

Webster police seek tips in rape case against coach

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Webster Police are still seeking the community's assistance in their investigation into rape allegations lodged against a former coach and special education teacher from the Webster Central School District.

Kali Watkins, 42, was indicted by a Monroe County grand jury last week on one count of first-degree rape and one count of second-degree rape. The two charges relate to a single incident involving a female less than 15 years old that allegedly took place sometime during December 2016 and January 2017.

Law enforcement officials last week asked anyone who might have information about that event or other events involving Watkins to contact police.

Police Chief Joseph Rieger last week said he would not comment on whether or not their plea resulted in any new tips.

"We continue to ask anyone who thinks they know something about what happened, or who saw anything out of the ordinary, anything else that raised suspicions, to call," he said.

School officials, prosecutors and police have been tight-lipped about the specifics of the allegations made against Watkins, who served as varsity football and girls varsity basketball coach at Webster Schroeder High School.



Kali Watkins was placed on administrative leave from Webster Schroeder High School in late 2017.
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Watkins questioned over texting student players

But court documents filed in the case shed some light on the accusations, and show investigators may have been concerned that Watkins also engaged in behavior widely believed by child sex abuse experts to be "grooming."

The National Center for Victims of Crime describes such actions as first identifying and targeting a potential victim, gaining trust and access to the child — often by providing the child with gifts or treats —

and otherwise declined to comment.

Gumina said during the course of the school system's investigation into Watkins' work, they were made aware of an "unrelated criminal" matter that they referred to local police.

The court documents show police questioned Watkins — who did not have a lawyer present — in December 2017 and in January, February and April 2018. They also show the date of the alleged incident as Dec. 1, 2016.

insinuating themselves into a position of importance in the child's life, seeking ways to be alone with the child and creating secrecy around the relationship.

According to the court records, Webster Police Investigator Jeff Webster asked Watkins whether he believed the way he would interact with his student players was "inappropriate."

In response, Watkins said he did not, and said he would commonly text all of his student players both individually and in groups, and would also provide gifts to his student players as well as other faculty members.

Upon further questioning, Watkins denied ever having inappropriate contact with a student player and denied that he had ever been alone with a student player in a girls' locker room.

Watkins was placed on administrative leave from Webster Schroeder High School in mid-November 2017. School Superintendent Carmen Gumina said that leave was spurred by concerns that had been raised in the district about Watkins' conduct with other school staff.

Watkins involved with other staffers

The court documents show Watkins admitted to police that he had been involved in "several" consensual sexual relationships with female staffers at the school during his employment.

Watkins was hired by Webster in 2015 and was notified by letter on Dec. 27, 2017, that his "probationary employment" was terminated, according to school district documents. He was not tenured.

Prior to working in Webster, 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 last week said he had no record of Watkins coaching in the district,

The documents also show that Watkins willingly provided police with his iPhone and computer in December 2017.

It remains unclear why nearly a year elapsed before he was indicted.

Watkins' attorney, Jon Getz, declined to comment.

Who is Kali Watkins?

Watkins is a 1995 graduate of Irondequoit High School. He is also a former receiver and safety at the University at Buffalo.

Additionally, he was a two-year captain for the Bulls and a 2014 inductee into the Section V Hall of Fame.

From 2006 to 2010, he was Webster's varsity football offensive coordinator, and was the varsity football coach from 2010 until 2017. He also served as the girls junior varsity basketball coach from 2008 to 2017.

He started the 2017 season as coach of the Webster Schroeder girls varsity basketball team, but was replaced in November by veteran softball coach Meaghan Keil.

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

"This is sad for everyone involved," former Irondequoit football coach Wade Bianco said.

Watkins is due back in court in April.

Anyone with information they believe may be helpful to the investigation is asked to call the Webster Police Department at (585) 872-1216 or 911.

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