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Jaalen Watkins, former OBU football player, dies in car accident at age 21



By: OBU News Bureau

July 08, 2014

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208.

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. -- Jaalen Watkins, a junior kinesiology major at Ouachita Baptist University, died from injuries sustained in a car accident on Thursday, July 3. He was a passenger in a car that was involved in a two-vehicle accident on I-630 in Little Rock, according to Arkansas State Police.

Watkins, the 21-year-old son of Keith and Sharon Watkins of Little Rock, was a former member of the Ouachita Tiger football team. A standout running back in high school at Central Arkansas Christian and Joe T. Robinson High School, he earned the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* Metro Sophomore of the Year honor in 2008.

A transfer student to Ouachita last fall, Watkins was a redshirt sophomore for the Tigers. Todd Knight, OBU head football coach, said Watkins suffered knee problems during spring practice and opted to sit out the remainder of the season.

"Jaalen had many friends, met no strangers and was well liked and respected by both the coaching staff and team," Coach Knight said. "He loved playing the game of football and seemed to never have a bad day. He will be missed but not forgotten at OBU. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family at this time."

"Jaalen was a hard-working individual who exemplified the character that every student at Ouachita should possess," said classmate Dixon Land, a junior Christian studies major at Ouachita and sports editor for *The Signal* campus newspaper. He noted that Watkins "worked hard in the classroom, on the field with his teammates and in his relationships with friends and family."

"We will all remember Jaalen for his love of God first, family second and others third," Land added. "He will surely be missed."

A funeral service will be held Friday, July 11, at 10:30 a.m. at The Church at Rock Creek in Little Rock. Visitation will be held at the church on Thursday evening, July 10, from 6 to 8 p.m.