Lotief denies allegations of verbal, physical abuse, calls firing retaliation

Title IX is a federal law, part of the U.S. Education Amendments of 1972, which states “no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination.”

On Wednesday, Nov. 1, UL Lafayette announced Lotief had been terminated, saying in a statement that he “violated university policies by subjecting student-athletes and coworkers to violent, vulgar language and verbal and physical assault, creating a hostile learning and working environment.”

“Behavior of this nature will not be tolerated,” University President E. Joseph Savoie, Ed.D., said in the press release. “I want to commend the students for coming forward. They exemplified great courage in sharing their stories.”

That same day, Lotief, surrounded by his wife Stefni, lawyer Glenn Edwards and a room full of his players, held a press conference on the allegations that he used vulgar language as well as verbally and physically abused players.

“I have never been involved in a physical confrontation in my life,” Lotief said.

Lotief said he believes it’s common in competitive sports to have a loose tongue, saying he’s “not an angel.”

“When I get out on the field sometimes I have a loose tongue,” Lotief said. “But, to take that and make it become vulgar and offensive and hostile, that’s a stretch and that’s inaccurate.”

Lotief said he believes his firing is the university’s retaliation to the equality issues he advocated last month, which placed him on administrative leave.

“They don’t appreciate and understand the quality of the people and the athletes that are behind me,” Lotief said.

On Nov. 2, the university released hundreds of pages of letters, emails, text messages, notes and documents about the former coach.

In these documents, former players accused Lotief of using verbal attacks, mimicking them and using vulgar language.

“He grabbed a girl’s hair/head and shook it several times,” one anonymous player wrote in a handwritten letter.

Another handwritten letter by another anonymous former player accused Lotief of verbally abusing her.

“I firmly know that the environment Coach Mike creates for young women is degrading, unhealthy and sexist,” she wrote.

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