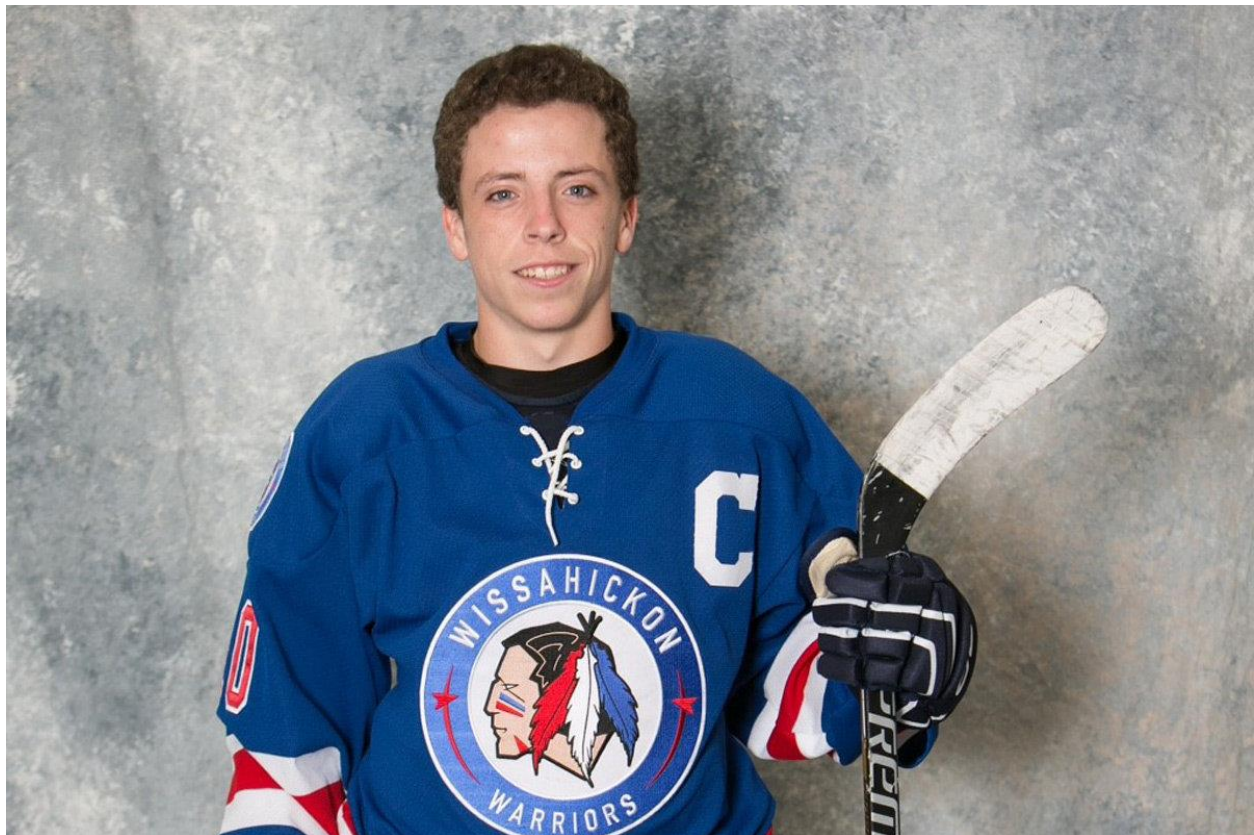


Young hockey player dies of head trauma

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- By Michelle Bond STAFF WRITER



Nick Bond, the captain of his hockey team, had scored a goal during the game Sunday morning, but he left the rink after telling his coach — who was also his father — that he had a headache.

Moments after leaving the ice at the Wissahickon Skating Club in Chestnut Hill, the Springfield (Montgomery County) High School senior collapsed and was taken to Einstein Medical Center, where surgeons operated to relieve pressure on his brain.

Bond died Monday afternoon. Coaches and parents said that they did not see Bond take any blows to the head and that he did not tell anyone he had been hit, but he died from complications from blunt-impact head trauma, the Philadelphia Medical Examiner's Office said Tuesday. The office ruled his death an accident.

The Wissahickon Skating Club was his favorite place, a second home for the 18-year-old “since he was old enough to put on skates,” said Kevin Hamel, the club’s president, whose son grew up with Bond.

At the skating club, Bond blossomed from a shy, reserved little boy to “this amazing young man who was courageous both on the ice and off,” Hamel said. To lose Bond when he was on the cusp of college and a bright future “is devastating beyond belief,” he said.

“He was, without question, the epitome of what we want most in our children,” Hamel said. Bond was the youngest of four brothers. His father, Rob, in addition to coaching hockey at the club, has been an assistant varsity baseball coach at Springfield the last four seasons. His mother, Margaret, is a crossing guard for the school district and a passionate “hockey mom.”

Bond volunteered to help younger skaters and led “with confidence and compassion,” Hamel said. Although he was “somewhat diminutive, Nick fearlessly challenged every opposing player regardless of size,” the club president said.

“Year after year, Nick was selected by his teammates and coaches as team captain,” Hamel said. “When the team was down, Nick was that guy to score the first goal to start the turnaround.”

Bond also played football and lacrosse, and had played baseball for the Chestnut Hill Youth Sports Club, where his father formerly coached.

Dennis Primavera, Springfield’s head baseball coach, said everyone at the school loved the teenager. “The entire community has been hit real hard by this,” he said. “Stuff like this, where a great kid dies so young, shouldn’t happen.”

Players in Bond’s hockey club and its sister club in Ontario plan to put stickers on their helmets to honor Bond. The club planned to bring his teammates together Tuesday night, a practice night, for grief counseling. Several former teammates now in college, including one in West Virginia, planned to come.

Teen hockey player’s death leaves questions

Exactly how Nick Bond died is unclear. His supporters gathered for a game in his honor on ice where he played.

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- By Michaelle Bond and John Ryan Barwick STAFF WRITERS + mbond@phillynews.com ^ 610-313-8207 "@ MichaelleBond

Still stunned, Nick Bond’s grieving teammates gathered in the lounge of their Philadelphia skating club, where they had shared countless potlucks, and pondered two overwhelming questions:

Could they have done anything to prevent his death? And could this happen to them?

Bond, an 18-year-old senior at Springfield Township High School in Montgomery County, died Monday, a day after he unexpectedly collapsed at the Wissahickon Skating

Club after leaving the ice during a game. In the days since, his friends and family have struggled to make sense of what happened.

The Philadelphia Medical Examiner's Office ruled Bond's death accidental and said the teen died from complications from blunt-impact head trauma.

But no one saw Bond hit his head while he was on the ice last weekend, and without all the medical information, it was too soon to speculate about what happened, said Matthew Grady, a sports medicine pediatrician at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, who spoke with Bond's teammates earlier in the week.

"Sometimes we recognize there are things outside our control, and there's nothing we could do about it," Grady said Wednesday. "As far as we know right now, this was one of those times."

Grady, who came to the club with counselors from the hospital to talk to about 100 players, former players, and their parents, told them no one was to blame. He also advised the players to tell adults if they ever sustain a head injury.

Bond "certainly was playing a contact and collision sport, but it's still unclear what trauma occurred," Grady said. "And we don't know whether he had something underlying that put him more at risk."

After Grady and the counselors spoke Tuesday, Bond's teammates, siblings of players, and players who came back home from college played a hockey game, with a large photo of a smiling Bond wearing his Wissahickon Warriors jersey looking on.

Flyers captain Claude Giroux read on Wednesday about what happened to Bond and planned to send a "care package" to his parents and three older brothers, Jill Lipson, his personal assistant, said.

"The family is in his thoughts and prayers, and Claude just wants to let them know he's thinking about them," she said.

Coincidentally, Bond's coaches often described his hockey style as being like Giroux's. Bond skated at Wissahickon "since he was old enough to put on skates," club president Kevin Hamel said.

Charles Wroten, a 17-year-old junior at La Salle College High School, said he met Bond in middle school and played lacrosse with him before he transferred.

"One of the best individuals I have always looked up to as a friend and athlete," Wroten said of Bond, who was an organ donor.

Chase Luxton, 22, graduated from Springfield in 2013, and played football and baseball with Bond's older brother. Bond's father was his baseball coach. Luxton said the Bond family supported his family when his brother died.

Teammates who gathered at the skating club made a collage of photos on a poster. In the center, Hamel said, was a social media post Bond had written: "Let it be a lesson. Don't take anything for granted, because it can all be taken away in the blink of an eye."

Funeral arrangements were pending Wednesday night.