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Crash victim remembered as 'everybody's friend'

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by [Erica Hall](#)
Journal Reporter

BELLEVUE -- Robert Vasen, who died Sunday from massive injuries suffered in a car crash in downtown Bellevue, was remembered Monday as "everybody's friend" by a coach who watched him battle a life-threatening infection as a Bellevue High athlete.

Vasen, a 20-year-old junior at the University of Washington and a 2003 graduate of Bellevue High, was one of five people in a BMW that was struck by a Jeep Cherokee carrying six people in downtown Bellevue late Saturday night.

He was taken to Harborview Medical Center, where he later died from severe head and neck injuries.

The drivers of both vehicles were arrested at the scene. Jarrod Bandy, the 22-year-old driver of the Jeep Cherokee, was booked at the King County Jail following his release from Overlake Hospital, where he was taken for observation.

Bandy's bail was set Monday at \$350,000, and he remains in custody under investigation of one count of vehicular homicide and two counts of vehicular assault.

The driver of the BMW, Ryan Kellog, also was taken to Overlake Hospital, for treatment of a fractured collarbone and possibly a spleen injury. He has since been discharged. A court hearing hasn't been scheduled for Kellog.

Bellevue police suspect alcohol was a factor in the crash, Officer Greg Grannis said.

One of the other passengers in the BMW was treated at Harborview Medical Center for a fractured neck vertebrae and released. The remaining passengers in the BMW were taken to Overlake Hospital with less serious injuries.

Though the medical examiner's office has listed Vasen as deceased because of the severity of his injuries, he remained on a ventilator Monday, and his family was encouraging friends to visit.

Vasen played basketball at Bellevue High after overcoming a staph infection in his leg he got while playing his first sport, soccer, former coach and family friend Bob McDonald said Monday.

The infection became life-threatening at one point, he said, and the several surgeries required to treat it severely limited the flexibility of his leg, but Vasen was determined to play. McDonald decided to keep him on the team.

"He was probably one of the most hard-working, caring people you'd ever meet," McDonald said. "He had a great degree of perseverance. I was going to cut him, but didn't because I knew how hard he worked. He was always the first one there and the last one to leave."

Off the court, Vasen was the kid "everybody loved," McDonald said. "He had a great attitude, great determination. He was everybody's friend. There was nothing not to like."

McDonald said he kept in touch with Vasen after graduation, and would sometimes bump into him at the Bellevue Club, where he'd be lifting weights and playing basketball.



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`` It's hard to reconcile," McDonald said.

Bellevue police said Bandy was behind the wheel of the Jeep Cherokee Saturday night when he ran a red light and broadsided the BMW in the intersection of 108th Avenue Northeast and Northeast Second Street.

Ryan Peach, a 28-year-old EMT for Tri-Med Ambulance, was just finishing up his shift at his second job at the Melting Pot in downtown Bellevue when someone ran into the restaurant and told his manager to call 911. Peach's manager found him to see if he could help.

Peach ran to the scene of the crash with his fiancée, also an EMT, who happened to be there waiting for him to get off work.

At first glance, just about all the occupants were out of the cars and the BMW didn't seem to be in bad shape, Peach said. The only panel that was seriously damaged was the one behind the drivers seat where the Cherokee hit the BMW, and Peach said he figured everyone was already out of the car. `` I wouldn't expect to see someone left in there," he said.

But Vasen was sitting behind the driver's seat, and that's where Peach found him pinned. He and a friend got Vasen out of the car, but he wasn't breathing and didn't have a pulse, Peach said. They performed CPR for about three minutes, until Bellevue Fire medics arrived.

`` I wish we could have done more for the guy," he said.

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