

# Former FGCU shortstop Alex Diaz killed in car crash on Friday morning

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(Photo: Corey Perrine, Corey Perrine)

FORT MYERS -- Former Florida Gulf Coast University three-year starting shortstop Alex Diaz was killed in a car crash Friday morning.

According to the Miami Dade Police Department, Diaz was driving a Dodge Ram 1500 in his hometown of Miami "at a high rate of speed" and lost control, "causing it to slide into the rear of" a home. It then struck a concrete pillar. Diaz was pronounced deceased at the scene.

FGCU coach Dave Tollett spoke with Diaz's mom, Nikki, on Friday morning. The 24-year-old Diaz is also survived by his dad, Sindo, and younger sister, Ashley.

As of 1 p.m. Friday, funeral services had not been planned, but Tollett said the Eagles would be there in great numbers.

Diaz had recently finished online courses to get his FGCU degree in criminal justice and was to be employed as a firefighter with Marion County soon.

His former teammates took the loss very hard.

"They've been here in my office all day, just sitting in here," said Tollett, struggling for words. "I mean they're like brothers. It feels so empty."

Late Friday morning, Zach Tillery, a former FGCU pitcher and third baseman who was drafted by the Minnesota Twins in the 13th round of 2014, posted several pictures and this on Diaz's Facebook wall: "Lost for words right now. My throwing partner, my friend, my brother I love you Alex Diaz. RIP."

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(<http://archive.naplesnews.com/sports/college/fgcu/fgcu-notebook-barron-collier-grad-tillery-helps-baseball-team-to-strong-finish-to-regular-season-ep-342518732.html>)

A grief counselor met with the Eagles at 1 p.m. Friday.

Before that, Tollett said he went to the shortstop position on his infield and contemplated for 30 minutes.

"That's the only thing that really helped me a little bit," Tollett said.

The 6-foot-2, 190-pound Diaz started at FGCU from 2012-14 after getting a medical hardship due to injury as a true freshman. A product of Miami's Ferguson High, Diaz was drafted in the 40th round by the Washington Nationals in 2010, but put off pro ball to play for FGCU. He's Ferguson High's single-season leader in hits (33) and steals (12).

Known as an outstanding fielder, Diaz batted .236 with 23 RBIs in 2014, his final FGCU season. He also stole seven bases on nine attempts and had a fielding percentage of .935.

Diaz had kept in close touch with his former Eagles teammates, traveling to Fort Myers for some home games and catching them when they played in Miami.