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Driver killed after chase

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Article Text:

State police say troopers were not tailing a motorist who died early last Saturday in a crash after he allegedly led them on a 3 1/2-minute chase south of the borough.

Jason E. Lockridge, 27, of the 800 block of Pintail Drive, Newport, ignored flashing lights and sped south on Route 34, at times reaching 80 mph, says Troop H spokeswoman Jackie Capriotti.

He was driving under a license suspended for DUI, she adds.

She says troopers driving north on Route 34 about 4:30 a.m. saw Lockridge run a stop sign at Fourth and Market streets. They turned around and began following the 1991 Buick Park Avenue with their emergency lights on.

Lockridge allegedly sped up, leading police on a chase several miles down the curvy road, she says.

Fell behind

The police cruiser fell behind because of Lockridge's high speed and didn't actually see the crash, says Capriotti, who conducted a press conference about 1 p.m. last Saturday outside the Newport barracks.

Police surmise he was going too fast for a curve just south of Pine Grove Road in Centre Township.

The car crossed the road and went off the shoulder, tumbling down into a grassy field.

The troopers "came up when the car was rolling," Capriotti says.

No seatbelt

Lockridge, who wasn't wearing his seatbelt, was thrown from the vehicle and landed on the west shoulder of the road where he was pronounced dead at the scene. The vehicle ended up on the east side of the road facing north, Capriotti says.

Police do not plan to conduct an internal investigation, and the Perry County District Attorney's Office is not investigating the crash, she adds.

The county coroner will conduct an autopsy and toxicology tests, she says. "I believe if he had been wearing his seatbelt ... he may have survived the crash."

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