

September 18, 2012

STATEMENT FROM LANA GEHRING AND JESSICA SMITH

Last month in London, our Summer Olympic counterparts rallied a nation by leading the world in Olympic Medals. At the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, every member of our team, the USA Short Track Speedskating Olympic Team, brought home at least one Olympic Medal. Now 17 months away from our moment under the bright lights in Sochi, Russia at the 2014 Olympic Winter Games, at a time when we should be focused on how we are going to take on the world, we are instead forced to defend our coach against baseless allegations of abuse that are nothing more than a false attack on his character.

We do not believe any of the allegations of abuse leveled against our Head Coach, Jae Su Chun, and Assistant Coach, Jun Hyung Yeo. We have never seen any abuse take place - physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional - and we know these men are not capable of abuse.

We know Jae Su better than anyone outside from his own family. We've spent the past six and four years, respectively, with him as our coach, and we have never seen the behavior described in the allegations.

Jae Su expects the highest moral character from his team, and that is exactly what he displays himself. He cares deeply about our success as skaters and as people. He truly wants everyone to be his or her best. He's brought us to the top in our sport, and we will continue to be successful under his direction and leadership on the ice and in life.

Jae Su pushes us hard, but we trust him, and we have faith in the program that he runs to take us to the top of the podium at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia. Any coach at an Olympic level is going to have high expectations and will push their athletes to be the very best they can be. For example, Jackie Joyner-Kersey's coach is quoted during a TV interview saying he's not an athlete's friend, he's their coach, and a coach's job is to get the best out of their athlete. Similarly, an Olympic runner in the 2012 Games said something to the effect of "there are days I don't like my coach, but I made it to the Olympics." That is not abuse – it is coaching.

We understand that not every athlete will be happy with Jae Su's training style or his program. No coach is ever able to make every athlete happy; nor should that be the coach's primary concern. But Coach Chun does a fine a job as anyone of balancing the grueling demands of training at the Olympic level with the personal care and development of his athletes.

We truly believe that Jae Su is the most knowledgeable short track speedskating coach in the world and that he conducts himself ethically and with integrity in every way. An investigation is in process. We are fully cooperating with that investigation, and are confident that our coaches will be cleared so that we can put this behind us and get back to focusing on what U.S. Speedskaters do best: winning medals!

Sincerely,

Lana Gehring, 2012 World Championships Silver and Bronze Medalist, 2010 Olympic Bronze Medalist

Jessica Smith, 2012 World Championships Silver Medalist

We the undersigned athletes as members of the U.S. Short Track National Racing Program are in full support of this statement made by Lana Gehring and Jessica Smith:

Kimberly Derrick
John-Henry Krueger
Tamara Frederick
Cole Krueger
Eduardo Alvarez
Chris Creveling
Keith Carroll, Jr.