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Navy Vet player killed in accident

Dean Sorensen, a leading scorer with hockey team, dies in accident on Highway 403

By MARK SCHADENBERG
of The Sentinel-Review

Dean Sorensen, a top-scoring forward for the Woodstock Navy Vets Junior C hockey club, was killed in a single-vehicle accident early Sunday.

The Woodstock detachment of the OPP said an officer arrived at the accident scene yesterday at 6:48 a.m., but the exact time of the roll-over accident on the west bound side of Highway 403 near the Brant-Oxford county line, is not known.

An OPP press release says the cause of the accident is unknown at this time and the investigation is continuing.

Sorensen was wearing a seat-belt and was the lone occupant in the vehicle, said police.

Sorensen, 20, who lived just outside Thamesford, was second in the Navy Vets in scoring this season with 13 goals and 15 assists in 13 games. Sorensen was a key figure in the Navy Vets' 10-2-1 record so far this season. The fourth-year



Dean Sorensen

centre also played an important role in three consecutive Niagara Junior C West Division championships.

"This is such a devastating loss," said Navy Vets coach Dave Bogart. "Dean was a huge part of our success over the last four years. And with this hockey club, it goes much beyond a game, we're a family.

"Until now, I had never been part of a team as a player or a coach that had a player die like this. It's always someone else, but not this time. It leaves me with a real hollow feeling in my stomach.

"Dean had been to the wall with me and the rest of the team many times over the last four years," continued Bogart. "In the last two years, he had developed into being one of the elite players in our league. He had become an offensive threat and physical presence on the ice in every shift."

Sunday game cancelled

The Navy Vets were scheduled to play in Port Dover yesterday afternoon. That game was cancelled as players, coaches, training staff and team executive shared in the Sorensen family's grief. The close-knit hockey club also includes Dean's younger brother, Tim, who is a second-year defenceman.

In helping lead the Navy Vets to three straight division titles, Dean Sorensen had 41 goals and 75 points in 55 games last year (including the playoffs), and 30 goals and 61

points in 51 games the previous year.

"Dean was a great hockey player who got all his points through hard work," said team captain Jason Rupert. "Off the ice, he was even more important to this team. He led the team with his positive attitude and work ethic."

"We've lost a very big part of our team," said defenceman-forward Brandon Murphy. "This is a shocking loss — a big shock. I've lost a good friend. Dean was the type of guy who always looked on the bright side of things. When things were going bad in a game, he pumped us — motivated the team. On and off the ice, he was a good leader."

Like Bogart, veteran forward Ryan Smith said Sorensen's death is like losing a member of the family.

"We spent (eight months) together in each of the last three years. This is like losing a brother, and Dean was such a nice guy," said Smith.

Away from the arena, Dean Sorensen worked full-time in the

family business — Elgie Bus Lines.

Sorensen had attended Lord Dorchester Secondary School in Dorchester, but played his minor hockey in St. Marys before joining the Navy Vets as a major midget for the 1992-93 season — a year that the Vets started 23-0-5 with Sorensen in the lineup and won their first of three straight Niagara West titles.

"Dean was the kind of kid that the other players looked up to," said Navy Vets general manager John Jensen. "Dean was the type of young man that you would want your own son to grow up to be like. He was a perfect gentleman and in the time I knew him had developed into a really nice young man."

Dean Sorensen is survived by his parents, Bob and Dianne, his brother Tim, and grandparents Stuart and Marguerite Elgie of Thamesford.

Visitations will be at the Harland B. Betzner Funeral Home in Thamesford on Tuesday from 2-4 p.m. and 7-9 p.m. The funeral will be Wednesday at 11 a.m., at the Betzner Funeral Home.