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Former Olympic gymnast Kylie Shadbolt in rehab after charged for driving six times over alcohol limit

HARRY CLARKE • THE CAIRNS POST • JULY 01, 2015 11:14AM



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DRINK DRIVING: Former Olympic gymnast Kylie Shadbolt will undergo alcohol rehabilitation after being charged for driving six times over the legal alcohol limit.
PHOTO: NELLIE PRATT (File Photo)

A CAIRNS woman and former Olympian who became Australia's first international gold medal gymnast will undergo alcohol rehabilitation after being caught driving more than six times over the legal limit.

Kylie Shadbolt, who represented Australia at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics as well as two world championships, yesterday pleaded guilty in the Cairns Magistrates Court to high-range drink-driving.

Her matter has been adjourned until she completes a minimum five-week stint at a rehabilitation clinic in Victoria, after which she will face a long driving disqualification and an "enormous" fine.

Ms Shadbolt was driving on Isabella Rd about 5.45pm on Sunday, June 14, when she was pulled over by police for a random breath test and produced a blood-alcohol reading of 0.314.

Ms Shadbolt said she'd been suffering depression at the time of the offence, which stemmed from the recent death of her father and her mother being diagnosed with an illness.

The court heard yesterday she had started drinking vodka at 3am that day because she could not sleep amid the stress, and was on her way to a McDonald's store several hours later when she was pulled over by police.

Supported by family in the courtroom, Ms Shadbolt said she was likely to lose her

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job as a project officer with the Department of Natural Resources and Mines as a result her offence.

She said she had sought a five-week alcohol rehabilitation program at Southern Retreat near Port Fairy in Victoria to deal with her depression and alcoholism.

Magistrate Trevor Black adjourned the matter until August 25 to allow Ms Shadbolt time to acquire medical certificates from the rehabilitation centre.

He said the punishment would ultimately be severe.

“I’m going to have to disqualify you (from driving) for a long period of time ... the fine would have to be enormous.”

Ms Shadbolt was part of the Australian gymnastics team which finished 16th in the 1989 World Championships.

She was 19 when they became the first Australian team to qualify for an Olympic Games, achieving a rank of sixth.

Since her 15-year sporting career she has worked in the healthcare industry and last year returned to the gymnasium as a coach.

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season cyclone in the Coral Sea.

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