

UI Vandal football players defend Petrino, coaching staff

Anonymous accusations sent to team, media by email

Michael-Shawn Dugar/Moscow-Pullman Daily News

An anonymous email sent out Monday afternoon alleging excessive vulgar verbal reprimanding, unequal treatment and NCAA practice violations on the part of Idaho coach Paul Petrino and his staff was quickly dismissed by the Vandal players.

The email, delivered to members of the football team, athletic department and local media, includes accusations from an unnamed individual who identified himself as a member of the team using the screen name "Joe Adams."

There is no such player listed on the UI roster.

Shortly after the email was sent out, the team released the following statement: "This email did not come from anyone on the University of Idaho football team. It contains significant libelous/slandorous material. There is not anyone named Joe Adams associated with the University of Idaho Athletic Department."

Among the many accusations were the claims Petrino and his staff frequently use demeaning language when addressing the players and conducted more two-a-day practices during fall camp than the NCAA permits, which the anonymous sender of the email says is the reason the team lost its Sept. 3 season opener against Ohio.

"Petrino and his staff are hurting the players rather than building them up," the email reads. "Also I believe if fall camp wasn't a month long we would have beaten Ohio. We played good during the first half and the second half our legs was gone due to days before we scrimmaged like usual live (tackling) at practice."

The Daily News received an email hours later from Dallas Sandberg, a senior offensive lineman and one of the team's seven captains. Sandberg's email included a PDF with a statement from the captains, rejecting the notions alleged by Joe Adams.

"In response to the previous letter sent out about our team, we players and captains want it to be known that we stand behind our coaches 100 percent," the statement reads. "We do not support any of these accusations. In fact they are completely false. We are fully confident that everything Coach Paul Petrino does is in the best interest of the team. His goal is not to only better us as players, but build great individual men."

The statement, signed "The Vandal Football Team" - and including signatures of about 50 players - says the coaches do not personally attack the players and "they praise us for our good performance."

"Every coach in this program cares for their players as if they were their own sons. They want to see this program succeed and do everything in their power to do so. We as a team are going to put this issue behind us. We look forward to preparing for the rest of the season under the guidance Coach Paul Petrino, his staff and the entire Vandal family."

Petrino, who has yet to respond directly to the allegations, will hold his weekly media session at noon today.

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