

## Gymnastics coach sentenced for molestation

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### *Schiefelbein gets 96 years in prison*

**FRANKLIN** — Mark Schiefelbein was sentenced to a total of 96 years in prison for molesting an 11-year-old student at his gymnastics training center in Brentwood, a judge ruled yesterday.

Convicted on eight counts, Schiefelbein, 37, was sentenced to 12 years per count. Judge Russ Heldman ordered that the sentences run one after the other, adding that Schiefelbein denies his guilt and is not fit for rehabilitation.

"I found him to be incredibly dishonest and very deceptive," Heldman said. "His conduct was laced in a pattern of deception, and he used the sport of gymnastics to gain the trust of his victim."

Schiefelbein was co-owner and head coach of Esprit Gymnastics in Brentwood, which has closed, when he molested a student now 13.

During his trial in July, prosecutors provided evidence that he videotaped the girl's private areas, inappropriately touched her and made her touch him in incidents during 2001 and 2002.

"I'm relieved it's all over," her father said. "Justice has been served. All I can say is I hope the day will come when he realizes what he did and admits it to himself."

Two psychologists took the stand during the sentencing hearing, which began Friday and resumed yesterday. Both diagnosed Schiefelbein as a pedophile, but Dr. Donna L. Moore said that because he didn't admit he had a problem, he was not suitable for treatment.

Moore said she considered him at "high risk" to molest again, while Dr. James Walker said Schiefelbein's risk to re-offend was "low to moderate."

Heldman said he did not base his decision on the psychologists' findings but on the trial evidence and the testimony of the victim, her family and the lead detective.



*JEANNE REISEL / STAFF*  
**Brentwood gymnastics coach Mark Schiefelbein, left, weeps after an emotional plea of mercy during his sentencing hearing yesterday.**

"I was a little surprised by the amount he got, but feel it was fair and just," said detective Adrian Breedlove of the Brentwood Police Department. "In my opinion, this type of crime is worse than a murder. He took something away from the victim that she'll never be able to get back. It was a fair sentence that will keep him from ever doing it again."

Several members of Schiefelbein's family were at the hearing and heard him give a tear-filled speech to the court and the victim's family.

"I love my mom and I love my dad and do not wish to bring further dishonor to them by being in prison when they pass away," Schiefelbein said. "I'm begging for mercy."

Schiefelbein's attorneys Lee Ofman and David Raybin, neither of whom represented him at trial, said they would appeal the conviction on the grounds of ineffective counsel during trial.