

Former Alton High School football, basketball star dies in tragic car crash

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ROCKFORD - Former Alton High football and basketball standout **Demonte Wigfall** died Tuesday evening at the scene of an accident on Interstate 90 in Rockford, Il.

The accident occurred at about 5:50 p.m. Tuesday in the eastbound lanes of I-90 and the crash involved a car and two semi trucks. Illinois State Police said one of the vehicles lost control, struck the median wall and triggered the pileup.

Wigfall and Rockford University student Desiree Wease, 19, were both in the vehicle that struck the median wall, Illinois State Police said. Students Daijon Davis of Zion and Stephen Taylor were also involved in the accident. Davis was treated and released from the hospital, but Taylor remains hospitalized today.

Alton High School Athletic Director Jeff Alderman coached Wigfall in the 2014 football season for the Redbirds. He said there were “a lot of heavy hearts around Alton High School” after learning of Wigfall’s accident and death. Wigfall, 6-foot-1, 175 pounds, played six games this past season at the wide receiver position for Rockford

University and caught nine passes for 102 yards and a touchdown. He was an All-Southwestern Conference selection for the Redbirds in football in 2014. He was also a member of the 27-5 Alton High basketball team last year.

The athletic director described young Wigfall as "a tremendous kid."

"He had an infectious smile and was well-liked by everyone," he said. "This happening to someone 18 or 19 years old is certainly way too soon. It hits extra hard. I have children that age. I can't imagine what Demonte's family is going through. My heart reaches out to them."

Alderman said Wigfall was an excellent athlete and that he coached him on varsity for three years.

Alton High School head basketball coach Eric Smith agreed it had been a very rough day this morning learning of Wigfall's tragic death.

"He was a good athlete and a good kid," Smith said. "He was part of our program for three years. He was with us all the time. The basketball group that graduated last year was probably more of the close-knit groups I have been around. We have been in contact with as many kids as we could get a hold of today. The kids from the past and the kids in the program now were friends with him and knew him. They are all hurting."