

Still looking for someone to step up and take responsibility

Lee Rozen/Moscow-Pullman Daily News

Washington State University's Mike Leach, both as a top-level football coach and a human being, has a carefully cultivated mystique.

He presents himself as a world-class jerk to the sportswriters who cover him, his team and his players.

Yet, he walks home to his Pullman neighborhood from Martin Stadium many days, stopping to chat with residents along the way.

He'll put all the failures of a losing game on his players, taking none on himself for pregame preparation or in-game decisions.

Then, he'll defend those same players against actions that seem indefensible when they're accused of assault - in one case against a woman - and theft. He'll keep playing them even after they're expelled for these actions.

Most such accusations aren't formal yet, nor has one player exhausted his appeal of the expulsion.

Instead, Leach blames the media for exaggerating the police reports, and the Pullman police for targeting, not in the NCAA helmet-to-helmet sense, but in picking on his players because they are bigger and better known. Athletic director Bill Moos also says "they look different."

Is Moos accusing police and other students of being racist?

Leach certainly isn't taking responsibility for what these players did - or didn't do.

The Spokesman-Review reported Sunday the 29 football player arrests during Leach's tenure is the country's highest - more arrests than wins. It also reported that most of these were for minor things, 16 of which were dismissed or not prosecuted.

It isn't easy to pinpoint why this has been happening. What's different here? The players, the location, the police, the coaching staff, the fans? The media?

It's very difficult to argue that any or all of those factors are very different from dozens of other institutions of higher athletics across the U.S.

Still, eventually, someone will have to be found who is responsible.

The Spokesman-Review is reporting WSU President Kirk Schulz, in his first words on the issue, said Monday he plans to sit down with Moos and Leach after the season - and only after the season - to ask, "Hey, is what we're doing working?"