

SPECIAL REPORT

With four felony arrests in the past month, the WSU football program is gaining national notoriety off the field

DARK DAYS ON THE PALOUSE



The number of arrests leads the nation, but school officials say an overzealous police department targets players

By Thomas Clouse
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PULLMAN – On Thursday, Washington State University football star Robert Barber was expelled from school. A day later, the athlete was arrested by Pullman police on felony assault charges.

And at a key moment in Saturday’s game against Idaho, Barber – who is allowed to play while appealing his expulsion – blocked a field-goal attempt that resulted in a 72-yard touchdown return, completely shifting the game’s momentum in the Cougars’ favor.

But it’s the momentum that is building off the field, with 29 player arrests in the past four-plus seasons under coach Mike Leach – including two arrests Friday for alleged felony assault – that has WSU answering more

questions about the hits players are delivering at parties than the ones they are delivering on the football field.

The 29 arrests with Leach as coach is a number that leads all NCAA Division I schools. In that same time frame, the Cougars have won 22 games.

The majority of arrests were for small matters that probably wouldn’t attract the notice of police in bigger cities – a minor in possession of alcohol the day before his 21st birthday, for example, or throwing a snowball through a window. Charges have been dismissed in 16

See WSU ARRESTS, A10

MOST RECENT WSU ATHLETE ARRESTS

A FIGHT AT DOMINO’S PIZZA



Luani

AUG. 24: Shalom Luani was arrested on felony charges of second-degree assault in connection with an altercation that occurred at a local Domino’s Pizza.

STOLEN BEER



Tago

SEPT. 12: Logan Tago was arrested on felony charges of second-degree assault and robbery in connection with a reported assault and theft of beer June 4.

HOUSE PARTY BRAWL



Barber



Fehoko

SEPT. 16: Robert Barber and T.J. Fehoko were both arrested on charges of second-degree assault in connection with a July 23 altercation at a house party.

PHOTO BY TYLER TJOMSLAND tylerc@spokesman.com

Knezovich blasts Shea claim linking Sheriff’s Office to triple homicide



Rep. Matt Shea, R-Spokane Valley

By Pia Hallenberg
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A state legislator’s claim that a fiery triple homicide north of Spokane is connected to the Spokane County Sheriff’s Office drew a furious rebuke and threat of political payback by Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich.

Rep. Matt Shea’s assertions – based on rumors and writings by critics of the sheriff – prompted Knezovich to call on fellow GOP officials and political hopefuls to disavow the controversial Shea or he will yank his election endorsements.

Shea represents Spokane Valley in the state Legislature

and is a favorite of the tea party and far-right-leaning groups. He jumped into the national fray on issues including support for the ill-fated occupation of the Malheur Wildlife Refuge in Oregon. The establishment wing of the GOP has failed in at

See SHEA, A9

UNUSUAL PETS SLITHER TO TOWN

Spokane’s first Reptile and Exotic Pet Expo brings some scaly critters a little closer.

NORTHWEST, B1

PAUL TURNER PITCHES AN IDEA

Baseball or football? Playing catch, maybe the ball doesn’t matter as much as the quality time spent. TODAY, D1



Mostly sunny
▲ 70 ▼ 43

- » NorthwestB1
- » ClassifiedsF1
- » OutdoorsC14
- » LotteriesA2
- » MoviesD4
- » ObituariesB4
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FROM THE FRONT PAGE
SPOKESMAN-REVIEW SPECIAL REPORT

List of tussles, injuries grows longer

WSU ARRESTS

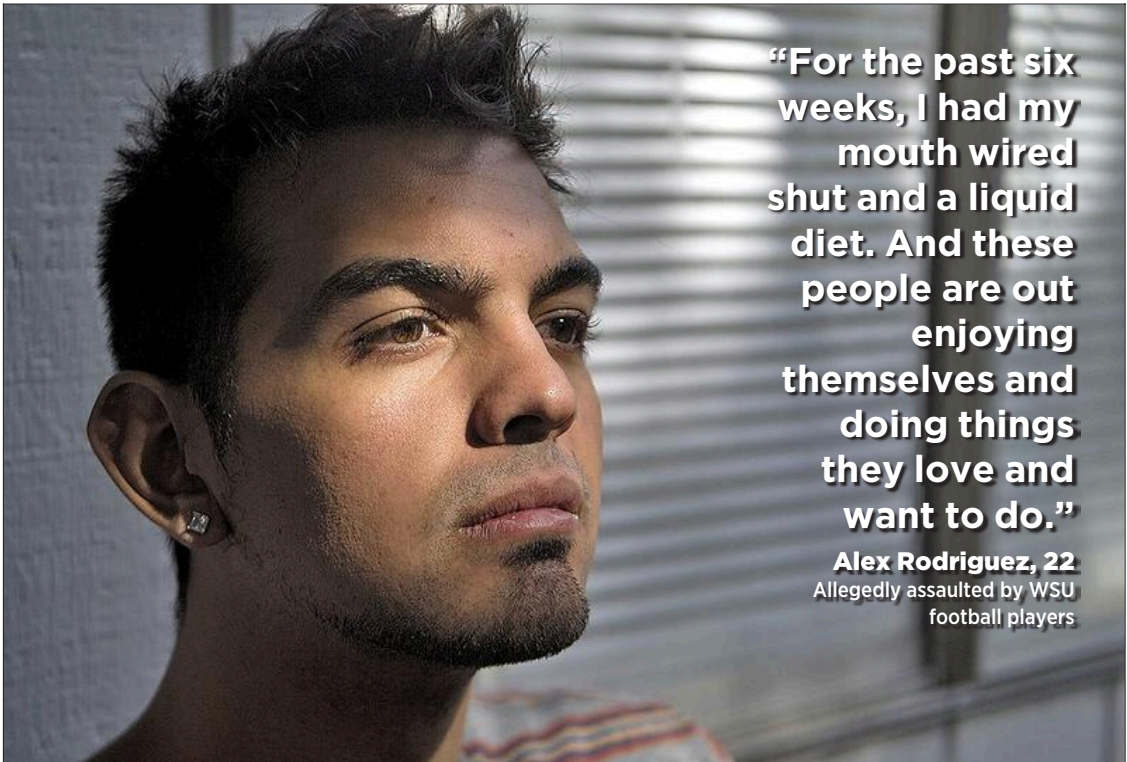
Continued from A1

of the 29 arrests under Leach. And Leach and athletic director Bill Moos argue players are unfairly targeted in a town where they're local celebrities, recognized on sight by many of the 20,000 students. But there are also disturbing stories: the young woman who was punched by a player, knocked out cold with a concussion and less than a month later committed suicide. The young fan who never missed a football game in his years at Wazzu, then was allegedly kicked in the jaw by a player when he tried to break up a house party. A walk-on football player who was punched by a teammate – and ended up paying \$2,000 out of pocket for his medical treatment. Leach responded angrily this week – with his anger directed at the news media and Pullman police.

“The (legal) system has to be checked if with the number of people involved in these incidents, the only ones accused are football players. If that's the case, then something is seriously wrong, which goes far deeper than what ever has even been alleged,” the coach said at a news conference. A summit at the end of the week involving Moos, Pullman police Chief Gary Jenkins and WSU President Kirk Schulz produced more soothing words of cooperation and ensuring “fairness is given to all involved.”

FOUR FELONY ARRESTS IN THE PAST MONTH

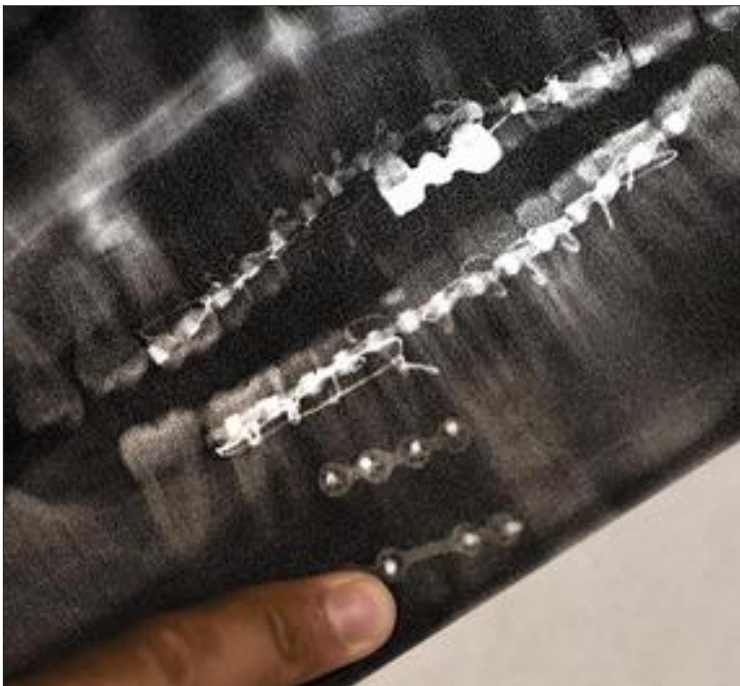
The string of four felony assault arrests in the past month sparked the intense scrutiny of WSU's program. Suddenly, the Cougars were national news, even a topic on ESPN's “Outside the Lines,” but not for their heroics on the field. Far from it. Defensive linemen Robert Barber, 22, and T.J. Fehoko, 19, were both arrested Friday on charges of second-degree assault in connection with an altercation July 23 in Pullman that left one student, Jackson Raney, with a concussion and a second, Alex Rodriguez, with a broken jaw. Earlier in the week, linebacker Logan Tago was arrested on suspicion of felony assault and robbery after he admitted to police that on June 4 he assaulted a man



“For the past six weeks, I had my mouth wired shut and a liquid diet. And these people are out enjoying themselves and doing things they love and want to do.”

Alex Rodriguez, 22
Allegedly assaulted by WSU football players

PHOTOS BY TYLER TJOMSLAND tyler@spokesman.com



Alex Rodriguez had his jaw broken at a July 23 party. Above, he shows where doctors added plates to his jaw.

and took his case of beer after the victim refused the football player's demands to hand it over. And on Aug. 24, officers arrested safety Shalom Luani on charges of felony assault in connection with a fight outside a local Domino's Pizza that left one man with a broken nose and Luani with a concussion. Three of those four players

took the field against the University of Idaho on Saturday in Pullman; Fehoko practices with the team but hasn't played. Leach on Tuesday read from a prepared statement that accused the Pullman Police Department of unfairly targeting his players. “It is irresponsible to this town, this community and everybody to have some kind of a dou-

ble standard where we only focus on one demographic, one group of people and then drag their name through the newspaper with a bunch of irresponsible comments,” the coach said. But the coach wouldn't actually talk to the newspaper – or any media – about specifics. And neither would Schulz. They weren't the only ones who couldn't or wouldn't talk. The team tightly controls which players are allowed to talk to the media, so none of the players involved were available to comment on the incidents or the aftermath. Jenkins, the Pullman police chief, said Leach's comments didn't anger him. Jenkins, in fact, thinks a lot of Leach. He considers himself a big fan. “I understand where (Leach) is coming from,” said Jenkins, who came to Pullman from Claremont, California, in 2010. “It seems like a lot at once.” Moos said he considers the investigation of Luani and the altercation that injured Rodriguez different from the case against Tago, who confessed to stealing the beer. “Look, there is no excuse for rude behavior,” the athletic director said in an interview with The Spokesman-Review. “But when it's perceived that the people I'm responsible for are the only ones with the rude behavior, that's offensive to me and my

coaches. With all these incidents, with the possible exception to the most recent one, there was rude behavior happening by more than those representing Washington State.”

SENTENCE SUSPENDED AFTER ATTACK ON YOUNG WOMAN

On March 4, 2014, starting cornerback Daquawn Brown attended a dance. Witnesses said he began harassing a young woman, a fellow student, who was taking part in a stroll dance. A man asked Brown to leave the woman alone. They shoved each other, then Brown punched the man in the face. Another young woman rushed into the fray to protect her friend, who was standing near Brown. Two witnesses told police they saw Brown turn and punch the girl who was trying to help her friend – punched her so hard that he knocked her unconscious, according to court records.

The woman sustained a concussion, two loose teeth and had nose bleeds for three days following the punch, according to court records. Less than a month later, she was found dead, apparently from suicide.

A coroner's report indicated the woman had a history of depression; her grandmother, in a brief interview, said she believed the assault was related to her granddaughter's death. Attempts to reach the student's mother last week were unsuccessful.

Brown later pleaded guilty to fourth-degree assault, and all of his 180-day jail sentence was suspended.

Leach allowed Brown back on the team, and he led the Cougars in 2014 with 82 tackles. The school dismissed him from the team after that season without explanation. He transferred to Fresno State but no longer plays there. Attempts to reach him weren't successful.

Asked why Brown was allowed to play after the assault investigation involving the female student, Moos replied: “You're going to have to talk to Mike about that one. It's hard for me to believe that he just opened the door for him.”

‘THEY ARE THE GOOD GUYS?’

Alex Rodriguez, 22, of Medical Lake, is the first in his family to attend college. He really didn't care about Washington State until that letter arrived informing him that he'd become a Cougar. He immersed himself in all things Wazzu: the school, the Cougars, the campus life. He bled crimson and gray. The instant fan, a senior and human development and psychology major, never missed a game. He even traveled last year to Oregon and watched as safety Shalom Luani snagged the interception that beat the Ducks in a glorious double-overtime win. But that was before this summer, when someone started throwing firecrackers into the crowd at his house party. As he and his roommate tried to get the mostly intoxicated throng to leave, both were punched from behind.

On the floor, someone kicked Rodriguez so hard it broke his jaw and caused nerve damage in his lip. “For the past six weeks, I had my mouth wired shut and a liquid diet,” Rodriguez said. “And these people are out enjoying themselves and doing things they love and want to do. To see them get cheered on by the fans and the school, it's hard to understand. They are the good guys? I feel like I have to root against my school.” Rodriguez had to drop some classes while he was recovering. “That's what frustrates me the most,” he said. “I'm trying to figure out how to survive and eat and get everything I needed to keep my body healthy, and these people are out there playing and practicing.”

Moos, when asked about Rodriguez's injuries, replied, “I heard there was a lot of intoxication, possibly drug use and intimidation. Was that man involved in the fight? I don't know.” After being informed of Rodriguez's injuries, and how he couldn't use a straw to feed himself and had to strain his food through his teeth, Moos softened.

“I've got five children of my own. I wouldn't wish that on any of the kids,” Moos said. “I hope he has a full recovery. Hopefully, I can sit down and visit with him.”

COACH ‘APPLIES DISCIPLINE’

The list of arrests, and recent investigations, has not put Leach on the hot seat. Not only is



WSU nose tackle Robert Barber (92) reacts after blocking a kick during the University of Idaho game Saturday at Martin Stadium in Pullman.

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY ATHLETIC LEADERSHIP

MIKE LEACH

Head football coach



The recent legal troubles at Washington State are not the first time Mike Leach has found himself embroiled in controversy. Leach, 55, was hired Nov. 30, 2011, by athletic director Bill Moos after he was fired in 2009 after 10 seasons coaching Texas Tech. The controversy surrounded the son of college football analyst Craig James.

According to published reports, Leach earlier had demoted Adam James for what he perceived as a lack of effort at practice. Then, in December 2009, Adam James reported suffering a concussion at practice. Leach then instructed staff to place him in a darkened equipment shed for the duration of a practice. The next day, he ordered James to remain in a darkened office. School officials claim they gave Leach an ultimatum to apologize to James in writing by Dec. 28 or Leach would be suspended, the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal reported. The school fired Leach Dec. 30, a day before he was owed an \$800,000 tenure bonus and over \$1.7 million for the contract for 2009. Leach later sued the school, but the suit was dismissed.

BILL MOOS

Athletic director



Bill Moos, 65, came back to his alma mater, WSU, in 2010 after overseeing \$160 million in facilities upgrades at the University of Oregon from 1995 to 2007. However, the details of how his tenure as a Duck ended remain mostly unknown. Moos told the Seattle Post-Intelligencer in 2007 that his leaving was tied to a rift between Moos and mega-booster Phil Knight. Moos

wanted to build a new arena to replace aging McArthur Court but couldn't fund it without Knight's help. Moos told the P-I his relationship with Knight was “strained a bit toward the end.” After Moos left, Knight donated \$100 million toward the arena. Controversy erupted a year after Moos' return to WSU around the arrest of three starting basketball players, DeAngelo Casto, Klay Thompson and Reggie Moore, for marijuana possession. After the team suspended Casto, Moos reinstated him a day later to allow him to play in the NIT. In clearing Casto, Moos cited “new information” and “unique circumstances,” he told The Spokesman-Review, without explaining what that meant. He later added: “We have to get our disciplinary act together.”

See **WSU ARRESTS, A11**

FROM THE FRONT PAGE
SPOKESMAN-REVIEW SPECIAL REPORT

1. No hitting women.
2. No illegal drug use.
3. No stealing.

— COACH LEACH'S ZERO-TOLERANCE RULES

Athletes under scrutiny in ‘huge fishbowl’

WSU ARRESTS

Continued from A10

Leach’s \$2.95 million-a-year job safe – making him one of the highest-paid state employees – Moos credits the coach for attracting most of the program’s top recruits.

“I’ve been in this business a long time. (Leach) applies discipline, with regard to his players, more than any coach I’ve ever been around,” Moos said. “There are rules on drug testing, and hitting women and theft. And he’s tough on fighting, too.”

But Brown, the player who hit the young woman, continued playing. And Moos and Leach both stood behind a player who hit a walk-on three years ago, breaking his jaw in two places.

On Oct. 2, 2013, the team gathered for morning workouts. One of the players was late, which prompted a coach to discipline the entire team by making them do 75 “up-down” drills. From standing up to a plank position on the floor, over and over again, it’s the sort of drill that’s done as much to induce pain as it is for conditioning.

Walk-on quarterback Domenic Rockey had an injured ankle that prevented him from keeping up. A coach told him to keep up or leave, which he did, according to court records.

Later in the locker room, 6-foot-4, 245-pound freshman Emmitt Su’a-Kalio apparently mistook Rockey for the player who caused the extra up-down reps. Su’a-Kalio walked up and punched Rockey.

Leach and his assistants initially refused to comment except to say it would be handled internally by the team. The university also did not inform police: Rockey’s girlfriend reported the assault the next day after finding her boyfriend with a swollen face and a mouth that would not stop bleeding.

The only thing Su’a-Kalio said was “I’m sorry” because “coaches told him to,” according to court records.

Su’a-Kalio later pleaded guilty to a charge of fourth-degree assault. He was sentenced to 30 days in jail but a judge allowed him to serve that time, instead, through 240 hours of community service.

Su’a Kalio also was allowed to remain with the team, although he didn’t play in 2013. Of the four



WSU head coach Mike Leach fields questions from reporters after a closed practice on Wednesday in Pullman.

letters written on his behalf to the University Conduct Board, two were written by Moos and Leach.

In his letter, Leach wrote, “There are occasions of misrepresentation that can take place and when coaches constantly preach to ‘keep each other accountable,’ Emmitt (Su’a-Kalio) took this literally,” according to court records.

A civil suit was filed by Rockey and was dismissed, but that dismissal is on appeal.

Moos said last week he couldn’t remember the specifics of the Rockey case but said, in general, “my guys aren’t just walking in like the Gatlin boys and, like a western, clearing the barroom out.”

Of Su’a-Kalio and Rockey, Moos said, “There’s something that instigates it and to my knowledge, our guys aren’t starting the fights, which makes you wonder who wants to start a fight with these kind of guys.” He can’t recall what was said, he added, but “there were insults and verbal stuff, and bam, he got hit.”

A PULLMAN PROBLEM?

Keeping the peace can sometimes be challenging in a football-crazy town dominated by students.



The Pullman Domino’s Pizza where WSU safety Shalom Luani was reportedly involved in a fight Aug. 24 is seen Wednesday.

“There are segments of the community that believe athletes get passes on things and things are swept under the rug,” Jenkins said. “I want to make sure that doesn’t happen. I also don’t want to target anyone.”

Moos backed up his coach, saying Leach’s pugnacious comments have merit.

“Is it just assumed the athlete was the one who was the aggressor because they look different and they are bigger and they

are stronger?” he said.

Moos said the size of Pullman is both its greatest asset and sometimes its biggest curse. Pullman has a listed population of about 30,000 people, according to the 2010 census. About two-thirds of that population are students.

By way of comparison, Moos said, he’s confident the University of Washington doesn’t have 70 percent of the Seattle Police Department’s squad cars hang-

ing around campus on Friday and Saturday nights.

“We are a huge fishbowl. Everyone on campus knows who our athletes are,” he said. “It’s hard to get lost. Lose two or three games in a row and try going to the supermarket. It ain’t easy.”

Just five years ago, Moos was answering some of the same questions after three of five starters on the WSU basketball team were arrested for marijuana possession. He was asked then if police were targeting the athletes.

“I have a concern about that,” Moos told The Spokesman-Review. “College Hill is not the collegial, fun, exciting place I remember as a student-athlete, or even working here 25 years ago. It’s become, in my observation, in the minds of the authorities in Pullman the ‘bad part of town.’ I don’t think that’s serving anyone very well.”

He added that there was a way to avoid the trouble.

“In a perfect world, if the Pullman police or campus police wanted to target our athletes, there would be nothing to target.”

Staff writers Chad Sokol and Jacob Thorpe contributed to this report.

Five years, 31 WSU athlete arrests

A report by ArrestNation.com, which tracks media reports of arrests of athletes in all sports, ranks Washington State University No. 1 in the nation for the number of arrests, with 31 in the past five years. But a Spokesman-Review examination found the number of arrests for that time period is actually 37. The next closest university, according to the website, was Florida with 24 arrests, and Georgia and Texas A&M were tied for third place with 22 arrests. Here is a list of the 29 arrests of WSU football players since Mike Leach was hired in November 2011, which would still rank the Cougars No. 1 on the list.

Feb. 7, 2012: C.J. Mizell is arrested on charges of fourth-degree assault and second-degree criminal trespass following an altercation at a fraternity. Both charges were later dismissed.

Feb. 12, 2012: Zachary D. Koepp is arrested, accused of obstruction of law enforcement. The charge was later dismissed.

April 8, 2012: Denzell Dotson is arrested on a charge of DUI. The charge was later amended to a minor in operation of a vehicle after consuming alcohol, and Dotson pleaded guilty. He was sentenced to 60 days in jail with 59 days suspended.

April 8, 2012: Spencer J. Waseem is arrested on a charge of fourth-degree assault following an altercation. The charge was later dismissed.

July, 20, 2012: Travis M. Long is arrested on a charge of minor in possession and consumption the day before his 21st birthday. The case was later dismissed.

July 23, 2012: Anthony G. Laurenzi is arrested on a charge of third-degree theft. The case was later dismissed.

Nov. 9, 2012: Chester Su’a is arrested on suspicion of hit-and-run. The case was dismissed, and court records for the arrest no longer exist in Whitman County District Court.

Jan. 27, 2013: Leon J. Brooks is arrested on a charge of DUI. The charge was later amended

to first-degree negligent driving. Brooks pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 60 days in jail with 60 days suspended.

Feb. 1, 2013: Drew R. Loftus is arrested on charges of third-degree theft, minor intoxicated in public and minor in possession and or consumption of alcohol. Witnesses told Pullman police Loftus tried to steal two bottles of tequila from Dissmore’s IGA. The theft and minor in possession charges were dismissed, and Loftus pleaded guilty to being a minor intoxicated in public. He was sentenced to 60 days in jail with 59 suspended. He was initially kicked off the team, but he was allowed to play the 2013 season.

Feb. 17, 2013: Gabe L. Marks is arrested on a charge of minor intoxicated in public. The charge was later dismissed.

April 28, 2013: Teondray Caldwell is arrested on felony charges of second-degree assault and burglary in connection with a case in which a man suffered facial fractures. The charges were later dismissed.

May 12, 2013: Kalafitoni “Toni” Pole is arrested on a charge of making a false statement to a public official. The case was later dismissed.

May 16, 2013: Logan F. Mayes is arrested on a charge of hit-and-run of an attended vehicle. The charge was later

dismissed.

Oct. 3, 2013: Emmitt Su’a-Kalio is charged with felony second-degree assault after witnesses said he punched reserve quarterback Domenic Rockey on Oct. 2, breaking Rockey’s jaw in two places. Su’a-Kalio later pleaded guilty to the lesser charge of fourth-degree assault. He was sentenced to 30 days in jail, but a judge allowed him to serve that time through 240 hours of community service. He remained on the team in 2013 but didn’t play. He left after that season.

Rockey later filed a civil suit against WSU. That case was dismissed, but the appeal remains pending.

Nov. 7, 2013: Chester Su’a is arrested for failure to appear for a hearing on the earlier charge of hit-and-run. The file for this charge no longer exists in Whitman County District Court.

Feb. 2, 2014: Daquawn D. Brown is arrested on a charge of driving with no valid driver’s license. It was amended to a lesser charge, and Brown paid a \$100 fine.

Feb. 10, 2014: Gabe L. Marks is arrested on charges of second-degree criminal trespass, fourth-degree assault, minor intoxicated in public and minor frequenting an area that is off limits. Witnesses claimed Marks assaulted a bar employee. All four charges were later dismissed.

March 4, 2014: Daquawn D. Brown is arrested on felony charges of second-degree assault and fourth-degree assault after an altercation that occurred during a dance. Two witnesses told police they saw Brown punch a male student and a female student, who was knocked unconscious. Brown later pleaded guilty to fourth-degree assault. All 180 days of his jail sentence were suspended.

March 17, 2014: Austin J. Brown is arrested on a charge of third-degree theft. Brown pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 90 days in jail with 89 days suspended.

June 16, 2014: Ivan P. McLennan is arrested on a charge of unlawful handling of a weapon capable of producing bodily harm after reportedly pointing a nonlethal pellet gun at another student. The case was later dismissed.

July 31, 2014: Drew Loftus is arrested on a charge of fourth-degree assault after someone said Loftus punched him outside a Domino’s Pizza. It was Loftus’ third arrest, following a 2011 arrest on suspicion of car prowling and the alleged tequila theft from Dissmore’s in 2013. The assault charge was later dismissed.

Sept. 14, 2014: Theron R. West is arrested on a charge of reckless driving. The charge was later amended to speeding too fast for conditions, and he was fined \$500.

The same night in a separate incident, Daniel Ekuale is arrested and cited for minor frequenting a tavern, but that charge was later dismissed.

Jan. 17: Jamal Morrow is arrested on a charge of DUI. Morrow later pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 180 days in jail with 179 days suspended. He was also fined \$1,900.

March 6: Calvin R. Green is arrested on charges of hit-and-run, reckless endangerment and not having a valid license. The case has been dismissed.

Aug. 24: Shalom Luani is arrested on felony charges of second-degree assault in connection to an altercation at a local Domino’s Pizza. Video shows Luani pushing a man into a wall before he and several other men continue the altercation outside. One of the men suffered a broken nose, and Luani reportedly suffered a concussion. He was suspended for one game, and his case is pending.

Sept. 12: Logan Tago is arrested on felony charges of second-degree assault and robbery in connection with a reported assault and theft of beer June 4.

Friday: Robert Barber, 22, and T.J. Fehoko, 19, are arrested on charges of second-degree assault in connection with a July 23 altercation at a Pullman house party that left one man with a concussion and another with a broken jaw.