Paterno deserved to lose his job for not calling cops

JOE PATerno being fired as head coach of the NOTTany Lions was a huge spread between supporting those who do and those who don't. The Penn State University football coach won't get to complete his 46th year with the Lions after the school's board of trustees gave him the boot last Wednesday after finding he failed to report child molestations.

Those who don't think Paterno should have been fired are essentially saying it's okay to not do everything in your power to prevent children from being molested when you know it's happening around you. As long as you do your part and tell someone else, the rest is up to you.

Because that's what Paterno did. When current receivers coach Mike McQueary told him back in 2002 that he saw former assistant coach Jerry Sandusky raping a 10-year-old boy in the showers of the locker room at Penn State the day before, Paterno told athletics director Tim Curley. Not the police. Sandusky still came around campus with boys from his charitable organization, The Second Mile, where he had access to the university's facilities.

Paterno seems to be a respectable guy. A lot of people love the 84-year-old man who brought his Lions to two national victories in 1982 and 1986 and has seen 40 wins in his career. Even Ashton Kutcher — who went out on a lengthy tweet last Wednesday night as soon as he found out Paterno had been fired — is a fan. Kutcher later said he didn't know why Paterno had been fired when he went on Twitter.

But the hundreds of Penn State students who started rivaling after they heard the news did know the reason Paterno was fired. But for some reason it seemed okay for them to flip over a news van, throw rocks at a reporter and smash horns to show their support of a man who stayed quiet about child abuse.

Paterno has now said that in hindsight he should have done more. But the fact remains that he didn't. Coaching legend or not, he deserves to be fired. And so does McQueary, who didn't run to help a little boy who was being raped, but ran in the other direction — out the door to call his boss, who suggested he call Paterno.

McQueary reported that both Sandusky and the boy saw him. Image is the damnation of hope that flashed through that little boy's mind when he saw the tall, athletic man come in, only to see him rush away.

Sandusky has been arrested and charged with 40 counts of sexual assault throughout 15 years, between 1967-2002, involving eight boys. He is an alleged sexual predator who continued to visit the Penn State campus even after at least three people there claim they knew what he had done. Maybe they didn't know about all of the accounts, but they knew about one. That should have been enough to warrant a call to the police.

And actually, more people knew. Curley told senior vice president for finance and business Gary Schultz. The two talked to McQueary about what he saw. Curley also told university president Graham Spanier. None of these men contacted the police, the campus police, or tried to identify the child.

Spanier was fired the same day as Paterno. Curley and Schultz have been charged with perjury and failing to report abuse. Nothing has happened to McQueary, unless you count multiple death threats that might keep him on the bench as a coach for all his own safety.

Paterno made a big mistake and there are big consequences. Failure to report a serious crime is not based on how many gold stars you have tucked up in your favor by being a respected coach and a likable guy. The issue is about eight boys who were allegedly sexually abused by one man over 15 years. Some of the acts happened after the incident that was witnessed in 2002. At least a few of them might have been saved from this type of shameful and degrading experience if Paterno had called the cops.

By not doing that, Paterno deserves what he got.