

Ex-coach in Webster charged with rape

Watkins accused in case involving girl under 15

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Kali Watkins, a former coach and special education teacher in the Webster Central School District, is facing rape charges.

The charges were announced Wednesday morning in a joint press conference with the Webster Police Department and Webster Central School District.

Watkins, 42, has been indicted by a Monroe County grand jury on one count of first-degree rape and one count of second-degree rape, said Monroe County Assistant District Attorney Meredith Vacca. She said the first-degree charge relates to having engaged in sex by forcible compulsion, and the second-degree charge relates to engaging in sex with a female less than 15 years old. The incidents are alleged to have occurred in 2016 and 2017, she said.

Watkins, 42, is a former special education teacher and varsity football coach at Webster Schroeder High School.

Officials would not say whether the victim was a Webster student.

At the press conference

Wednesday, Webster schools Superintendent Carmen Gumina said that internal concerns about Watkins' conduct at Webster Schroeder were raised in November 2017, leading to a district investigation and Watkins being placed on an administrative leave.

During that probe, Gumina said, "the district was informed of an unrelated criminal allegation," which officials referred to the Webster Police Department. Gumina said the district fired Watkins on Dec. 27, 2017. "These charges involving a teacher and coach who was highly regarded by students and his Webster Schroeder colleagues are disturbing to say the least," he said. "Words fail as I attempt to convey how grieved I am by these charges and how an educator allegedly abused his position of trust."

Webster Police Chief Joseph Rieger said his agency's investigation has been ongoing since November 2017.

"During this time, the Webster Central School District has been completely transparent and cooperative," he said.

Watkins, who had been the Schroeder football coach for the previous eight seasons, started the 2017 season as coach of the Webster Schroeder girls varsity

the district, and otherwise declined to comment.

According to Monroe County Jail records, Watkins was being held without bail on a sealed indictment as of Wednesday morning.

Officials provided few details about the circumstances of the alleged rape, but urged anyone with additional information about Watkins to call the Webster Police Department at (585) 872-1216 or 911.

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Webster Central School District Superintendent Carmen Gumina talks about the school's initial response to allegations of rape by a teacher and coach. TINA MACINTYRE-YEE/ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

Watkins

basketball team, but was quickly replaced by veteran softball coach Meaghan Keil.

The *Democrat and Chronicle* reported in December 2017 that parents of girls' basketball players and their daughters were told in mid-November 2017 that Watkins was taking a leave of absence.

Watkins, a 1995 West Irondequoit graduate, was named Monroe County Division I football Coach of the Year in 2017, but did not attend the banquet to receive his award.

Watkins is a former receiver and safety at the University of Buffalo. He was a two-year captain for the Bulls and a 2014 inductee into the Section V Hall of Fame.

Gumina said Watkins was a varsity football coach in the district from 2010 to 2017, varsity football offensive coordinator from 2006 to 2010 and girls junior varsity basketball coach from 2008 to 2017.

Watkins worked in the Rochester City School District from 2004 to 2015, mostly as a special education teacher at Wilson Foundation Academy, a K-8 school. An RCSD spokesman said he had no record of Watkins coaching in