

investigation and found no evidence to corroborate her allegations and lifted the ban on the fan.

"We remain committed to rooting out racism wherever it is found," the school said.

Rebecca de Schweinitz, an associate professor of history at BYU who teaches African American studies and who is white, said many students of color at BYU identified with what Richardson described because of their own experiences with racism on campus. She also pointed out that some white people used the investigation to attack anti-racist efforts at BYU.

"There were many white people who concluded in the aftermath of the investigation that the charges were all a 'hoax,' and have suggested that the outcome confirms their belief that concern about racism at BYU is overblown," De Schweinitz told USA TODAY Sports via email. "They are using this incident to further attack anti-racism initiatives at BYU.

"That's been super discouraging for many in the campus community. Some black students worry that their experiences with racism at the university are now more likely to be written-off, and that 'rooting out racism,' as the school has recently pledged to do, will take a back-seat to other priorities."

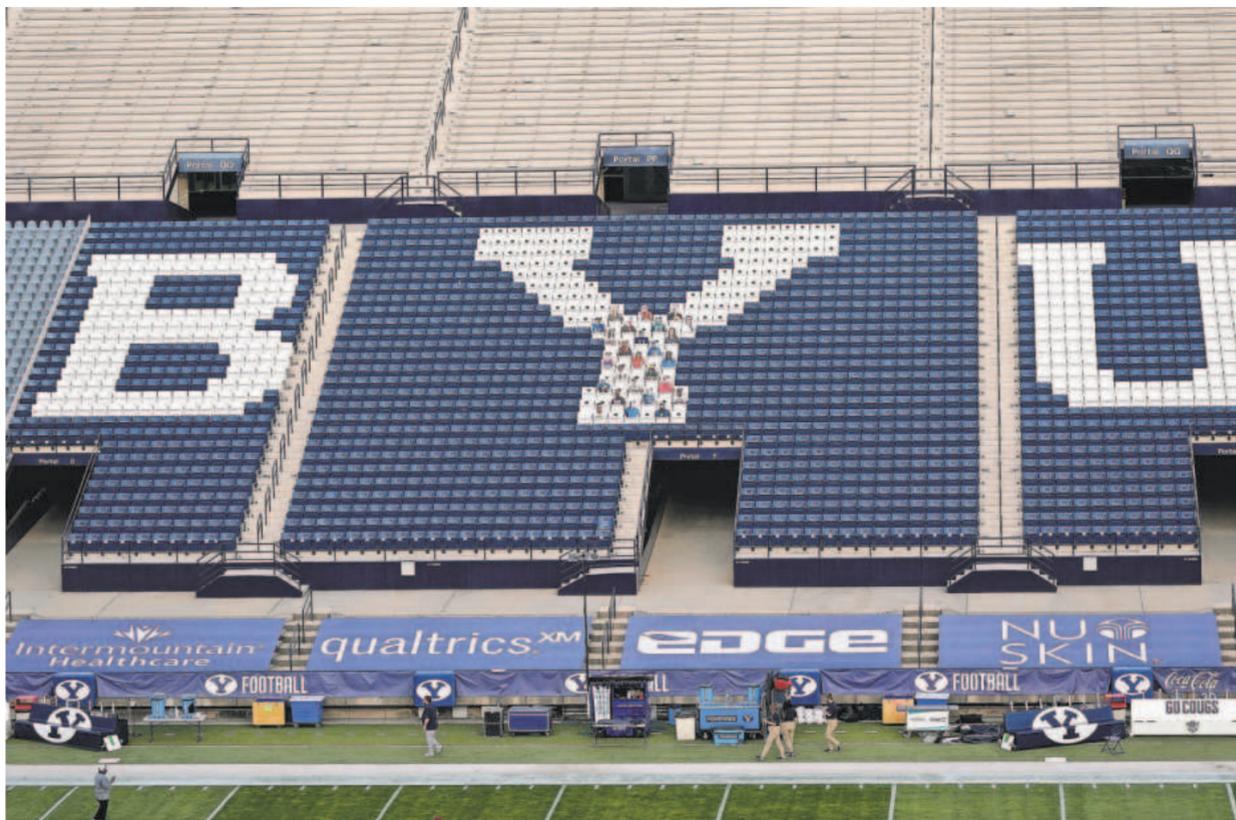
De Schweinitz also said she would have liked to have seen a statement at the end of the BYU investigation that appeared less defensive. But she said she appreciated the university taking steps to investigate the matter.

"I was really pleased to hear about the conversations that BYU's athletic director, Tom Holmoe, had with members of Duke's team, his strong condemnation of racism and expressions of racism, and to see that he, and the University, have put in place some new practices designed to address racist and unsportsmanlike behavior among fans at home games – things like pre-game announcements and videos that promote anti-racism, and a hotline for reporting racist incidents," she said. "Some of that, I think, has gotten lost in all the focus on the specific outcome of BYU's investigation into the incident."

WCC commish: 'I believe Rachel heard what she heard'

In fact, the outcome of the investigation triggered intense reactions.

Richardson's godmother, Lesa Pamplin, called BYU's investigation "a cover-up."



Enrollment at BYU is about 33,000 students, nearly all of whom are Mormon and less than 200 are Black. RICK BOWMER/AP

Critics of Pamplin called Richardson Jussie Smollett 2.0.

Amid the mudslinging, a middle ground emerged.

On Sept. 13, the West Coast Conference – a 10-school athletic conference of which BYU is a member – issued a statement saying it believed BYU had conducted "a transparent and thorough investigation." But the conference also added, "BYU's inability to locate perpetrator(s) does not mean the remarks were not said and does not mean BYU did not put the appropriate resources, time, and effort into their investigation."

Gloria Nevarez, commissioner of the WCC, compared the investigation to those involving sportsmanship or a bad officiating call "in that you rarely find the clean answer or the piece of video that unequivocally answers whether the call was right or not."

"I believe Rachel heard what she heard," Nevarez told USA TODAY Sports, "I also believe BYU conducted a thorough and transparent investigation and could not pinpoint perpetrator or perpetrators. And a lot of folks aren't of the mind that you can have both truths.

"So for me that's a starting place. And what guides me in working with BYU, I really did not feel they were trying to hide the ball. If I had sensed they were conflicted and maybe not doing enough or trying to sweep it under the rug or not going far enough to in questioning witnesses or involving law enforcement, then I would have suggested an outside firm or additional outside review."

"I can't say what they investigated and what they didn't investigate," said Silvia Johnson, director of the Metro Volleyball Club in Washington, D.C., for which Richardson played for about six years. "I can just say I definitely believe Rachel because I know her character.

"Really great kid. Really great family." Richardson is one of six children, including two other sisters who played Division I volleyball. Her mother, Gloria, is a graduate of Howard University, and her father, Marvin, is deputy director of The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Two days after the BYU match, Marvin Richardson spoke to the NBC affiliate in Dallas-Fort Worth and referenced his wife when he said, "We grew up in

Fort Worth during the 1960s and '70s during desegregation. You know, I'm able to share those experiences with my children about what we went through.

"The same hateful rhetoric is still being spewed in 2022, in college athletic arenas? That's not encouraging. But the fact that it is being called out and the fact that it will not exist in the dark is encouraging."

Marvin Richardson did not respond to interview requests from USA TODAY Sports left by voicemail and text message.

Some discussions were taking place in private.

With the image of a volleyball in the background, A Long Talk advertised a Zoom meeting for Sept. 14 entitled, "Let's Talk About ...what happened at the game." There is no recording of the Zoom meeting available on the company's website, no record of who participated or if the meeting addressed not just what happened at the match but also before and after.

It could require a very long talk.
Contributing: Brent Schrottenboer, Mike Freeman

PROFESSIONAL GOLF TOURNAMENT PREVIEWS

DP World Tour (European)

Estrella Damn Andalucía Masters

Course: Real Club Valderrama in Sotogrande, Spain. Yardage: 7,028. Par: 71.

TV (ET): Thursday-Friday, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. (Golf); Saturday-Sunday, 7:30 a.m.-noon (Golf)

Notes: U.S. Open champion Matt Fitzpatrick, the defending champion, leads the field and at No. 10 is the highest-ranked player. ... Ryan Fox of New Zealand is coming off a win two weeks ago in the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship that moved him into the top 25 in the world. ... Sergio Garcia won the Andalucía Masters three straight times. He is playing the LIV Golf Invitational in Saudi Arabia this week. ... Along with cork trees in some fairways, there are a few vistas of the Rock of Gibraltar from the course. ... Two Europeans with PGA Tour cards, Thomas Detry and Matti Schmid, are playing in Spain. They were not eligible for the Zozo Championship this week in Japan.

LIV Golf

LIV Golf Invitational-Jeddah

Course: Royal Greens Golf & CC, King Abdullah Economic City, Saudi Arabia. Yardage: 7,010. Par: 72.

Streaming: 5:15 a.m. ET Friday-Sunday (LivGolf.com)

Notes: This is the seventh and final LIV Golf Invitational event for individual and team play. The final event is strictly about teams. ... Six players have won the six LIV Golf Invitational series – Charl Schwartzel, Branden Grace, Henrik Stenson, Dustin Johnson, Cameron Smith and Eugenio Chacarra. ... Johnson leads the money list with just over \$12.7 million and has clinched the points title for the \$18 million bonus. ... The field includes 27 players who were at the Saudi International in February, including winner Harold Varner III. ... Hudson Swafford has made \$860,000, the least of players who have competed in all six events. ... Johnson's streak of being in the top 10 at every LIV Golf event ended in Bangkok when he tied for 15th.

PGA Tour Champions

SAS Championship

Course: Prestonwood CC in Cary, North Carolina. Yardage: 7,237. Par: 72.

TV (ET): Friday-Sunday, 2-5 p.m. (Golf)

Notes: This is the final tournament before the PGA Tour Champions postseason begins. Steven Alker has a \$178,712 lead over Padraig Harrington for the Charles Schwab Cup. Both are playing. ... Steve Stricker leads the tour with four victories after his win in the Constellation Furyk & Friends. Stricker plans to take off the next month so he can bow hunt for deer at home in Wisconsin. He said he might consider playing the season-ending Charles Schwab Cup Championship. ... Ten players have crossed the \$1 million mark in earnings this season. ... Sponsor exemptions were awarded to Paul Stankowski and John Huston. ... Notah Begay III made his Champions debut last week. – Associated Press

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