

Office of the Kane County State's Attorney



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FORMER GYMNASTICS COACH PLEADS GUILTY TO CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

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A former St. Charles gymnastics coach has pleaded guilty to possessing child pornography on his computer.

Shawn C. Bowlden, 33 (d.o.b. 5-6-1974), formerly of the 900 block of South Third Street, St. Charles, today agreed with the Kane County State's Attorney to a sentence of 30 months sex offender probation and other terms in exchange for a guilty plea to one count of Possession of Child Pornography, a Class 3 felony.

Circuit Judge Grant S. Wegner accepted the plea.

On Oct. 10, 2007, investigators from the St. Charles Police Department and the Illinois Attorney General's Office served a warrant at Bowlden's address based on a tip from Immigrations and Customs Enforcement of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The investigation revealed thousands of images of child pornography in the form of computer images and movies. Bowlden admitted to authorities that the images and movies were his.

According to the St. Charles Police Department, at the time of his arrest, Bowlden coached gymnastics at a gym in the 700 block of North 17th Street in St. Charles. There is no indication that Bowlden engaged in any inappropriate or illegal activity with any current or former student at the gymnastics school.

Terms of sex offender probation include but are not limited to: must register for life as a sex offender, must have no unsupervised contact with anyone under age 18 for the duration of his probationary term, cannot use the Internet except for work purposes for the duration of his probationary term, must undergo polygraph

examinations for the duration of his probationary term, forfeits all rights to any seized property.

Bowlden's computers were forfeited to the St. Charles Police Department. If he purchases a new computer, he must alert Kane County Court Services, which has the authority to perform random searches.

In addition to the probation, Bowlden must serve 90 days in the Kane County Jail. By statute, Bowlden received day-for-day sentencing, as well as credit for eight days served in the Kane County Jail. Bowlden remains free on \$20,000 bond. He will surrender to authorities to begin his term of incarceration at an agreed upon time.

"Mr. Bowlden's actions contributed to the marketplace of child pornography on the Internet, and hopefully this sentence will help to deter any further person planning to use the Internet to perpetrate the rape of a child," said Kane County Assistant State's Attorney Justin Fitzsimmons, who prosecuted the case.

Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan also was pleased with the sentence.

"My office works aggressively with law enforcement officials to combat child pornography shared over the Internet," Madigan said. "We are pleased that our partnership with St. Charles Police Department, Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the Kane County State's Attorney's Office has resulted in this significant sentencing, which means Mr. Bowlden's activities will be monitored for a long time."