

# USA Gymnastics received abuse allegations against Anna Li and Jiani Wu in 2017



[ocregister.com/2019/08/26/usa-gymnastics-first-alerted-to-alleged-abuse-by-anna-li-and-jiani-wu-in-2017](https://www.ocregister.com/2019/08/26/usa-gymnastics-first-alerted-to-alleged-abuse-by-anna-li-and-jiani-wu-in-2017)

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Top USA Gymnastic officials have been aware of physical, verbal and emotional allegations against coaches Anna Li and Jiani Wu since at least 2017, nearly two years earlier than the national governing body has acknowledged, according to USA Gymnastic emails obtained by the Southern California News Group.

Mark Busby, USA Gymnastics general counsel, and Toby R. Stark, then the organization's director for Safe Sport confirm, confirmed in a series of September 2017 emails that USA Gymnastics had received allegations of "verbal, physical and emotional abuse" against Li, an alternate on the gold medal-winning 2012 U.S. Olympic team, and her mother, Wu, an Olympic medalist for China and former U.S. national team coach.

The Busby and Stark emails contradict statements by USA Gymnastics president and chief executive officer Li Li Leung earlier this month denying that the organization was aware of complaints against Li and Wu prior to Li being named to USA Gymnastics' high profile Athletes Council in June.

Stark in an email confirmed receiving allegations against Li and Wu and that he had forwarded them to Busby. The allegations were also forwarded to Legacy, Stark said in the email. Shortly thereafter Busby acknowledged in an email receiving allegations against Li and Wu that included "verbal, physical and emotional abuse, in addition to lack of oversight and proper coaching."

"I will be following up with Elite World Gymnastics regarding the issues specifically," Busby wrote,

misidentifying the gym. In a later email he correctly identified the gym as “Legacy Elite.”

Leung was hired by USA Gymnastics last February.

USA Gymnastics has also received a formal complaint in the last week in which a parent alleges Li and Wu were aware that former U.S. Olympic and women’s national team physician Larry Nassar was a sexual predator prior to recommending a young female gymnast seek medical treatment from Nassar, according to USA Gymnastics documents obtained by SCNG. The young gymnast trained at Legacy Elite Gymnastics, the Aurora, Illinois gym owned by Li and Wu’s family.

Sam L. Amirante, an attorney for Li and Wu, said Li alleges she was sexually abused by Nassar during her gymnastics career. Li filed a confidential claim related to Nassar’s alleged sexual abuse with U.S. Bankruptcy Court’s Southern District of Indiana earlier this year as part of USA Gymnastics’ Chapter 11 proceedings, Amirante said.

Amirante has not responded to multiple requests to provide a copy of the claim.

“Anna and Jiani unequivocally deny these maliciously false defamatory allegations, which are a blatant and reckless disregard of the truth,” Amirante said in a statement on Twitter. “As their attorney, I will fight to restore the honor and respect that these woman have earned and deserve.”

USA Gymnastics said in a statement it stands by Leung’s previous statement.

“The information that Li Li Leung shared with a small group of reporters in Kansas City, Mo., earlier this month was accurate,” the statement said. “Prior to the safe-sport report filed in July 2019, USA Gymnastics had received a single-spaced, six-page report that primarily raised issues of athlete favoritism at Legacy Elite that was sent by an individual who requested anonymity. The other two reports, one regarding alleged social media initiatives and the other an athlete incident, that (SCNG) inquired about were submitted on Friday, Aug. 23, at 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. ET, respectively. All of these documents have been shared with the U.S. Center for SafeSport, which is handling the current case regarding Anna Li, Jiani Wu and Legacy Elite. We cannot comment further because it is a pending matter under the Center’s discretionary jurisdiction.”

In the letter USA Gymnastics referred a Legacy parent wrote to Li and Wu and details verbal and emotional abuse by the coaches, accusing the Li and Wu of, among other things, belittling gymnasts and turning a select group of athletes against other gymnasts at the club.

“You totally ignore all the other girls and make them think they are horrible and not worthy of any of your attention,” the parent wrote.

The letter was also forwarded to Stark as part of a complaint to USA Gymnastics. Stark passed on the letter to Busby.

“You tell these girls they suck, they are bad, etc.,” the parent wrote in the letter, referring to Li and Wu. “Your motivation comes in forms of threats, being put in time out, being singled out in front of the entire gym, or told to do lengthy handstand holds or other lengthy items. You talk negatively about gymnasts and their families to other gymnasts. You tell the girls negative things about other gyms, which I assume is a sad attempt to brain wash these girls into ever thinking of leaving your program. You have meetings with the girls to speak negative about coaches that have left or even have gone as far as disallowing the girls to talk to other gymnasts that have left your program. You will make things difficult for families when they leave and we know it’s out of spite. Honestly, it is childish and you make USAG look bad for everything you do.

‘...USAG has enough broadcasted issues going on right now and I am sure they don’t want any more negative under the USAG brand by knowing you are allowing girls to train themselves that could lead to injuries and allow verbal abuse and borderline physical abuse.’”

Li resigned from the Athletes Counsel on Aug. 7 and the eve of the USA Gymnastics Championships following [an SCNG report](#) in which gymnasts coached by Li and Wu, and their parents alleged in interviews and confidential formal complaints filed with USA Gymnastics that Li and Wu were physically, verbally and emotionally abusive to young gymnasts.

Gymnasts and parents also alleged Li and Wu steered gymnasts to be treated by Nassar at Michigan State’s sports medicine clinic where he was employed. At least four Legacy gymnasts were sexually assaulted by Nassar, according to three people familiar with the cases including an attorney for multiple Nassar victims

Nassar is currently serving a 60-year sentence in federal prison for possession of child pornography. He was sentenced in 2018 to between 40 and 175 years and 40 and 125 years after pleading guilty to a total 10 charges of sexual assault in two Michigan state cases.

“When Jiani and Anna recommended that athletes see Dr. Larry Nassar, they absolutely KNEW he was a dangerous man!” a Legacy parent wrote in an Aug. 23 formal complaint filed with USA Gymnastics. “They did not assume, they did not guess, they did not hear it through the grapevine, they did not speculate. Anna Li and Jiani Wu sent athletes to Dr. Larry Nassar even though they KNEW what Dr. Larry Nassar was capable of; and they allowed their athletes to see this doctor OVER and OVER and OVER again. Not once during my time at Legacy Elite gymnastics did Anna or Jiani advise otherwise. Anna’s alleged abuse against Larry Nassar is sad, but the suggestion that other athletes see this doctor is incomprehensible.”

The U.S. Center for SafeSport accepted jurisdiction to investigate Li and Wu earlier this month. USA Gymnastics and/or the U.S. Center for SafeSport have received at least 14 complaints alleging physical, verbal and emotional abuse against Li and Wu, according to confidential formal complaints, and other USA Gymnastics and SafeSport documents.

The complaint to USA Gymnastics alleging Li and Wu’s referrals to Nassar also charges Legacy booster club members and other parents at the gym of launching an “intimidation campaign on social media” to “silence victims.”

The complaint also alleges “that Anna Li’s retweets of victim shaming is extremely concerning and again, serves as a way to intimidate new victims from coming forward.”