An internationally renowned gymnastics coach who sexually abused seven girls as young as six over a 40-year period has walked free from court. Bob Bellew, 66, has published books on gymnastics, taught at schools across the UK and was a former Community Coach of the Year.

He also served on committees planning the 2012 Olympics and was chief coach of the Tower Hamlets Schools gym and dance display team.  Bellew was also awarded the ‘Order of the Smile’, a UN-recognised citation for adults ‘distinguished in their love, care and aid of children’.

But he admitted a string of sexual abuse charges, spanning 40 years, against girls he was tutoring….

She described two sets of allegations, the first in the 1970s, and the second in the 1990s and early 2000s. She said: ‘The offences would not have occurred but for the position of trust held by the defendant as a gymnastics coach, which gave him access to the victims who were young and therefore vulnerable.’

Bellew  was due to stand trial in September after pleading not guilty to a number of offences in April last year.  However, the second set of allegations came to light after the victims read news reports of the pending court case and contacted police.  
Bellew admitted eight of 17 charges against him, involving seven victims as young as six years old….

However in a probation report he backed down from his admissions, denying the touching was sexual and passing the blame onto his victims. His lawyer Barry Kogan said: ‘He has had great difficulty coming to terms with the shame of what he has done, and this is demonstrated by what he has told the probation officer, trying to deny his actions, pass them off as inappropriate not sexual, and blame the victims.’….  
[**http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2307610/Bob-Bellew-Gymnastics-coach-sexually-abused-girls-young-walks-free-court-judge-accepts-remorse-despite-attempts-blame-victims.html**](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2307610/Bob-Bellew-Gymnastics-coach-sexually-abused-girls-young-walks-free-court-judge-accepts-remorse-despite-attempts-blame-victims.html)

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