OTL - Outside the Line

Alleged Discrimination

Sunday, December 11, 2005
9:30 a.m. ET on ESPN

During his two year stint as Penn State's athletic director, Joe Paterno hired women's head basketball coach Rene Portland in 1980. Under her direction, the team has amassed more than 650 wins and 7 conference titles, while Portland has twice been named WBCA National Coach of the Year. But despite her success, questions have persisted about Portland's treatment of players she perceives to be gay. Portland first spoke publicly about lesbians on her team in a 1986 Chicago Sun Times article in which she said, "I will not have it in my program." Five years later, a profile in the Philadelphia Inquirer quoting former players on Portland's anti-lesbian position, sparked a flurry of media attention and protests. As a result, Penn State added sexual orientation to its anti-discrimination policy, and Portland announced that she would abide by the university's rules. However, after Jennifer Harris said she was dismissed from the team last season because Portland suspected her of being a lesbian, Harris filed sexual orientation discrimination charges against Portland. **Outside the Lines**' Steve Delsohn reports on players' personal accounts of alleged discrimination at Penn State, followed by a discussion about sexual orientation in women's college basketball as it pertains to recruiting, coaching and playing. Bob Ley hosts.

Guests included:
Jennifer Harris, Pearl Harris, Cindy Davies, Courtney Wicks, Liz McGovern

Kara Lawson: WNBA player with the Sacramento Monarchs and 2003 Univ. of Tennessee All-America
Mechelle Voepel: Kansas City Star Womens College Basketball Writer
Helen Carroll: Sports Project Coordinator for the National Center for Lesbian Rights
Karen Doering: Attorney for the National Center for Lesbian Rights