redus and LeMarquand are charged with a variety of felony brutality and assault counts for alleged beatings of transients and others with fists and nightsticks. LeMarquand is charged in one count with burning a young Hispanic man in the forehead with a cigarette and Chevalier is charged in one count with forcing a man he had arrested to play a game of "Russian roulette."

Hollen is charged with a single count of brutality against a transient he found illegally camping along the San Lorenzo River.

All of the alleged acts occurred between October 1979 and April 1981.

Municipal Court Judge Richard Kessell ordered all five defendants to stand trial on the charges following a preliminary hearing on the evidence.

Before setting dates for hearing motions and for the trial, Hall asked the attorneys if there would be motions to disqualify any Superior Court judge from conducting the trial. Attorneys said there would be no challenges.