

Judge grants special probation to ex-Enfield coach charged with patronizing prostitute in WL

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A former Fermi High School junior varsity boys' basketball coach — who resigned from his position following his arrest in Windsor Locks in a prostitution sting last month — was granted a special program Wednesday in Enfield Superior Court that could erase the charge against him.

Meanwhile, a Springfield detective charged in the same sting has applied for the same special program.

Judge Howard Scheinblum granted the former coach, John F. Norris, 53, of 24 S. Maple St., Enfield, accelerated rehabilitation, placing him in the special program for first offenders for six months — until Sept. 1. During that time as part of his probation Norris must perform 50 hours of community service, the judge ordered.

If Norris successfully completes the special probation the charge against him of patronizing a prostitute could be erased.

“This just was a dark moment in his life,” Norris' lawyer, Charles D. Hines of Enfield, said.

Last month, in an interview with the Journal Inquirer, Norris said that “my family has stood behind me, and we're going to work it out and move forward in our life.”

Norris, who has been free on a \$1,000 cash bond since his Feb. 14 arrest in Windsor Locks, resigned from his first-year coaching position at Fermi High School in Enfield following his arrest in the prostitution sting, which police called “Operation Cupid.”

The sting was carried out on Valentine's Day at the La Quinta Hotel, located at 64 Ella Grasso Turnpike in Windsor Locks, according to a prosecutor.

The sting involved members of the Windsor Locks criminal investigation and patrol divisions working together to target prostitution in their town.

Windsor Locks police said they placed ads on a popular Internet site used by those who want to purchase sex for money. An undercover officer who was posing as a prostitute responded to

numerous inquiries and requests for sexual services from “clients,” police said. The two parties would then meet at the hotel in Windsor Locks, where the suspect was later arrested by a team of back-up officers, police said.

The sting netted the arrest of 11 men, including Norris and Springfield police detective John Wadlegger, 42, a resident of Agawam, Mass. All were charged with patronizing a prostitute.

Wadlegger filed an application for the accelerated rehabilitation program on Monday. A hearing on his application is scheduled for March 31.

Wadlegger has since been placed on desk duty by Springfield police pending an internal investigation, according to the Associated Press.

The following men arrested in the sting applied for accelerated rehabilitation last week and are due back in Enfield court on the following dates:

- Eslam Ayoub, 41, of Middletown, due back March 31.
- Brandon Blank, 28, of Bridgeport, due back March 25.
- Wagner Brown, 34, of Waterbury, due back March 25.
- James Castelveter, 59, of 14 Iroquois Road, Enfield, due back March 20.
- John Cook, 56, of 45 Brightman Circle, South Windsor, due back March 26.
- Jesse Coughlin, 33, of Chester, Mass., due back March 27.

The remaining men charged are due back in Enfield court on the following dates:

- Bryan Deway, 46, of 29 Leslie St. in Windsor Locks on March 18.
- Eric Oullette, 42, of Glastonbury on March 21.
- Ravindra Wikramanaya, 54, of Chicopee on March 27.