

By Kevin Johnson
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Claimants in Sandusky case could number as high as 30

WASHINGTON -- Penn State has received settlement demands or offers from representatives of at least 25 possible victims of alleged abuse involving former assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky, said a lawyer hired by the school to handle the abuse claims.

Attorney Ken Feinberg said the information was turned over to Penn State officials late last week for decisions on how the claims would be resolved.

Feinberg declined to characterize the demands or elaborate on the discussions with victims' attorneys.

He said there was no time frame for a decision by the university.

The number of possible claimants could run as high as 30, far more than the 10 victims whose abuse was at the center of Sandusky's criminal trial, in which the former coach was convicted on 45 counts involving the 10 victims during a period of 15 years.

The settlement discussions come as representatives of the family of Joe Paterno, the university's iconic former head football coach, disputed findings of a July university report that concluded Paterno and other Penn State officials concealed information about Sandusky's activities.

Paterno died in January 2012, more than two months after the criminal charges against Sandusky were made public. Paterno, 85, was never charged in the case.

Slade McLaughlin, one of the attorneys representing Aaron Fisher, the victim who prompted the criminal inquiry leading to Sandusky's conviction, said communications with Feinberg have been "cordial and encouraging."

"We have met numerous times, and seemed to make a bit more progress towards resolution on each occasion," McLaughlin said. "We are looking forward to a final meeting to see if an agreement can be reached to resolve our cases."

Tom Kline, an attorney representing a victim designated at Sandusky's trial as "Victim 5," said negotiations are at "delicate and sensitive stage and best private between various parties and PSU."

"Public statements pertaining to demands and offers, in my view, do not advance Penn State's end game of

settling the claims globally," he said.