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Brooklyn's Poly Prep Covered Up Football Coach's
Sex Abuse: Lawsuit (NBC New York)

In a federal lawsuit, nine men say they were abused by former **football coach** Phil Foglietta from 1966 until the early 1980s.

Brooklyn's Poly Prep Country Day School is coming under fire for its alleged four-decade cover-up of "prolonged and horrific sexual abuse of many of its sons" by its **late iconic football coach, Phil Foglietta**.

In a federal lawsuit, nine men say they were abused by Foglietta from 1966 until the early 1980s, the Daily News reports. **The suit alleges Poly Prep received complaints about Foglietta shortly after he was hired, but did not take action against him because of his coaching success and fundraising prowess for the highly respected 157-year-old school.**

Foglietta might have abused dozens or even hundreds of boys, according to the suit, but top school officials allegedly ignored complaints or threatened to discipline or expel students who reported they were abused.

The plaintiffs are seeking at least \$20 million each in compensatory and punitive damages. One of them is David Hiltbrand, 57, who told the News about an episode in the coaches' locker room shower when he said Foglietta rubbed his shoulders and put his hand between his legs. Hiltbrand jumped away and into scalding water, then saw the coach groping other boys, he said.

"It was so terrifying," Hiltbrand told the paper. "It made me feel like I had done something wrong. I come from a Roman Catholic family and I just knew I was going to hell."

Foglietta was Poly Prep's football coach and a physical education instructor for students between 5th and 12th grades from 1966 until 1991. The school did not renew his contract. He died in 1998. The lawsuit was filed two years ago. School lawyers have filed to dismiss it.

"It would not be appropriate to comment upon specific allegations now pending in a federal court," Headmaster David Harman said in a statement to the News. "The school believes that a lawsuit seeking tens of millions of dollars in damages based on conduct that took place largely in the 1960s and 1970s is not actionable." Herman is a defendant in the suit, along with former headmaster William M. Williams, the school, and various members of its board of trustees.

The case echoes the recent coaching abuse scandals at Penn State and Syracuse University, but Poly Prep officials rejected such comparisons, according to the News.

The iconic coach is not mentioned on the school's website.