

Former youth sports coach gets life sentence for molesting boys

SANTA ANA – A San Clemente man was sentenced to 45 years to life in prison Friday for molesting two preteen boys he met while coaching youth sports.

Cameron Joseph Baca, 29, was convicted by a jury in August of nine counts of lewd acts with a minor, three counts of showing pornography to a minor, and possession of child pornography.

Superior Court Judge David A. Thompson also tacked on a six-year, four-month term for Baca's convictions for an attempted lewd act on a third child, and for showing that victim pornography.

Thompson handed down his sentence after Deputy District Attorney Heather Brown read a victim-impact letter from the parents of one of the victims, who said Baca "manipulated us to believe that he was a loving and kind individual, but he had pure evil intent."

Brown argued for a 135-year to life sentence, contending that no punishment would be severe enough to erase the pain Baca inflicted on the victims and their families.

Brown said Baca would groom his victims by befriending their parents, dropping by their homes unannounced, giving the boys gifts and ultimately showing them pornography.

Baca met his victims — two 11-year-old boys and a 12-year-old boy — between January 2006 and December 2008 while coaching them on football, lacrosse and basketball teams in San Juan Capistrano, San Clemente and Dana Point.

He admitted in his testimony that he molested one victim but denied sexual contact with the others.

Defense attorney Ronald MacGregor requested a more lenient sentence, arguing that it was unfair that Baca was getting more time than some murderers.