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Former Penn State assistant Jerry Sandusky to be sentenced Oct. 9 in child sex abuse scandal

There's little doubt former Penn State assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky faces a long prison sentence. In a few weeks, he'll find out just how long.

A judge announced Monday he will sentence Sandusky on Oct. 9, nearly four months after Sandusky was convicted in the child molestation scandal that brought shame to Penn State.

Sandusky was convicted in June of 45 counts of sex abuse involving 10 boys. Prosecutors said some of the assaults took place on the Penn State campus.

The 68-year-old Sandusky, given his age and the serious nature of the crimes, is likely to receive a sentence that will keep him in prison for life. He is jailed pending sentencing and maintains his innocence.

Judge John Cleland scheduled a morning hearing at the courthouse in Bellefonte to determine if Sandusky should be classified as a sexually violent predator, a designation that subjects a convict to intense reporting requirements upon release. An assessment board has recommended Sandusky for the designation, though it's expected to have little practical effect since he stands to die in prison.

Sandusky will be sentenced immediately after the hearing. The judge ordered defense attorneys and prosecutors to submit written statements "intended to aid the court in the imposition of sentence" by Oct. 5.

Sandusky's attorney Joe Amendola said his client might make a statement at the hearing.

"Jerry remains in relatively good spirits and has spent most of his time in custody preparing for his sentencing and his appeal," Amendola said via email.

Attorney Tom Kline, representing a young man who testified during Sandusky's trial that he was fondled in a school shower in 2001, said Monday he expects his client either to testify at sentencing or to supply a statement to the court.

"We expect to provide what is requested by the attorney general's office to assure justice is achieved in Mr. Sandusky's sentencing," Kline said in an email.

Attorney general's office spokesman Nils Frederiksen said prosecutors will make a sentencing recommendation to the judge.

Also Monday, two former Penn State administrators facing charges related to the sex abuse scandal asked a judge to be tried separately.

Defense lawyers are seeking to split the criminal cases against former athletic director Tim Curley and retired vice president Gary Schultz.

Curley and Schultz are charged in Dauphin County with failing to report suspected child abuse and lying to a grand jury. They have pleaded not guilty and face a January trial.

A spokesman for the attorney general's office declined to comment on the defense motions. Prosecutors have until Oct. 1 to file a response with the court.

In the Sandusky case, a long sentence, like a conviction, can help victims feel they were believed, said Kristen Houser, a spokeswoman for the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape. But she added that justice achieved through the court system is not a cure-all.

"Having him convicted and having him sentenced does not alter one iota the daily baggage that he inflicted upon them that they have to figure out how to manage every day for the rest of their lives," she said.

The abuse scandal touched off by Sandusky's Nov. 5 arrest rocked Penn State, bringing down famed coach Joe Paterno and the university's president and leading the NCAA to levy unprecedented sanctions against the university's football program.

Former FBI Director Louis Freeh, hired by school trustees to conduct an investigation into the university's handling of abuse complaints against Sandusky, concluded that Paterno, ousted President Graham Spanier, Curley and Schultz concealed a 2001 allegation against Sandusky to protect Penn State from bad publicity.

The late coach's family, as well as Spanier, Curley and Schultz, have hotly disputed Freeh's assertions.

Some alumni groups have also attacked the Freeh report and said Penn State and the NCAA should not have accepted its conclusions.

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