

SoulCycle accused of firing execs who give birth, blaming it on COVID-19

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By Lisa Fickenscher

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Stephen Ross's SoulCycle has a pattern of firing women who've gotten pregnant — and then blaming it on the coronavirus, according to a new lawsuit.

The popular fitness chain, whose motto is “Your Soul Matters,” fired a veteran executive on April 27, just 32 days after she gave birth, and falsely claimed it was eliminating her job due to the pandemic, according to a lawsuit filed in Manhattan federal court on Tuesday.

Now the executive, Jordan Kafenbaum, is fighting back, claiming that SoulCycle this month named a male executive to her former role as senior director of instructors and talent.

Kafenbaum says she worked for the spinning company for seven years, working her way up the ladder to oversee 400 instructors before her axing. She says she was promised a promotion by her boss last year and that the executive who assumed her former job this month was supposed to report to her once she was promoted.

“Importantly, SoulCycle made such plans for Ms. Kafenbaum before it knew that Ms. Kafenbaum was pregnant,” the suit says.

But the company's attitude towards her noticeably changed after she became pregnant. “Everything changed once that happened,” the suit said.

The spinning company has carried out this same pattern with three other female employees who were terminated shortly after or before they gave birth this year, the suit said. SoulCycle, which didn't immediately return a request for comment, cited the pandemic in each case, the lawsuit said.

SoulCycle was the subject of a boycott last year after Ross, a real estate mogul worth an estimated \$7 billion, held a fundraiser at his Hampton's home for President Trump.