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By Kevin Johnson, USA TODAY

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## **Sandusky faces life in prison after conviction on 45 charges**

BELLEFONTE, Pa. – Shortly after he arrived at the courthouse here to learn the verdict of a jury weighing the 48 child sex abuse charges lodged against him, Jerry Sandusky's attorney said he attempted to prepare his client for the almost certain prospect that he would not be going home.

Attorney Joe Amendola said he told the former Penn State University assistant football coach, while the two waited to be ushered into a packed courtroom late Friday night, that it was "more than likely" that the 68-year-old defendant — once celebrated for his collegiate football coaching prowess and nationally acclaimed for his role in founding a charity for troubled children — would be convicted on at least some of the criminal counts.

Despite those warnings, Sandusky's face appeared to turn blank as a cascade of guilty verdicts — 45 in all — were read by the jury foreman, standing only a few yards away.

As the prosecution's overwhelming victory began to wash over the courtroom gallery, one of the coach's victims who offered wrenching testimony of Sandusky's abuse during the seven-day trial wept quietly.

On the other side of the room, where Sandusky's wife, Dottie, sat with her family, each pronouncement of "guilty" seemed to land like a hammer.

When it was over, Sandusky, offering a slight wave to his wife, was ushered out of the courtroom in the custody of sheriff's deputies to begin what his attorney said will likely be a life prison sentence.

Judge John Cleland, who told Sandusky that he had been "convicted by a jury of your peers," said formal sentencing would take place in 90 days.

In developments Saturday:

- Sandusky's lawyers said they asked to resign the case on the eve of trial but the judge turned them down. Defense attorney Karl Rominger said he and co-counsel Joe Amendola made the motion as jury selection began but Judge John Cleland ruled against it. Rominger says the exchange took place in chambers and the motion was filed under seal.

- A juror said the credibility of the accusers who testified at the trial solidified the case against Sandusky. Joshua Harper told NBC's Today show, "It's hard to judge character on the stand because you don't know these kids. But most were very credible — I would say all. It was very convincing."

Sandusky's own impassivity as the verdict was read was also a confirmation that the jury's decision was the right one, Harper said. Sandusky appeared to be accepting his fate, Harper said, "because he knew it was true."

- Sandusky is one of 272 inmates at the Centre County Correctional Facility, just seven miles from the Penn State campus, and was kept under watch overnight. A jail spokesman would not say whether anyone had come to see him Saturday.

On Friday, the jury of seven women and five men concluded more than 20 hours of deliberations over the course of two days before reaching the decisions that triggered a thunderous celebration outside, where hundreds of spectators had gathered on the century-old courthouse steps. Some of them, accompanied by their children, waved homemade signs expressing their appreciation for a jury that included eight members who had deep ties to either Penn State or were familiar with some of the witnesses in the case.

The reaction was similar in nearby State College, the home of Penn State University and a powerful football program that Sandusky helped build.

An overflow crowd at Bill Pickle's tap room in downtown State College erupted in cheers with the announcement that Sandusky had been found guilty. Patrons had gathered around the bar's five TV sets, all of which were tuned to the cable news broadcast.

Outside, the usually bustling campus town was relatively quiet, with the first summer school session having just ended and many students back home.

Penn State graduate Thomas Wardrop, 22, said, "For both Penn State and State College it's important to have closure to an event that brought so much negative light.

"Now that we have reached this step," he said, "we can begin to address the issues that preceded this and build upon it both as a college and a community to improve and make sure that things like these don't happen again."

Audrey Leonard, 22, of Oakton, Va., who graduated last month, said: "With everything that this man has put the community, college and especially the victims through — I think any other verdict would be unfathomable."

In a statement released after the verdict was announced, the university said it wants to move quickly to see that victims in the case are compensated.

"Now that the jury has spoken, the university wants to continue that dialogue and do its part to help victims continue their path forward," it said. "To that end, the university plans to invite victims of Mr. Sandusky's abuse to participate in a program to facilitate the resolution of claims against the university arising out of Mr. Sandusky's conduct.

"The purpose of the program is simple - the university wants to provide a forum where the university can privately, expeditiously and fairly address the victims' concerns and compensate them for claims relating to the university."

Addressing the crowd gathered on the Bellefonte courthouse square, Amendola said that his client's attempt to "climb Mount Everest" had failed. "We just didn't make it," Amendola said.

"There was a tidal wave of public opinion against Jerry Sandusky."

Amendola, however, was angrily shouted down by the crowd when he suggested that his client may have been wrongly convicted. "There are a lot of people sitting in jails around the country who are innocent," the attorney said, adding that Sandusky would appeal.

Pennsylvania Attorney General Linda Kelly, surrounded by the prosecution team, described Sandusky as a "serial child predator who committed horrific acts."

"Now," Kelly said, "he is being held accountable for his crimes."

Kelly said the verdicts represented an "overwhelming" affirmation for the eight victims who testified at trial and the witnesses who described abuse against two other victims who have never been found by investigators.

"Most of us can not comprehend what they have endured," she said. "We hope our search for justice helps the victims and others."

**An attorney who represents one of Sandusky's victims who testified during the trial said that his client is "grateful."**

**"He is gratified that there are people in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania who took this seriously," attorney Tom Kline said. "This has been very, very difficult for him. There is something deep in his soul that has suffered an horrific injury."**

The jury sustained convictions on charges involving all 10 victims, including some of the most disputed charges involving a 2001 assault of a young boy witnessed by Penn State football assistant Michael McQueary, whose accounts of the incident were strongly challenged. While the jury found Sandusky not guilty of sodomizing the boy, the panel returned guilty verdicts on four other related counts, including indecent assault.

The incident, perhaps the most explosive in the criminal case, ultimately led to the ouster of Penn State University President Graham Spanier and head football coach Joe Paterno. The incident also is at the heart of a related perjury prosecution against Athletic Director Tim Curley and retired university Senior Vice President Gary Schultz. Both are accused of lying to a grand jury when they testified that McQueary's initial report of the incident did not include an account of sexual conduct by Sandusky. Both men have denied any wrongdoing, as they await trial. Paterno, who was never charged, first reported McQueary's allegations to Curley and Schultz. Before he died in January, Paterno suggested he should have done more to pursue the allegations.

The trial's conclusion also seemed to resolve questions about why Sandusky did not testify on his own behalf, after Amendola signaled in opening statements that the jury would hear directly from the former coach.

Amendola said he elected not to call Sandusky after the defense was threatened with the prospect that one of Sandusky's own adopted sons would testify against him.

The attorney for Matt Sandusky, 33, issued a statement Thursday, claiming Sandusky also had been abused by his father and was prepared to testify for the prosecution.

Amendola said the younger Sandusky met with prosecutors after they had presented their case and as defense lawyers weighed the possibility of calling the former coach to testify.

Defense lawyers did not call Sandusky, Amendola said, because prosecutors could have offered Matt Sandusky as a rebuttal witness to counter his father's testimony. Amendola said the family was "crushed" by the son's action. The attorney said that Matt Sandusky had been listed on the defense witness list and had been seated with the family during the start of the trial.

In the end, he was not called by either side.

The jury's decision came nearly four years after a wide-ranging criminal investigation was launched and seven months after the first of the 48 charges were announced, detailing abuse involving 10 victims over a 15-year period.

Eight of the victims testified during the trial, providing often graphic accounts of abuse, ranging from fondling to forced oral sex and sodomy.

One of the victims recalled how he screamed for help while Sandusky allegedly assaulted him in the basement bedroom of the coach's State College, Pa., home.

In closing arguments earlier Thursday, lead prosecutor Joe McGettigan said Sandusky "accommodated" children to "sexual touch."

"He displayed the full spectrum of predatory pedophile behavior," he said, referring to previous testimony from victims who said their contact with Sandusky routinely began with the former coach putting his hand on their legs during car rides.

In a voice barely audible in the courtroom, McGettigan concluded his argument saying: "I feel like I have 10 souls in my pocket."

He then marched to the defense table and stood beside the defendant, who appeared to be startled by the move.

"You can't give them back the pieces of the souls he took," McGettigan said, as two of the alleged victims watched from the front row.

"Find him guilty of everything. Give him the justice he really deserves," McGettigan said.

Earlier, Sandusky attorney Amendola said the charges against his client came from alleged victims who sought financial gain for their testimony and who were improperly coached by police investigators.

"The system decided that Mr. Sandusky was guilty and the system set out to convict him," Amendola said, referring to police investigators and the prosecution.

Sandusky was an assistant coach at Penn State from 1967 to 1999, during which time Penn State won two national championships and was nicknamed "Linebacker U" because it kept churning out All-American defensive players like LaVar Arrington, Matt Millen and Lance Mehl. Sandusky was the defensive line coach, then linebackers coach, then defensive coordinator of the iconic defense.

Sandusky was, at one point, the heir apparent to Paterno. And indeed, their names will forever remain linked - because of Sandusky's role in the scandal that stained the university's reputation.

The Paterno family released a statement after the verdict, saying: "Although we understand the task of healing is just beginning, today's verdict is an important milestone. The community owes a measure of gratitude to the jurors for their diligent service. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with the victims and their families."