

By *Jeremy Roebuck*
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Sandusky accusers' attorneys say settlements by Dec. 31 unlikely

(The following was excerpted from *The Philadelphia Inquirer*)

Pennsylvania State University's goal of settling claims from Jerry Sandusky's sexual-abuse victims before the end of the year now appears unrealistic, attorneys for several of the former assistant football coach's accusers said this week.

With less than four weeks to go, the attorneys characterized talks as still in preliminary stages, with the college's negotiators continuing to gather facts and fielding new claims.

"It's possible, but I think it's becoming less and less so, because there's still a significant way to go," said Tom Kline, a Philadelphia lawyer representing the 26-year-old known in court filings as Victim 5.

Still, several of the accusers' attorneys noted, the tenor of discussion has been encouraging.

... University officials declined to specifically address their self-imposed deadline but said they were committed to the ongoing negotiations.

"We certainly hope to reach settlements as soon as possible," university spokesman David La Torre said in an e-mail. "But our priority is working to ensure the process is done in a way that respects the victims."

More than 20 young men have come forward seeking compensation for abuse they say they endured at Sandusky's hand, including eight who testified against the former coach at trial.

Their claims range from a one-time groping in a hotel pool to years of sustained sexual assault.

University officials have not publicly indicated how much they may be willing to offer accusers. Legal analysts have estimated that Penn State's legal liability could exceed \$100 million should the cases go to trial.

Over the last two months, the university's negotiators, Kenneth Feinberg and Michael Rozen, have met with lawyers representing the accusers, some as many as three or four times, to gather information and develop a criteria for eventual settlement offers. Potential dollar figures have yet to be discussed, several lawyers representing the accusers said.

Sandusky, 68, was sentenced in October to a minimum of 30 years for abusing 10 boys over a period of 15 years. Much of that abuse occurred on Penn State's campus.

Three former administrators, including ousted university president Graham B. Spanier, await trial on charges they ignored early allegations of abuse for fear of damaging Penn State's reputation. All three have denied the charges.