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Kiffin fires back at Raiders

By John Clayton
ESPN.com

Former [Oakland Raiders](#) coach Lane Kiffin fired back at owner Al Davis on Friday night after a letter sent to the University of Tennessee by the Raiders became public. Kiffin filed a grievance with the NFL Coaches Association after he was dismissed in September 2008 for what Davis described as acts of insubordination and lying. Kiffin, who is seeking approximately \$2.6 million of salary he believes he is owed under terms of the remainder of his Raiders contract, is scheduled to give a deposition next week.

But before that could take place, the Raiders sent a three-page letter, dated Jan. 22, 2009, to Tennessee.

The letter, which was first obtained and made public by CBSsports.com, details the Raiders' grievances against Kiffin and accused him of "inducing" assistant coach James Cregg to breach his Raiders contract and leave for Tennessee. The Raiders also want access to Kiffin's employment agreements with the university, which announced Kiffin's hiring Dec. 1.

Kiffin's attorney, Alan Loewinsohn, said Kiffin is confident next week's depositions will show he was fired without cause. "Starting with Al Davis' nationally televised press conference publicizing the firing of Head Coach Lane Kiffin last fall, the Raiders have continued to attack Coach Kiffin in the media," Loewinsohn said in a statement. "That assault continued today, long after he left the Raiders, when the Raiders issued a statement and 'leaked' a letter, a letter they wrote months ago to Coach Kiffin's new employer, the University of Tennessee, in which the Raiders again attacked Coach Kiffin's character.

"Starting next Tuesday at a hotel in Oakland, the Raiders will no longer be able to rely on unsupported allegations made in the media, as a key Raiders personnel, starting with Al Davis, will finally have to answer questions under oath at their depositions, a process that Coach Kiffin is confident will demonstrate that he was fired by the Raiders without cause and show that the continuing assault of allegations being made against him are false."

According to Loewinsohn, Davis is scheduled to be deposed Tuesday. The grievance will be heard by commissioner Roger Goodell.

Among the list of the Raiders' grievances is an allegation that Kiffin gave internal information to opposing teams after he was terminated.

The letter, written by Raiders general counsel Jeff Birren, ended with this: "It cannot be in the best interest of the University to continue to serve as his ally in his personal, though misplaced, war to rewrite the past.

"Please understand that the Raiders intend to vigorously pursue all of its rights and remedies and we will not stand idly by as your employee continues to go out of his way to damage the Raiders."

John Clayton is a senior NFL writer for ESPN.com. Information from The Associated Press was used in this report.

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