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LOCAL NEWS



Thomas Devlin

Tuesday 04 November 2008 13:24

Man to stand trial in connection with Thomas Devlin attack

A man is to stand trial accused in connection with the attack that led to the murder of north Belfast schoolboy Thomas Devlin.

District Judge Fiona Bagnall has ordered 25-year-old Nigel Brown, to be returned to the city`s Crown Court after prosecutors said there was a case against him to answer.

Brown, a cleaner from Whitewell Road, Newtownabbey is charged with attempted grievous bodily harm on a friend of the 15-year-old murder victim.

Thomas was stabbed to death close to his home in August 2005 as he and two pals returned from buying sweets.

It has been alleged that Brown tried to strike another of the group, Jonathan McKee, with a stick or baton on the night of the killing.

He is the only suspect so far to face criminal proceedings linked to the knife attack.

A previous preliminary enquiry hearing was put back while the Public Prosecution Service reviewed a decision not to charge Brown with more serious offences.

But with the case proceeding on the original basis, Brown appeared before Belfast Magistrates` Court to be told he was being sent for trial on a date to be fixed.

The accused, who was remanded in custody, also faces charges of assaulting police officers during his arrest.

He is understood to have complained to the Police Ombudsman about the circumstances surrounding his last detention.

Brown`s lawyer claimed it was "*scandalous*" that the Public Prosecution Service decided not to pursue charges against any officer four days after receiving a file from the Ombudsman.

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