Others make allegations against Penn State's Portland

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Jennifer Harris' federal lawsuit against Penn State has prompted other women to share similar allegations against coach Rene Portland. In a telephone interview Wednesday, Portland reiterated she never has discriminated against a player.

"I don't, and I won't, comment on rumors and speculations, and I view some of it as that," Portland said when asked about these allegations, adding she strongly disagreed about Courtney Wicks' recollections.

"Sexual orientation and race of any person is irrelevant to me, and I don't judge on those kind of basis."

USA TODAY's Jill Lieber spoke recently with these women:

"She told me point-blank in her office that if she ever heard of any lesbian activities that not only would I be kicked off the team, but transferring would be impossible and I'd never play basketball again."

— Christine Gulas, played for Portland as a sophomore (1980-81),then quit the first day of practice as a junior, in the fall of '82

"She sat me down and said that the woman I had been dating, who was the manager of the team, was let go, that she doesn't believe in that sort of thing. She said that she didn't know if it was true, that we had a relationship, but if she finds out it is true, then there was nothing to stop her from going to the university, the media and my parents. I felt like I was backed into a corner. I felt threatened. I was scared to death. She said, 'You have to choose her or basketball.' I felt there was no other way out."

— Cindy Davies, played for Portland as a freshman (1980-81), then left school the following season, soon after Portland confronted her about her sexuality in January 1982

"I had two separate conversations with her on the subject. One, I asked her directly why she felt the way she felt. Why she had this stance about not allowing lesbians in the locker rooms, on her team, or in her program. She said that she doesn't want her players to have to make a choice in the locker room. Basically, she almost made it seem, if you have a lesbian on the team, they could be predatorial and force you to make a decision you don't want to have to make, or force you to make a decision that you don't even really want to think about at that point in time, and it can be or is distracting. That was her big thing — distractions."

— Courtney Wicks, played for Portland as a freshman (1996-97), then quit in her sophomore season, in January 1998

"An athlete on the team told Rene, 'I know she's a lesbian.' So, Rene started to question my sexual orientation to others connected to the team. She said, 'If it's true, she can't work with the team.' I knew the culture at Penn State, I knew her history, but it was something I wanted and needed to do because my ultimate goal was to be an athletic trainer at Tennessee. So, I grew my hair long. I wore more makeup. I stopped going to alternative night at Players, the club on campus. I dressed differently. To the point where my parents noticed a difference. I knew I needed Rene's name on my résumé. She was asking questions. So, I had to give the appearance of being straight. It didn't come up again. I'd always been open about my sexual orientation. It was the first time in my life that I hid. I never had to do it before, and I've never had to do it since."

— Chris Demuth, student trainer for 1996-97 season

"I was in her office because we all have to have a coach-player meeting at the end of the season. We were talking about the softball team. ... She said that they hang out with us, so it makes them seem like they're not gay. That's when she said that we don't accept that on this team. I said, 'Oh, OK.'

— Amber Bland, played for Portland as a freshman (2004-05), was kicked off the team in March 2005, the same night as Harris. Reinstated a few weeks later, she left at the end of that academic school year.