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Arkansas sheriff confirms death of former KSU quarterback Dylan Meier
BY KELLIS ROBINETT -The Wichita Eagle

Former Kansas State quarterback Dylan Meier died Monday while on a family hiking trip in Arkansas' Ozark National Forest.

Meier, a native of Pittsburg, was 26.

According to Newton County (Ark.) Sheriff Keith Slape, Meier fell nearly 100 feet to his death while sightseeing on a popular trail.

Tim Ernst, a nature photographer and writer who lives in the area, was the first to reach Meier after his fall. He said Meier was hiking along the top of a trail, parallel to a tall line of bluffs, and slipped on a smooth surface of rocks.

"He simply went over to the edge, where a large number of rocks and boulders sit and was standing there for the view," Ernst said. "It's level and it's not slick. It's a spot where a lot of people go through. It's not a dangerous trail or dangerous location, but he happened to fall."

Ernst said he helped officials from across the area transport Meier out of the national park. Ernst said Meier was joined on the trip by brother Shad, a former K-State tight end who played in the NFL, and Kerry, a former wide receiver/quarterback at Kansas, who is preparing for the upcoming NFL Draft. Ernst said parents Valerie and Dennis were also there.

He did not speak with any of them, but "they were understandably quite shaken."

Meier was a member of the Wildcat football team from 2002-06. He started 11 games at quarterback, threw for 2,287 yards and 12 touchdowns and was a member of the 2003 Big 12 Championship squad.

In 2004, he became the first Kansas native to start a game at quarterback during the Bill Snyder era. In high school, he helped Pittsburg High play in back-to-back Class 5A championship games.

Off the field, Meier was an Academic All-Big 12 performer.

In remembrance of Meier, K-State will honor Meier with a video tribute and moment of silence prior to Saturday's Purple/White spring game.

"Dylan was an absolutely unbelievable young man in all the right ways," K-State football coach Bill Snyder said in a statement. "He was a leader in our program and was mature well beyond his years. He possessed all the intrinsic values that make one successful and guided others in that same direction. His spirit and passion for life, adventure and for others will live on in the hearts and minds of all of us that he touched. We will dedicate our spring game and our upcoming season to the memory of Dylan, the spirit he brought to this program, and to his family."

Funeral arrangements are pending.

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