

DeBacker killed in automobile accident

Written by Jim Ecker

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Danny DeBacker, a member of the Mount Mercy University men's basketball and track teams, was critically injured in an automobile accident early Sunday morning in Davenport and died at University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City Sunday afternoon.

DeBacker, 22, was a senior from Orion, Ill. He transferred to Mount Mercy last year from Black Hawk Community College.

Andrew Scott Adams, 21, from Orion, Ill., also was killed in the crash, according to the Quad City Times.

Kai Robert Miller, 23, from Davenport, was arrested at 6:34 a.m. Sunday and charged with Homicide by Vehicle-OWI (Operating While Intoxicated), according to the Scott County sheriff's department.

Witnesses told Davenport police Miller was driving a Hyundai XG at a high rate of speed when his vehicle broadsided a Hyundai Elantra driven by Adams. Police said alcohol was "the main contributing factor" in the crash that happened at 2:04 a.m. Sunday at 12th and Brady streets in Davenport.

Jacob Misener, one of DeBacker's teammates and friends at Mount Mercy, said DeBacker had gone home for the weekend to spend time with family and friends. Misener said DeBacker was flown to Iowa City with a severe head injury and underwent surgery Sunday morning.

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"He was hanging on by a thread all day," Misener said Sunday. "At around 2:30 (p.m.) they pronounced him as dead."

Misener said more than 50 people gathered at the UI hospital during the day.

"The whole team was there, his whole family, multiple students he went to high school with, multiple high school friends," said Misener, a Cedar Rapids Kennedy graduate and a senior at Mount Mercy. "It was a really crazy, emotional, indescribable day."

A prayer service for DeBacker was held Sunday night at the chapel on the Mount Mercy University campus in Cedar Rapids.

"It's a really rough day," said Misener. "It sounds cliché, but I told myself, 'Anybody but Danny.'"

"You just loved him. He was kind, he was funny, he was charming. He wasn't cocky or anything like that. He was just a guy that you really wanted to be around."

"It's a sad, sad day."

DeBacker was pursuing a double major at Mount Mercy in psychology and biology. He played in 29 games for the Mustangs last season with five starts, averaging 3.1 points and 2.5 rebounds.

Service arrangements are pending, according to the Mount Mercy website.