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PLUS: COLLEGE FOOTBALL

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The former Utah State football coach Dave Arslanian has sued the university, contending an administrator secretly hired a new coach five weeks before he was fired.

Mick Dennehy was introduced as Utah State's coach Dec. 3, one day after Arslanian was fired midway through his four-year contract.

Arslanian said former Utah State president George Emert secretly hired Dennehy five weeks earlier without telling Arslanian, the university's Board of Regents or the University of Montana, where Dennehy had coached for four seasons.

The lawsuit, filed in 3rd District Court, seeks unspecified punitive damages for fraud, breach of contract and breach of good faith. It also accuses Utah State of failing to pay salary and benefits totaling \$310,504 that Arslanian claims he is still owed.

The school's counsel, Craig Simper, said Dennehy was hired the same day that Arslanian was fired.

"I fail to see the consequences of a two-hour overlap," Simper said. He also said the school has yet to be served with the lawsuit.

The lawsuit says Emert became angry at Arslanian for hiring his brother, Paul Arslanian, as offensive coordinator against the president's wishes. The lawsuit says Emert then decided to fire Dave Arslanian at the end of the 1999 season.

Emert began telling subordinates of his plans several months earlier, according to the lawsuit, and last fall began secretly and covertly interviewing and offering the job to other candidates.

According to the suit, Emert and the athletic director, Rance Pugmire, offered the job to Dennehy on Oct. 29, when Dennehy still coached at Montana.

Pugmire refused comment on the lawsuit. When Dennehy was introduced as the new coach in December, Pugmire said he had contacted and interviewed the coach a few days earlier.

Simper said Arslanian's termination followed the former coach's contract.

"Coaches are at will, and contractual employees at best, so we don't have to identify particular causes," Simper said. He added that the coach had problems making the team a success.

Arslanian, who coached at Weber State for nine years, has not found another job, the lawsuit says, because of damage to his reputation.

He and seven assistant coaches were fired after a 7-15 record in two seasons at Utah State. Paul Arslanian is now an assistant at San Jose State.

GEORGIA STUDENT HURT: A Georgia student was seriously injured after being trampled during on-field celebrations following the Bulldogs' victory over Tennessee.

Kristine Yu, 18, is recovering at St. Mary's Hospital in Athens, Ga. She was moved out of the intensive care unit Sunday and was in stable condition, said supervising nurse Jan Green.

Witnesses said the freshman was trampled by other fans on the field Saturday night when one of the goal posts began to fall during the celebration after No. 14 Georgia beat Tennessee. It was the Bulldogs' first victory over the Volunteers after nine straight losses.

"The goal post just started coming down and people were just pushing, pushing, pushing," Mack Brice said. "It was a nightmare. It was a heck of a price to pay for a goal post."

Tony Wagner added: "As soon as she fell over, it was bad."

Green said Yu's parents asked that no information be released about the extent of their daughter's injuries.

Both goal posts were torn down in the celebration, although the school posted security guards along the edge of the field near the end of the game. The guards were no match for the horde of students who charged the field.

"It was just too overwhelming," said Vince Dooley, Georgia's athletic director. "It would have taken an army, maybe the U.S. Marine Corps."