

Dr. Alan Shepard,
President and Vice-Chancellor,
Western University,
London, Ontario.

November 9, 2023

Dr. Shepard,

I am writing to you regarding today's London Free Press article entitled "The vast majority of the women's hockey want to finish the season". I suggest that title is not accurate.

What the letter from John Doerksen to the players says (as indicated in the article) is, "We've now heard from you, and can confirm the vast majority of the players have indicated their intentions to continue playing for the 2023/24 season".

"Have indicated their intentions to continue playing" should not be taken as any player wanting to play under coach Moxley as the headline suggests and despite the university's best attempts to frame it that way. The players had no choice. They were given 24 hours to respond when asked to indicate their intentions after being told Moxley would return Friday, and that if enough players decided to leave, the team would fold. Play under coach Moxley or the university folds the team. Play or quit as was written in a previous article. It is no surprise that the vast majority indicated their intention to continue playing.

That does not however mean they do not stand by what was said in the letter that was written.

That does not mean they do not want their concerns addressed.

That does not mean they are going to finish the season in a safe environment.

What it means is that a vast majority of women are prepared to put themselves at risk, in an unsafe environment, to play the game they love and have dedicated years of hard work to. It also means some women are not prepared to put themselves at risk (as a "vast majority" is not everyone). This is wrong and should not be the end of this issue.

Some women clearly do not feel the environment is safe enough to return as long as coach Moxley is coach. That should be enough to warrant further investigation. The university has a responsibility to provide a safe environment to all student-athletes, not just some student-athletes, a responsibility to protect all student-athletes from misconduct and sexual harassment. Having players leave the team because they do not feel safe with Moxley as coach is not the university protecting student-athletes. It is the university protecting coach Moxley.

Did the university ask those who indicated their intentions to not continue playing if they would continue under coach Brown or any coach other than coach Moxley?

All women should be able to finish the season, which means coach Moxley should not return pending a full and independent investigation as asked for by the student-athletes. Christine Stapleton should be temporarily relieved of her duties at Western and her board position with USports pending the same investigation, for her role in the matter. That investigation should be carried out by USports (not Western and not the OUA, as the OUA's policy on safe play empowers Athletic Directors with enforcing

said policy and Ms. Stapleton, as Western's Athletic Director would be in a conflict of interest), and be expanded to include Western's 3rd party investigation into Jeff Watson (what exactly does "the university parted ways" with Mr. Watson mean? Was there evidence he did violate Westerns harassment policy? What support was given to victims? What were the terms of the parting of ways?) and Westerns response to the entire situation (including its play or quit ultimatum).

Regards,
Garrett Holmes,
Founder, the Canadian Student Athlete Association.