

SEIZED: SHIPMENT HAD COME INTO COUNTRY FROM NETHERLANDS

FOOTBALL DUO ARE CHARGED WITH €3M DRUG FIND

BAIL BID:
Bluebell United FC
manager
Andrew
Noonan



Former Sheffield United player, and Bluebell United manager could face 14 years in prison if found guilty

EXCLUSIVE
BY PATRICK O'CONNELL

A FOOTBALL manager and a former professional footballer appeared in court yesterday charged in connection with a seizure of heroin valued at an estimated €3 million in Dublin.

Andrew Noonan (41), the manager of Bluebell United FC, with an address at Redhills Park, Ellistown, Co. Kildare, was charged with possession of drugs and possession of drugs for sale and supply, contrary to Sections 3 and 15 of the Misuse of Drugs Act.

Footballer Keith Quinn (31), formerly of Sheffield United, Cork City and Shelbourne, and with an address at Monastery Gate Avenue in Clondalkin, Dublin, was also charged with possession of drugs and possession of drugs for sale and supply, also contrary to sections 3 and 15 of the Misuse of Drugs Act.

OPERATION

The maximum sentence that can be handed down under section 15 of the Misuse of Drugs Act is 14 years in prison.

Dublin District Court heard the pair were arrested following a joint intelligence operation carried out by gardai and revenue customs officials on Wednesday last, August 5, in Dublin. The pair were detained in a car park in the Rosemount Industrial



COURT HEARING: Keith Quinn

estate on that date.

Noonan did not speak during the court proceedings. In his evidence, Det. Garda Redmond O'Leary, of the Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau, told the court that the package of drugs seized contained an estimated 20kg of diamorphine with a street value of between €2.8 million and €3 million.

The court heard the package had originated from the Netherlands.

Det. Garda O'Leary said he was objecting to bail on the grounds of the seriousness of the charges and the possible sentence faced by the accused on conviction.

In applying for bail, defence solicitor Claire Usher said her client's passport was already in the possession of gardai. She also pointed out that he has strong links to the community through his football associations and was offering a significant sum of €46,000 as surety

– with an additional €30,000 available for lodgement on Tuesday.

She described her client as a family man, with four children and loving wife, while also pointing out that given the current lockdown of Kildare – her client would not be 'able to leave the county nevermind the country' in the event bail was granted.

CUSTODY

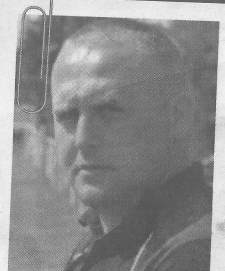
Judge John Brennan said that while he was conscious of the presumption of innocence, he was refusing bail given the seriousness of the charges.

Noonan was remanded in custody to appear before Cloverhill via video-link on August 13.

A short time later Keith Quinn appeared in court also seeking bail.

Seeking bail, defence solicitor Mr. Karl Monaghan said his client enjoys

“Noonan was offering €46,000 surety with an additional €30,000 available”



CHARGED: Andrew Noonan

the presumption of innocence and highlighted the fact that, in the event bail was refused, his client would face an extensive period in custody while awaiting a trial date.

Describing his clients personal circumstances he said he was a 31-year-old man with a two-year-old child he collects from creche on a daily basis.

He said his client had very strong ties to this jurisdiction and that his passport was already in the possession of the gardai. He also said his client was in a position to offer €950 as a surety while family members could raise an additional €2,000 as a surety in the event bail was granted.

Again refusing bail, Judge John Brennan said he was doing so with regard to the seriousness of the charges.

Quinn was remanded in custody to appear before Cloverhill District Court via video-link on August 13.