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Penn State Faces Years in Court

STATE COLLEGE, Pa.—Legal attention here is shifting from Jerry Sandusky to criminal cases against two former Pennsylvania State University administrators and civil litigation against the school, cases that could drag on for years.

Mr. Sandusky's lawyers said this weekend they plan to file an appeal on his conviction on 45 counts related to child-sex abuse, arguing they didn't have enough time to prepare. "We felt rushed to trial," said Karl Rominger, a defense attorney. Such an appeal could take six to eight months to file.

Some legal experts questioned whether an appeal would be successful, saying that while the case came to trial relatively quickly, judges have wide discretion for setting the trial's pace and said that Judge John Cleland's handling of the case was even-handed. "The conduct of Judge Cleland during the trial was absolutely impeccable," said Wes Oliver, a professor at Widener Law school in Harrisburg who watched the trial from the courtroom.

A juror in the case said the verdict was never in doubt and that the strong testimony of the eight young men who testified against Mr. Sandusky overwhelmed defense arguments that the men made false accusations. "I didn't see any hint that they (the young men) weren't telling the truth," said Joshua Harper, a 31-year-old high school chemistry and physics teacher who sat on the jury.

At the same time, he said Mr. Sandusky's demeanor watching the young men testify about painful abuse appeared almost wistful at times. "It was just completely not the right reaction to the victims," he said.

The university issued a statement Friday night saying it planned to invite victims of Mr. Sandusky's abuse to participate in an effort "to facilitate the resolution of claims against the University arising out of Mr. Sandusky's conduct."

Legal experts said more cases will likely be filed quickly, as attorneys seek to use current public attention to pressure Penn State in particular to reach settlements. **"The focus shifted back to Penn State at the moment of this verdict," said Tom Kline, a Philadelphia attorney who represents a 23-year-old man known as Victim 5.** The young man testified that Mr. Sandusky pressed up against him and touched his genitals while they were showering in a Penn State athletic facility on one occasion in 2001.

Mr. Kline declined to say when he might file lawsuits on behalf of the young man. He said he wanted to first read the report into Penn State's handling of prior allegations against Mr. Sandusky being done by former Federal Bureau of Investigation director Louis Freeh, at the request of the university trustees.

So far, one lawsuit has been filed against Penn State, the Second Mile and Mr. Sandusky in Philadelphia County Common Pleas Court. Travis Weaver, who was not among the accusers in the criminal case, is referred to as John Doe in that case. Mr. Weaver discussed allegations last week on NBC that he was sexually abused by Mr. Sandusky between 1992 and 1996, beginning when he was 10.

The defendants haven't formally responded to allegations in Mr. Weaver's suit. However, Penn State and Second Mile have said they are cooperating with the attorney general's investigation, and Mr. Sandusky's lawyer said after the jury reached its verdict that Mr. Sandusky continued to maintain his innocence.

Jeff Anderson, Mr. Weaver's attorney, said he plans to begin filing requests for evidence from the defendants in the civil suit "right away." He said he represents two other men who allege they were also abused by Mr. Sandusky and weren't part of the criminal case.

Still unresolved are charges against Gary Schultz, Penn State's former vice president of business administration, and Tim Curley, the university's former athletic director, who await trial on one count each of perjury and failing to report an alleged instance of child-sex abuse in a Penn State athletic-facility shower in 2001. The men have pleaded not guilty. A hearing on the case is scheduled for July 11.

Prosecutors recently announced the discovery of emails between the two administrators and former President Graham Spanier that prosecutors said show the men discussing how to respond to the 2001 shower incident. Mr. Spanier, who was ousted by Penn State's trustees in November, continues to draw a salary. No criminal charges have been filed against him. Mr. Spanier couldn't be reached for comment