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Woody's heart defect spotted before his birth



Tackling the issue head on . . . Damien and Woody yesterday

DUFF LAD'S ALL CLEAR

By AOIFE FINNERAN

IRISH footie hero Damien Duff has revealed how his young son Woody has overcome a congenital heart defect after undergoing major surgery.

The retired Irish international player, whose wife Elaine gave birth to their second child Darcy in September, told how they feared for their son even before he was born.

Duff explained: "We spotted it on a 32-week scan before he was even born so it was a long wait until he came."

Little Woody, who recently turned two, needed open-heart surgery to correct the defect at the time, but his parents faced an anxious wait until he could go forward for the life-saving procedure. And Damien said: "They wouldn't do the operation until he was six months old."

Thankfully the surgery was a success and the lively tot is now thriving.

Relieved Duff confirmed: "All is good now. We got the all-clear. We just have to go back for a few check-ups, but there's not a bother on him."

Ambassador

"He has got a clean bill of health. There's one or two more scans and hopefully that'll be the end of it."

The Fulham midfielder – who is originally from Ballyboden – was in Dublin yesterday to hand over 35 Coagu-Chek machines to the Mater Hospital on behalf of Heart Children Ireland.

The 34-year-old is the official ambassador for the charity and admitted that accepting the invitation was "a no brainer".

Yesterday's donation means patients with Congenital Heart Disorders will be able to monitor the coagulation of their blood at home instead of having to go to hospital.

Duff explained: "Heart Children Ireland make a really valuable contribution to the treatment and care of children and young adults with CHD in Ireland."

"With the great care our son Woody has received from his medi-



Euro 2012 . . . Damien & Robbie Keane

cal team, I look forward to many a kick-around with him in the future!"

He added: "Some of the kids here have had major surgery, quite a few of them have had four or five and they look a million dollars so fair play to the surgeons who play such a big part."

"It's amazing what they can do nowadays."

Despite being back in Dublin for the evening, the former Ireland star admitted he couldn't get to last night's crucial World Cup qualifier clash.

Instead of heading to the Aviva Stadium to see Ireland take on the Faroe Islands, Duff watched the match on TV after putting his toddler son to bed.

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