

## Joe Pa

46 years as coach is a long time. 409 wins is most in NCAA history. Another shot at a championship in Happy Valley, with a well chiseled legacy as good as Moses on the Mountain, Joe Pa got blindsided—or did he?

At a time when the pressures of The Programs, the BCS and rotating doors of recent violations and sanctions through Ohio State and The U, Joe Pa remained bigger than life—Patriarch of the gridiron—Beacon of character with a touch of arrogance.

What's happened? What's going on? What's next? Take your pick: ESPN 1, 2, 3, Fox Sports, NBC, ABC, CBS, CNN it's all over the news; but, it's not ALL OVER. It's just begun.

Tattoos and trinkets, party yachts and prostitutes, now, Jerry Sandusky, kids, sexual abuse, predator and victim—how do you slice and dice and serve it up over and over again through the media myopia whose bottom line is a story that sells?

Everyone has an opinion. What's yours? What's mine? Does it matter? The crimes have been committed with the usual I'm innocent until proven guilty ploys. No body gets out clean NOBODY! And that includes us.

Joe Pa blindsided? Yes and no. At 84 it will probably put him in an earlier grave. The glasses now have smudge marks and tears while his physical stature slumps with the weight of what he didn't do more than what he did.

It's the nature of the beast of abuse that once the word gets out other victims seek justice and healing. Such grassroots class action brings with it a tsunami of change to Penn State and with it heads rolling from the president to Paterno. Will that take care of it?

It's the nature of The Program to dominate even when it's broke. It's the nature of the Institution—religious, secular or educational to seek the protection of its Trustees—in the interests of self-preservation, even at the expense of those abused. Without criminal justice; and, its intervention, it would be swept under a carpet of cloistered sanctions and rules only to pop up again whenever the coast is clear.

Whether we like it or not what must be faced are the Jerry Sandusky and Joe Pa in each one of us. What needs to be faced is the futility of our ongoing search for the Icons and Patriarchs of sports as if they were Moses' on the mountain, with chiseled Tablets of stone, able to carry the weight of our sins to a winning season. If the truth be known—football has become not just a sub-culture but The culture. As a result, there will be no moratorium on football, collegiate or professional, as it concerns this travesty of justice and trust. Because, like the spectators of old in the Coliseum we love to hear from the gladiators, "We who are about to die salute you!" more than we want to hear Joe Pa and Jerry came up short.

The Game of Life we play includes more than what has brought disgrace and heartbreak to Penn State. Life played as the Game God intends involves more than a gridiron, a schedule and a championship. It requires us to face the Ultimate Patriarch and Coach—God—on His terms not ours.

It will do us no good to hide in the shower rooms of allegations or a reformer's attitude that says "fix it or else." In times like these it is for us to face God not Joe Pa, not The Program, not the Institution but God. "*For God is a consuming fire.*"(Hebrews 12:29) Only He has it within Himself to transform the Love He is into the Justice necessary to bring restitution and restoration to those both on the victim's side and the perp's.

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