

PRESS RELEASE

Winston & Strawn Lawyers Dan Webb and Matthew Carter Are Pleased to Share a Statement From Coach Pat Fitzgerald Following Satisfactory Settlement

AUGUST 21, 2025

Chicago—August 21, 2025—I have agreed to a settlement that resolves my breach of contract, defamation, and intentional infliction of emotional distress claims against Northwestern University and its President.

For the past two years, I have engaged in a process of extensive fact and expert discovery, which showed what I have known and said all along—that I had no knowledge of hazing ever occurring in the Northwestern football program, and that I never directed or encouraged hazing in any way.

Through discovery, I learned that some hazing did occur in the football program at Northwestern. I am extremely disappointed that members of the team engaged in this behavior and that no one reported it to me, so that I could have alerted Northwestern's Athletic Department and administrators, stopped the inappropriate behavior, and taken every necessary step to protect Northwestern's student athletes. In July of 2023, when Northwestern first summarized to me the hazing conduct investigated by Maggie Hickey, I was eager to address the misconduct with the team and put an end to any improper behavior, just like I had in every other facet of my work during my 17 years as Northwestern's head football coach.

The rush to judgment in the media in July of 2023 and the reports that suggested I knew about and directed hazing are false and have caused me, my wife, and my three sons great stress, embarrassment, and reputational harm in the last two years. Though I maintain Northwestern had no legal basis to terminate my employment for cause under the terms of my Employment Agreement, in the interest of resolving this matter and, in particular, to relieve my family from the stress of ongoing litigation, Northwestern and I have agreed to a settlement, and I am satisfied with the terms of the settlement.

I am proud to say that I ran a world-class football program at Northwestern. I made every reasonable effort to prevent student misconduct, including any hazing misconduct. I continue to love and have the utmost respect for Northwestern as an institution. I love Northwestern's student athletes, its fans, and the people that I worked with in my 25 plus years at Northwestern. I remain proud of the vast majority of Northwestern student athletes who I had the privilege of coaching—so many of whom have gone on to build incredible lives and careers on and off the football field.

Pat Fitzgerald

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