

# Our View: Have we fumbled on third down and goal to go?

Lee Rozen/Moscow-Pullman Daily News

This fall, the Daily News has reported on three off-field events in the University of Idaho football program.

- Coach Paul Petrino chased after two reporters after a practice and got so riled up at them about what they were writing that another coach felt compelled to physically encourage Petrino to back off.
- Football players shoplifted items from the VandalStore, were disciplined for it by the team but weren't prosecuted - as other students have been in similar situations - and the university tried to keep the details from the press.
- On Monday, 50 or so members of the football team sent an unusual email to the Daily News defending their coaches against the rambling but fairly specific allegations in a long pseudonymous email sent out a few hours earlier criticizing the program. Petrino addressed it at his press conference the next day.

The Daily News, specifically its Vandal sports beat writer, sports editor Michael-Shawn Dugar, has reported on all three incidents.

Long-suffering Vandal boosters seem to have decided after each of these stories that the Daily News, specifically Dugar, has some sort of vendetta against Petrino, Athletic Director Rob Spear and the football team.

Well, by golly, we deny it.

We thought it was news that:

- The football coach got so worked up over what was written about the team, that Dugar felt physically threatened. Petrino apologized the next day.
- Shoplifting players - particularly Dezmon Epps who had been in trouble with the law here on several other occasions - were not prosecuted.
- Despite a few naysayers about Petrino's style - none of whom are willing to come forward - the majority of the team supported their coaches strongly enough that they could be rounded up to sign a statement to that effect in a few hours on a day they weren't even practicing.

Some boosters don't see it that way, at least initially. A few make veiled threats of economic repercussions against the newspaper for writing these stories.

Like most local sports fans, we would like to see more Vandal football victories, which would really give the boosters something to shout about. But a winning program will take money - from the boosters most likely.