

Statement of Maggie Nichols

Recently, three of my friends and former National Team members who medaled at the 2012 Olympics have bravely stepped forward to proclaim they were sexually assaulted by USA Gymnastics Team Physician Dr. Larry Nassar.

Today I join them.

I am making the decision to tell my traumatic story and hope to join the forces with my friends and teammates to bring about true change.

Up until now, I was identified as Athlete A by USA gymnastics, the US Olympic Committee and Michigan State University. I want everyone to know that he did not do this to Athlete A, he did it to Maggie Nichols.

In the summer of 2015, my coach and I reported this abuse to USA Gymnastics leadership.

I first started Gymnastics when I was three and since I was a child, I always had the dream of competing for my country in the Olympic Games. I made elite level gymnastics when I was 13. By the time I was 14, I made the USA National Team. I traveled internationally for 4 years attending competitions and in 2015 competed at the World Championships representing our country.

People who watch gymnastics see young girls fly through the air and do all kinds of amazing things. You can imagine that having a good doctor is absolutely necessary to compete at the highest level.

Dr. Larry Nassar was regarded throughout the sport as the very best by coaches and staff throughout the gymnastics community. He was a doctor at Michigan State University and the Olympic and Team USA doctor assigned to us by USA Gymnastics at the Olympic Training Center at the Karolyi Ranch. He was supposed to care for us and treat our injuries. The first time I met Dr. Nassar I was about 13 or 14 years old and receiving treatment for an elbow injury. At the time it seemed like he knew exactly what therapy was necessary for me to recover. Initially, he did nothing unusual.

But when I was 15 I started to have back problems while at a National Team Camp at the Karolyi Ranch. This is when the changes in his medical treatments occurred. My back was really hurting me, I couldn't even really bend down, and I remember he took me into the training room, closed the door and closed the blinds. At the time I thought this was kind of weird but figured it must be okay. I thought he probably didn't want to distract the other girls and I trusted him.

I trusted what he was doing at first, but then he started touching me in places I really didn't think he should. He didn't have gloves on and he didn't tell me what he was doing. There was no one else in the room and I accepted what he was doing

because I was told by adults that he was the best doctor and he could help relieve my pain.

He did this “treatment” on me, on numerous occasions.

Not only was Larry Nassar my doctor, I thought he was my friend. He contacted me on Facebook complimenting me and telling me how beautiful I looked on numerous occasions. But I was only 15 and I just thought he was trying to be nice to me. Now I believe this was part of the grooming process I recently learned about.

One day at practice, I was talking to my teammate, and brought up Dr. Nassar and his treatments. When I was talking to her, my coach overheard. I had never told my coach about these treatments. After hearing our conversation she asked me more questions about it and said it doesn’t seem right. I showed her the Facebook messages and told her about what Nassar was doing. My coach thought it was wrong, so she did the right thing and reported this abuse to the USA Gymnastics staff.

USA Gymnastics and the USOC did not provide a safe environment for me and my teammates to train. We were subjected to Dr. Nassar at every National Team Camp which occurred monthly at the Karolyi Ranch. His job was to care for our health and treat our injuries. Instead, he violated our innocence.

I later found out that Michigan State University had ignored complaints against Larry Nassar from other girls going back 20 years and had investigated him for sexual assault in 2014. They never told USA Gymnastics. If they had, I might never have met Larry Nassar and I would never have been abused by him.

I have come to the realization that my voice can have influence over the manner in which our USA athletes are treated.

Throughout everything that has happened, my faith in God has sustained me.

I would like to let everyone know that I am doing OK. My strong faith has helped me endure. It is a work in progress. I will strive to ensure the safety of young athletes who have big dreams just like mine and I will encourage them to stand up and speak if something doesn’t seem right.

I want to thank everyone from the bottom of my heart that has helped me through this difficult time. My parents, coaches, and friends who have known about it, and that have stood by my side through it all. I would not have been able to be so strong without each of you.