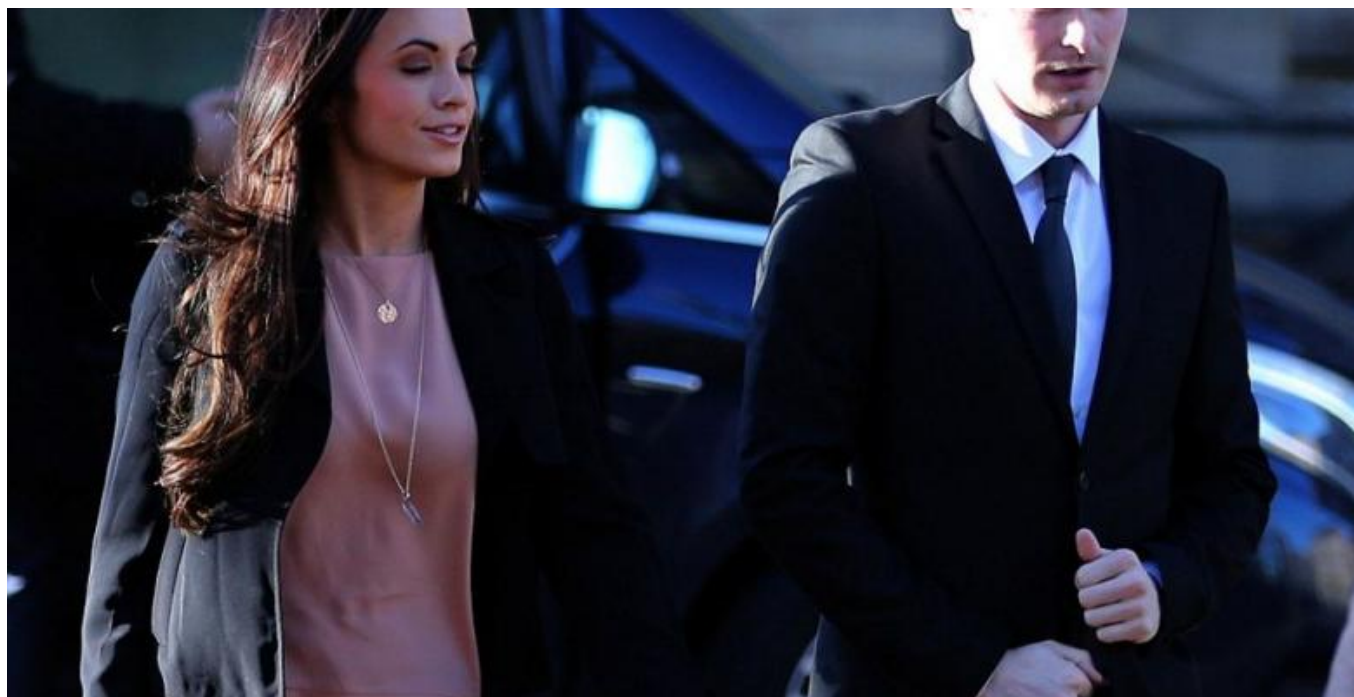


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Sunderland sack Adam Johnson after winger pleaded guilty of sexual activity

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Sunderland have sacked Adam Johnson after he pleaded guilty to grooming and sexual activity with a child under 16 years this week.

The 28-year-old winger shocked club officials on Wednesday when he admitted one count of grooming and one of sexual activity with a 15-year-old schoolgirl. His trial at Bradford Crown Court on two further counts of sexual activity begins on Friday morning.

Sunderland released a club statement on Thursday evening, which read: 'In light of Adam Johnson's guilty pleas, the club has today terminated his contract with immediate effect.'

'The club will make no further comment.'

Sunderland boss Sam Allardyce confirmed earlier on Thursday that Johnson - who was on a £60,000-a-week deal at the Stadium of Light - would not play in the Premier League against Manchester United on Saturday, but the situation quickly escalated and senior club officials took the decision to terminate his contract on Thursday night.

The news came hours after sports manufacturer adidas terminated their boot sponsorship with Johnson, saying in a statement: 'Adidas can confirm that it has terminated its contract with footballer Adam Johnson with immediate effect. This follows his guilty pleas entered earlier this week.'

Sportmail understands that adidas' deal to supply Sunderland's kit is not affected as Johnson's £10,000-a-year boot contract was a separate endorsement.