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Former MB star volleyball player is hit by car, dies

Ashlyn Dyer, who played at Mira Costa and USC, was training for the L.A. Marathon when a vehicle struck her. She died Sunday in San Francisco.

By Larry Altman
DAILY BREEZE

A Mira Costa High School graduate struck by a hit-and-run driver in San Francisco as she trained for the Los Angeles Marathon has been removed from life support and has died from her injuries, friends said Tuesday.

Ashlyn Dyer, 27, who played volleyball at USC and moved to San Francisco, died Sunday at San Francisco Medical Center. Family members donated her organs for transplant.

"That's the only way she would want to leave this Earth was to make sure she could fulfill other people's lives," said Mira Costa's volleyball coach, Dae Lea Aldrich.

Dyer, on her regular morning run through the Presidio on March 2, suffered irreversible brain injuries when a motorist struck her and left her in a ditch at the side of the road. A lack of oxygen caused the brain injury, which might have been preventable had she received prompt medical attention.

A park worker found Dyer just before 7 a.m., about 10 minutes after she was hit. She was unconscious and not breathing.

"If someone had called 911 right away, those few minutes might have saved her life," U.S. Park police Detective Sgt. Robert Jansing said.

Dyer carried no identification, but police figured out her first name from her iPod. When they turned it on, it displayed "Hello Ashlyn."

Detectives searched Apple records and found she was the only Ashlyn with a driver's license in San Francisco, Jansing said.

Dyer remained in a coma until her death. Investigators have little to go on to find the

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driver, but the hit-and-run case has received extensive news coverage in the Bay Area.

"There were no witnesses and nobody has come forward to admit responsibility," Jansing said. "We were thinking maybe when it was announced she passed away, the guilt might get to them. So far not yet."

Police have no idea what vehicle struck her, but recovered some evidence at the scene that is undergoing analysis at an FBI lab. The driver's car likely was damaged and Jansing said he has no doubt that the motorist knows he hit someone.

No skid marks were found on the roadway.

The driver would face federal hit-and-run and vehicular manslaughter charges rather than state charges because the Presidio, an Army installation until 1994, is U.S. land.

"It's just a shock that somebody would not stop," Aldrich said. "Nobody can understand that. I don't think we are even bred to believe that or do those things."

Aldrich recalled Dyer as an enthusiastic setter who helped the Mustangs to the 1995 and 1996 state Final Four volleyball championships after her family moved to Manhattan Beach. In 1996, Dyer served as the team's co-captain.

"She just contributed so much to us," Aldrich said. "All of us at Mira Costa and the kids who knew her are really devastated."

Dyer ran in recent marathons in San Francisco and Phoenix and was preparing for Sunday's race in Los Angeles.

"She would always do that for kind of self-help and therapy," said longtime friend Andy Krikorian. "Running was the way she did it."

Although she studied broadcast journalism at USC, Dyer found a job in retail as a buyer with Red Envelope in San Francisco, which sells gifts online and through catalogs.

She lived with three roommates.

"She did like the city. She enjoyed the diversity, the people," Krikorian said. "She took full advantage of its resources and the environment around her."

Dyer enjoyed exploring and going places written up in the newspaper, including music venues and artistic events.

"She was a real go-getter," Krikorian said.

Dyer spent time traveling -- Italy, Australia, New Zealand -- and a couple of years ago returned to Mira Costa during the summer to coach volleyball.

Aldrich said Dyer told her that teaching might be in her future.

"The kids just loved her," Aldrich said. "She just had a gift with working with kids and they were inspired by her. She was a great role model with everybody she came in contact with."

Dyer is survived by her parents, Bruce and Marsha, and two sisters.