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ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

TODD SPITZER

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Prominent Water Polo Coach Sentenced to 18 Years, Four Months for Sexually Assaulting Nine Teenage Girls During Coaching Sessions

SANTA ANA, Calif. – A prominent Orange County water polo coach sentenced to 18 years and four months of sexually assaulting nine teenage girls he trained and assaulting a tenth athlete over a five year period. Many of the assaults occurred underwater during training sessions at the Olympic-size pool at the Joint Forces Training Base in Los Alamitos unbeknownst to parents watching from the poolside.

Bahram Hojreh, 46, of Irvine, was convicted by a jury in November 2022 of 22 felony counts including sexual battery, sexual penetration, and lewd acts on a child involving nine water polo players between the ages of 13 and 17 years old from 2012 to 2017. The jury convicted Hojreh of the lesser included charge of simple assault of one of the Jane Does.

The jury also found Hojreh used his position of trust as a sought-after club and high school water polo coach to sexually abuse the young girls.

Hojreh was immediately taken into custody following the verdict.

“This coach held the keys to the athletic dreams of these young girls and he manipulated them into believing these sexual assaults were part of their training,” said Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer. “It is heartbreaking that another trusted mentor abused the trust of his athletes and their parents to prey on children for his own sexual gratification – and to do it under the guise of legitimate athletic activity. Today’s sentence will not erase the lifelong trauma these young girls will be forced to endure, but I hope it will serve as a powerful example for children that they matter and no adult – no matter who they are or the position they hold – have the right to sexually abuse them. We are thankful the jury saw through the defense’s pathetic argument that this was nothing more than a money grab and saw that these vulnerable children who were preyed upon by a pedophile.”

Over the course of several weeks, a dozen young women testified Hojreh touched their breasts, twisted their nipples, touched their genitals above and below their swimsuits and digitally penetrated them underwater during coaching sessions – actions he explained were to “toughen them up” for competition. On the stand, the victims

testified that they believed Hojreh's reputation as an accomplished water polo coach was key to fulfilling their dreams of playing at the collegiate level. Hojreh testified in his own defense, denied the allegations.

In 2017, several of Hojreh's players – then ranging in age from 14 to 17 - began to discuss the sexual abuse by their coach and in early 2018 a few of the girls confided in their parents who reported it to law enforcement.

In addition to coaching the International Water Polo Club in Los Alamitos, Hojreh also coached at Kennedy High School in La Palma. Hojreh has been banned from life from participating in USA Water Polo events.

Deputy District Attorney Raquel Cooper of the Sexual Assault Unit prosecuted this case.

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