

On behalf of Warren & Kara Jennings.

"We would be very grateful if you would be willing to circulate the attached letter to the MX Community with regards to our son Joshua Jennings. We would like to put to rest the rumours and speculation about his motorcross accident and his actual cause of death."

Out of respect for Joshua Jennings and our family, we write this to put to rest the speculation about Joshua's accident and the cause of his death.

We also believe it is our responsibility to the MX community to share our knowledge and our learnings now that we have received his post mortem.

Joshua went out onto the Clewer Sands track the day of his accident exactly the same way he did since the day he started riding - Airoh Helmet, Leatt neck brace, goggles, elbow guards, chest plate, knee braces, MX shirt, MX pants, MX boots and gloves. Sadly, nothing saved him. Joshua went over a jump and fell. The jump was no smaller or bigger than the ones he has done 100 times at his local tracks. He was unconscious when we got to him and remained that way until he passed away.

According to the forensic post mortem conducted by the State pathologist Joshua fractured his neck. We are not sure exactly which vertebrae were fractured but we believe it would have been between C3 – C5 of the cervical vertebrae (top neck bones) as well as severe injury to the spinal cord. Joshua also broke his left leg. He sustained NO head, skull or brain injuries.

Joshua's organs were not donated as the Cosmos Life Hospital did not offer the facilities to carry out the procedure.

What actually kills a person whose neck is broken?

It is correct that not every broken neck leads to death.

Christopher Reeves survived his but of course suffered quadriplegia as a result of his injuries. The cervical vertebrae (neck bones) are the top 8 bones in the spinal column. As such, they are part of our "backbone" and they also serve to protect the spinal cord from injury. If the vertebrae are broken, but the spinal cord is unharmed, then no neurological problems result. Of course these people are treated very carefully while the bones heal to avoid in post-injury damage to the cord.

If the cord is bruised or partially damage, then quadriplegia or other neurological problems may occur. If the cord is severely injured and this injury is at or above the fifth cervical vertebra (C5), then breathing may be effected and the person may die from asphyxiation. The portion of the cord that controls breathing is about C3 through C5. If the damage is below C6, then paralysis may occur, but breathing would be left intact.

However, if the cord is severely injured or transected (cut or torn in half), there is sudden loss of nerve supply to the entire body, including the heart and blood vessels. The victim may suffer a sudden and profound drop in blood pressure (BP), which can lead to a very sudden demise. Often, immediate. This is called "spinal shock."

So, the victim could be completely okay, except for a cervical fracture, or could be partially paralyzed, or could be rendered quadriplegic, or could die over 2 to 4 minutes from asphyxia, or could die almost instantaneously from spinal shock.

Joshua died doing what he loved and as the cautious rider that he was we can only believe that at that split second that he decided to take that jump, he believed he had it under control. Something went wrong and we will never know what went through his mind at that specific moment but we can only hope that behind his helmet was a smile. We can only hope and pray that he felt no pain and died peacefully.

Thank you for all the support we have received from our MX family and we wish you all nothing but the best for you and your family. We know Joshua was such a big part of so many lives and his fellow riders. We know that they hurt as much as we do, but he is all around and watching over us all.

Regards,
Warren and Kara Jennings