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TALLADEGA TRAGEDY: ARCA driver Tracy Read is pulled from car after striking wall in Permatex 500K on Saturday. Read was pronounced dead at the Alabama International Speedway's infield hospital.

Read dies in ARCA race crash

By Bill Robinson Staff Writer

TALLADEGA, Ala. — With his father watching, driver Tracy Read died in a spinning, smashing wreck during the running of the Permatex 500 here Saturday - eight days before he was to be married.

Read, 26, from Lake Village, Ind., died from crushing chest and upper abdominal injuries, according to Dr. James Hardwick, the track physician.

Read, a part-time racer, had moved to Charlotte, N.C., and worked full-time for the Cale Yarborough team on the Winston Cup circuit.

"This is a tremendous sadness and a terrible loss," said Yarborough. "He wanted so badly to be a race driver. And it's a big loss to our team. All the boys (on the crew) thought the world of him. He was just a super, super guy ... it's

hard to take." Read attempted to dodge a wrecking race car ahead of him in the fourth turn of Alabama International Motor Speedway on lap 80 (of 117) in the 500-kilometer race staged by the Automobile Racing Club of America (ARCA). But his racer spun, came down on the grass, crashing almost head-on into a high, heavy dirt

Read, who was supposed to be married a week from Sunday, was rushed to the infield hospital. Dr. Hardwick reported that, "We tried to revive a faint heartbeat, but ... " Hardwick pronounced Read dead at 4:15 p.m. EDT.

He was the third ARCA driver to die at Talladega since 1983, and the fifth driver fatality here since the track opened in 1969.

His father, Gerald Read, owned the car his son died in.

"But Tracy built that car from the ground up," said Rodney Combs, a Winston Cup driver. "It took him two years, and he finally got that sponsorship from the Randy Hope insurance people down in Columbia (S.C.). That was just a freak thing, that accident — it wouldn't happen again in a million chances. At least I hope it won't.

"Tracy was a good kid, and he was an important member of Cale's team as tire changer and doing a little fabrication

"He was happy that Cale let him work full-time with him and let him go racing in ARCA at the same time. It's just a tragic loss ... he was so young."

Read had run 20 ARCA races in the past four years, four this season. He won

the pole with a speed of 205.111 mph for the ARCA race here in May, the race preceding the Winston 500. He had raced in ARCA events in Daytona Beach, Fla., and in Atlanta in March.

His best finish, however, had been seventh in a 1983 race at Indianapolis Raceway Park.

Gene Richards was the first ARCA driver to die at Talladega, in May 1982. The following May, Ken Kalla died in a Talladega ARCA race. Winston Cup driver Larry Smith died in a wreck here in 1973, the veteran Tiny Lund in 1975, the same year Richard Petty's brother-in-law Randy Owens, a Petty crew member, died in a pit road accident.

"That's terrible," said Winston Cup veteran Buddy Baker. Baker did not know of Read's death until 11/2 hours after it happened and all Winston drivers had completed practice for Sunday's Talladega 500.

"It's so tragic because he was so young, and he loved racing and he was going to be a good race driver.

Said Jack Flowers, a Winston Cup spokesman: "He died trying not to hurt somebody else. Kirk Bryant's car spun ahead of him, and Tracy tried to dodge

ADs: Needy athletes deserve more money

By Earnest Reese Staff Writer

NCAA rules should be changed so that financially needy college athletes will have more spending money in their pockets and perhaps face less temptation to accept cash from agents, several leaders of college athletics said this past week.

Five college athletes have lost their senior seasons of eligibility because of recent revelations that they accepted money from New York-based agents Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom - a violation of NCAA rules. Because of these cases, NCAA executive director-elect Dick Schultz and several prominent athletic directors said they will attempt to change an NCAA rule that limits the amount of money scholarship athletes can receive from federally funded Pell Grants.

College students from poor families can qualify for up to \$2,100 per year under the Pell Grant program. Under NCAA rules, athletes who qualify for the program can keep \$900 of their grant but must give the remainder to the school.

Schultz and the athletic directors said they will try to change this rule at the NCAA's next convention in January so that athletes will be allowed to keep the full \$2,100 if they qualify. They suggested that the money be distributed to the athletes in monthly installments.

"I'll vote to give them the full amount, along with the scholarship," Nebraska athletic director Bob Devaney said.

"The full amount is due the athlete, just as it is any other student," agreed Indiana athletic director Ralph Floyd.

Devaney, Floyd and University of Georgia athletic director Vince Dooley all said the extra \$1,200 per year may help solve some of the problems with agents in college sports. Although they admitted that the extra money won't eliminate all temptation, they hope it would put players in a better position to say "no" to breaking NCAA rules.

"It would be a plus if we could reduce some of this stuff," Kentucky athletic director Cliff Hagan said. But he added, "When is a hundred dollars enough - when someone offers you \$1,000 or \$2,000 that you don't have to pay back until when and if you sign (a pro contract)? When is a one gold chain enough - one TV?"

But Dooley said, "It is an action the NCAA can take that might be some help in addressing the problem with agents.

"Also, the present rule discriminates against the student-athlete," Dooley added. "A regular student is eligible for (more than) twice the amount available to the student-ath-

lete through the Pell Grant program. That is against the basic philosophy of the NCAA, which states that an athlete is entitled to no

more or less than a regular student." Schultz said he feels certain the change in

the Pell Grant rule will pass overwhelmingly. "I think in Division I-A, they want it to go to the maximum," Schultz said. "Basically, that is because they feel the student-athlete is entitled to it, and the universities should not be using that money for other programs."

Under NCAA rules, a student-athlete is not allowed to hold a job during the academic year. Thus, for many athletes from low-income homes, the Pell Grant is the only source of money within NCAA rules. Several athletic directors noted that athletes often have no money for transportation, phone calls, movies or food after athletic dining halls are closed.

But athletic directors apparently are opposed to changing the rule regarding parttime jobs. Said Indiana's Floyd: "I think when athletes get some time, they should apply it to their studies, because that is the reason

they're in school." "The problem would be, 'Is it a legitimate job?" Hagan said. "That (allowing part-time jobs) was cut out years ago because the (NCAA) found that in many cases the ath-

letes' jobs were not legitimate. People were just showing up for paychecks. "Besides, when is a student-athlete going to have some time to be a student? Seasons

have gotten to be year-around, anyway." The ADs also indicated they remain opposed to athletic departments giving stipends

"There is the possibility that some schools

could do it in some sports, but I don't believe there is a school in the country that could pay men and women in all the sports," Devaney said. "Where do you start and stop? It would be nice if we could provide (money), but I don't think it's financially possible, except in one or two sports.

"A lot of schools couldn't even do that. That would really give one school an advantage over another."

The athletes who have lost their senior seasons of eligibility for accepting money from Walters and Bloom are football players Cris Carter of Ohio State, Alvin Miller of Notre Dame and Charles Gladman and Teryl Austin of Pittsburgh, plus basketball player Derrick McKey of Alabama.

Walters' and Bloom's activities are under investigation by a federal grand jury in Chicago. The grand jury is considering possible charges of fraud, extortion and violation of the RICO (Racketeering Influenced Corrupt Organizations) Act against the agents, who have admitted breaking NCAA rules but denied breaking any laws.

