



Michigan fired gymnastics coach who knew about Nassar abuse



Ryan Young

Yahoo Sports Jan 13, 2019, 8:17 PM



Multiple University of Michigan regents said Sunday they believe newly hired Wolverines gymnastics coach Rhonda Faehn should be fired due to her involvement with the Larry Nassar scandal. Hours later, the school fired her. (AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster)

University of Michigan regents said on Sunday that the school needs to fire new gymnastics coach Rhonda Faehn, who is believed to be the first USA Gymnastics official told about Larry Nassar's sexual abuse, [according to the Detroit Free Press](#).

"I appreciate the input I have received from the people of Michigan and the survivor community and believe this contract should be terminated immediately," Regent Jordan Acker [told the Detroit Free Press](#).

Just hours later, Michigan fired her.

"I have come to the conclusion that it is not in the best interest of the University of Michigan and our athletic program to continue the consulting contract with Rhonda Faehn," Michigan athletic director Warde Manuel said in a statement, [via the Detroit Free Press](#).

"It was the wrong decision, and I apologize. Our student-athletes are our highest priority and I want to do everything in my power to support them fully and put the focus back on their athletic performance."

Faehn was first to know of Nassar's abuse

Faehn is believed to have been the first USA Gymnastics official told about [Nassar's years of sexual abuse as the team doctor](#). More than 300 women have come forward to allege sexual abuse by Nassar during "treatment." [The 55-year-old is currently serving a lengthy federal prison sentence](#) for child pornography and is [facing hundreds of years in Michigan state prison](#) after he pled guilty of abusing 10 women. Nassar admitted to having assaulted girls over nearly three decades in the plea deal.

Faehn was hired as a gymnastics consultant for the women's team last week. She was never implicated in the Nassar scandal, however she was removed from her post with USA Gymnastics in May. She had previously served as the senior vice president for the USA Gymnastics women's program from 2015-2018, and led Florida to three straight NCAA championships as a coach from 2013-2015.

Faehn, [per the report](#), was first told about the abuse on June 17, 2015. Olympic gold medalist Aly Raisman, one of the most vocal among Nassar's victims, said she told Faehn about her abuse "in graphic detail," though Faehn didn't report the abuse for another week.

"I reported my abuse to Rhonda Faehn and so did Maggie Nichols, and I don't know what she did or didn't do with that information, but I didn't get contacted by the FBI for over a year, and in that time 50 to 100 gymnasts were molested," Raisman [told the Indianapolis Star in May 2018](#).

Public outcry after Faehn's hiring

Manuel defended Faehn's hiring last week, saying they conducted a "through review of Faehn's coaching career and her involvement with USA Gymnastics." He also said he met with team captains before a decision was made.

"After our exhaustive due diligence, we felt comfortable that coach Faehn reported all information available to her regarding Larry Nassar and that she cooperated fully, including voluntarily participating in all investigations and offering testimony before Congress," Manuel said in a statement, [via the Detroit Free Press](#). "Neither an internal investigation by USA Gymnastics or a criminal investigation by the FBI have assigned culpability or resulted in any charges against her."

Multiple Nassar survivors, though, didn't accept his explanation and took to social media to voice their displeasure. Among them was Rachael DenHollander, the first to publicly accuse Nassar of abuse.

"The well-being and safety of our student-athletes is always our highest priority."

"So we're hiring the fired USAG employee, whose failure to report Nassar, even though she's a mandated reporter, lead to some of our own athletes being victimized."

Nailed it @UMich <https://t.co/P3O7SWUj28>

— Rachael Denhollander (@R_Denhollander) [January 13, 2019](#)

And, when we learned that her illegal failure to report lead to more abuse, she didn't speak up, apologize, or help hold USAG accountable. No excuses for the failure, or her response when it became known. She was VP of the women's program. She was in charge. This matters.

<https://t.co/jUf0MG8BEW>

— Rachael Denhollander (@R_Denhollander) [January 13, 2019](#)

And most egregiously, when all of this came out, her response was not "I really messed up. I am so sorry. I have learned. Here's what I would do the next time" and then push USAG to clean up the mess. She stayed silent about what she knew until she was forced to testify. Not ok.

— Rachael Denhollander (@R_Denhollander) [January 13, 2019](#)

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