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Defense rests without Sandusky taking the stand

BELLEFONTE, Pa. The key event in the trial of Jerry Sandusky on Wednesday was not something that happened, but something that did not:

His lawyers ended their defense without calling the former Pennsylvania State University football coach to the stand, foregoing the chance for him to try to rebut the devastating testimony from eight men who graphically described how he sexually abused them as boys.

Closing arguments begin Thursday at 9 a.m.

For more than two weeks, even as the jury was being picked, speculation has risen over whether Sandusky, 68, would speak in his own defense - a high-risk, potentially high-reward gambit. That focus grew more intense as one by one the alleged victims described fondling, anal rape and forced oral sex at the hands of the man they once regarded as a caring mentor and even a substitute father.

Defense attorney Karl Rominger declined to say why his client did not take the stand, citing the gag order imposed by the court.

"We can't talk," he said.

Sandusky sat quietly as the defense ended its case and attorneys gathered up books and folders. He has shown virtually no emotion during the trial.

In interviews, attorneys for two of the victims were incredulous that Sandusky would not testify, particularly after granting interviews to two national news organizations.

"While an accused has the right not to testify, it cannot possibly escape the jury's attention that the same man who gave an interview to a national television audience would not come into the courtroom, and look them in the eyes, and face cross examination," said Thomas

Kline, who represents the man known as Victim 5. "Mr. Sandusky gave up the opportunity to confront all of the charges, which were left almost unrefuted at the close of the evidence."

Attorney Slade McLaughlin, who represents Victim One, wondered what Sandusky was thinking.

"What does he have to lose at this point? It's fourth and long and he's way down on the scoreboard," McLaughlin said.

Earlier in the day, the defense made some of its only headway: A family friend of prosecution witness Mike McQueary contradicted the former Penn State assistant football coach, saying McQueary never expressly said he saw Jerry Sandusky sodomizing a boy in the locker-room showers.

"Each time I would ask, 'What did you see, what did you see?' testified Dr. John Dranov, of Boalsburg, Pa. "And he kept coming back to the sounds."

Both men, McQueary last week and Dranov on Wednesday, testified that father John McQueary had called Dranov to his house late on a Friday night in 2001, after the younger McQueary reported having inadvertently stumbled into a traumatic scene.

McQueary swore on the stand that he specifically told his father and the doctor that he had witnessed something sexual, disturbing and wrong when he arrived in the locker room.

But Dranov said McQueary never specifically said he had witnessed a sex act. The younger man, terribly upset, his voice shaking and hands trembling, said he had heard "sexual sounds," Dranov said.

Dranov said he asked, "Mike, what do you mean?"

"Sexual sounds, you know what they are," McQueary responded.

"No, I don't," Dranov said he answered.

McQueary, the doctor testified, related that he had looked into the showers and seen a boy. A moment later "an arm reached out and pulled the boy back."

A man stepped out of the shower - it was Sandusky, the physician testified.

The testimony cuts in two ways: One, whether McQueary actually saw a sex act, and whether he accurately reported it to others, including revered and now deceased Penn State coach Joe Paterno. Two, whether the jury can believe McQueary's testimony about what he said he saw.

Defense lawyer Rominger asked the doctor: "Did he describe seeing any particular sex act?"

"No," Dranov answered, "he did not. Did he give me any graphic description? He did not."

Still, he said, "It was clear in Mike's mind this was an incident that should be reported."

Sandusky, accused of molesting 10 boys during 15 years, on Wednesday got support from two former Second Mile youths said they knew him well - and he never touched them inappropriately.

David Hilton, 21, testified that he grew tired of repeated police interviews and questions about the allegations. He got the impression the investigators wanted to hear certain answers, warning that he could be prosecuted for not telling the truth, he said.

"They wanted me to say something," Hilton said, "that wasn't true."