



New Zealand baseball player Lincoln Holdzkom killed in car accident in USA

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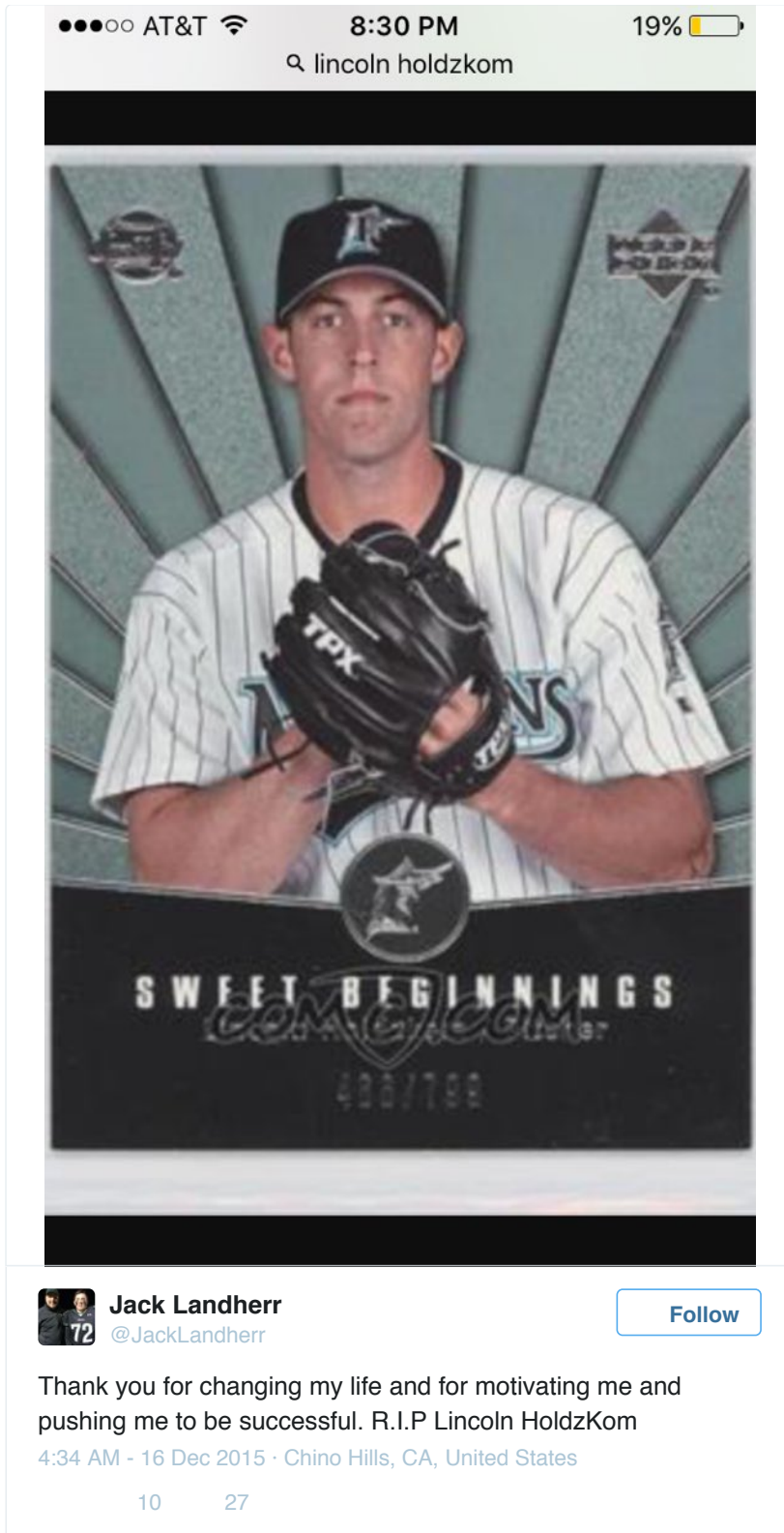
Lincoln Holdzkom died at Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Centre.

PHOTOSPORT

New Zealand baseball representative Lincoln Holdzkom has been killed in a car accident in California.

Reports in the US said the 33-year-old pitcher died at Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Centre at 6:03am on Sunday (local time).

His death has been confirmed by Baseball New Zealand chief executive Ryan Flynn, who said the organisation was "devastated by the loss".



"The only thing we're doing now is showing support to John and the whole family," Flynn said.

"We thought he would have a long career with us as a player, coach and a leader and so this is as big of a loss that we could have have in our programme.

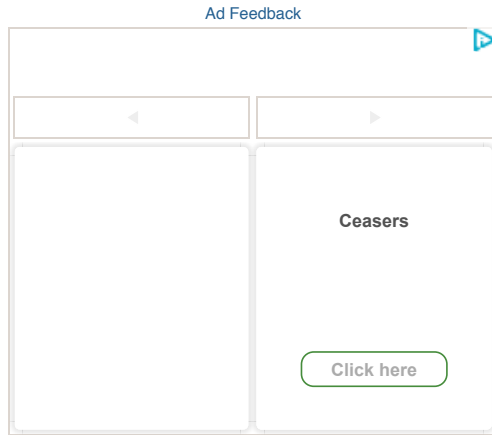
"It's caught us by surprise, a lot of people are devastated and a lot of people in New Zealand still don't know."

COLLISION

The California Highway Patrol said Holdzkom was driving on the 57 Freeway when he veered off the road for an unknown reason and collided with a metal guardrail.

Holdzkom was born and raised in America but qualified for the Diamondbacks through his Kiwi father who emigrated to the States as a youngster.

His younger brother John became the first New Zealand representative to play in Major League Baseball (MLB) when he debuted for the Pittsburgh Pirates last year.



Despite his American accent, Flynn said Holdzkom was a "Kiwi through and through" recalling how he quit his job in 2012 to help the country qualify for the World Baseball Classic.

"He coined the phrase Kiwi pride worldwide," he added.

"He was more excited about playing for New Zealand in the World Baseball Classic qualifiers than anyone and was taking a leadership role and wanted to move to New Zealand to help kids get better in the game that he loved."

The Diamondbacks are deep in preparation for the World Baseball Classic in February where Holdzkom was to play a leading role, said Flynn.

"Lincoln was going to be the captain of our pitching staff. We talked to him on Friday, he's our anchor, he's the guy. It's just caught us completely out of the blue."

TALENTED

Holdzkom was a talented pitcher who came close to making the MLB on several occasions.

His career started with a scholarship to Arizona Western Junior College before being drafted in the seventh round by the Florida Marlins, making their 40-man roster in 2004.

After five years he was traded to the Chicago Cubs and spent a season there before signing a free agent contract with the Boston Red Sox in 2007, making their 40-man roster a year later.

His most recent minor league contract ended in 2009 with Pittsburgh.

Flynn said the national team plan on honouring Lincoln in numerous ways in the WBC qualifiers and beyond. More details about Lincoln, his life in baseball and funeral service announcements will be posted on [Baseball New Zealand's website](#) and social media pages in the coming days and weeks.

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