

Middle Township soccer star charged with DWI after fatal crash

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

HAMILTON TOWNSHIP - A Cape May County man who plays professional soccer in two leagues was charged with driving while intoxicated after a crash that left one person dead.

State Police allege that Matthew Maher, 24, of Cape May Court House was driving his Cadillac Escalade at a high rate of speed March 7, at around 2:51 a.m., when he struck a mini-van from behind.

According to State Police spokesman Sgt. Gerald Lewis, troopers were called to mile marker 18.6 on the eastbound side of the Atlantic City Expressway in Hamilton Township. Lewis said the driver of a 2007 Escalade allegedly struck the second vehicle from behind, forcing the vehicle over a guardrail and causing it to roll over and stop on the driver's side. Meanwhile, the Escalade moved over to the left shoulder with severe front end damage.

Lewis said the driver of the mini-

van was partially ejected and determined to be deceased at scene. The dead man had no identification and police were trying to identify him through fingerprints. The deceased was taken to Shore Memorial Hospital in Somers Point for autopsy.

Maher was charged with driving while intoxicated after a field sobriety test and a blood sample was taken. Lewis said the investigation is ongoing and other charges may be filed pending the completion of the investigation by the Atlantic County

Prosecutor's Office.

Maher attended Cape Christian Academy and Middle Township High School, where he was the school scoring leader, played for the Cape Express Youth Soccer Club, and was a captain on the Temple University soccer team in 2005-06. He also played in the Premier Development League (PDL) with the Ocean City Barons.

According to his website, he was entering his second season as a professional soccer player with the Carolina Railhawks of the USL and

indoor soccer with the New Jersey Ironmen of the MISL. Maher and his brother Anthony run the Maher Brothers Pro Touch Soccer Camp in the area.

Maher is also listed as a spokesperson for Athletes In Action, a Christian sports ministry, and has residences in Cary, N.C. and Newark. He is the son of former Lower Township Police Chief and current Cape May County Undersheriff John Maher.

Red Cross merger expands resources, joins three counties

By ROBIN BUEHLER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE - At a time when many nonprofit organizations and businesses "tend to fade away" when faced with economic hardships, one local nonprofit is recommitting itself to the community by merging with another organization from two adjoining counties.

The American Red Cross in Cape May County announced Monday that it has merged with the Atlantic/Cumberland counties chapter to create the American Red Cross Southern Shore Chapter.

The merger took effect four months ago, after the organization's board of directors agreed that it was the right thing to do.

"Organizations like this tend to fade away (when facing hard economic times, but) we are making a commitment," said Jim Rutala, chairman of the organization's board of directors.

He noted that mergers are not anything new. The Atlantic and Cumberland counties' chapters merged approximately a decade ago, and the merger between the Atlantic/Cumberland chapter and Cape May County's "is more than a new name and expanded jurisdiction. This is a new opportunity to strengthen the Red Cross disaster, health and safety and blood services for residents of Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland counties."

For example, should a disaster ever occur in Cape May County or one of the other two counties, the county in which the disaster took place could pull from the other two for resources, such as volunteers, shelter and more.

Atlantic and Cumberland counties serve as evacuation routes, Rutala noted.

In order to fulfill that commitment, however, the Southern Shore Chapter, which now serves approximately 500,000 residents over nearly 1,300 square miles, will be recruiting and train-

ing volunteers to assist in disaster relief and other services that the entity provides. To find out more about volunteering, residents can contact one of the local offices.

In Atlantic County or the surrounding areas, resident can go to 850 North Franklin Boulevard in Pleasantville or call (609) 646-8330.

In Cumberland County, go to 21 East Main Street in Millville or call (856) 413-0909, and Cape May County

residents can still go to the Red Cross' office at 34 East Mechanic Street in Cape May Court House. The number there is (609) 465-7382.

The merger of the two Red Cross chapters also didn't take place overnight or just for the sake of consolidation, Rutala said.

The Cape May chapter approached the Atlantic/Cumberland chapter approximately six months ago. He indicated that the

chapter was experiencing some financial hardships. He did not elaborate what they were, but Southern Shore Chapter Executive Director Pamela Grites said, "We have to raise every dollar to be viable."

Red Crosses do not receive financial assistance from the government or from the national American Red Cross organization.

Grites further noted she is unaware of the actual dollar

amount the Cape May chapter's operating budget was prior to the merger, but speculated that it was in the vicinity of \$150,000 to \$170,000.

There are, however, several fundraisers in the works, including an upcoming golf outing at Wildwood Country Club on April 22.

The money raised goes toward the services and aid provided to local families in times of crisis.

WIB Professional Development Conference March 26

By JANICE BROWN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COUNTY - When Vicki Clark began her work in 2004 as president of the Cape May County Chamber of Commerce, there were numerous areas that piqued her interest for developing new programming. In particular she was hearing from many of the woman business owners and woman members that there was a pressing need for them to have seminars dedicated solely to the concerns that women experience in the work world.

This plea lead Clark to propose the Women in Business Professional Development Conference, now in its fourth year, and she cites this as "an event of which I am particularly proud," in that its response to the request of Chamber members, especially since no other organization has been offering a conference of this kind.

This year's theme is "Maximizing Potential in a Challenging Climate," which is a timely and much-needed focus according to Clark. She explained in a recent interview that each year the conference committee members meet regularly to combine their unique expertise on a variety of topics and to design a program responsive to the concerns of Chamber members and past attendees.

Jennifer P. Young, External Affairs Field Director at Verizon, is Committee Chair,

and she has guided the members to formulate a host of activities that will highlight the kinds of challenges women face in competing for business and that will facilitate connections and strategic partnerships.

Keynote speaker is Captain Cari B. Thomas, Commanding Officer of USCG Training Center Cape May, who will share her lively insights on "The Changing Image of Women in a Male Dominated Workforce." In addition there are breakout sessions on marketing and promotion, dealing with negative people, ways to maximize new employees, customer service, and self-renewal, all of which will be conducted by local women business leaders. The day culminates with a wine and cheese networking reception.

Numerous local businesses are generously supporting the event through donations, which is gratifying to the Chamber, given today's economic climate.

"I'm excited about this year's conference and am

looking forward to the opportunity to interact with so many dynamic businesswomen," said Clark.

The date of the Women in Business Conference is Thursday, March 26, from 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. It will be held at the Golden Inn Hotel and Conference Center, 78th and Oceanfront, Avalon. Cost

is \$50 for Chamber members, \$65 for non-members, and includes lunch buffet and hors d'oeuvres at the reception. Registration deadline is March 19. Contact the Cape May County Chamber of Commerce at (609) 465-7181 or via email: sara@cmchamber.com.

WCM joins TULIP program

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY - The Borough of West Cape May had decided to participate in a liability insurance program to offer insurance to vendors who might not otherwise be covered.

Mayor Pam Kaithern said the Tenant User Liability Insurance Policy (TULIP) is offered by an affiliate of the borough's insurer.

"It offers vendors and non-profits the ability to obtain low-cost insurance," Kaithern said.

She said the program allows vendors and non-profits using the borough's facilities, including Wilbraham Park, to register and obtain their own insurance if they do not already have insurance. Kaithern said groups need insurance for events such as the Lima Bean Festival, and it would be up to the group putting on an event to make sure participating vendors

have liability insurance. She said a vendor's homeowner's insurance might add to the home policy, and non-profits may already carry the appropriate insurance.

"Those who don't have that kind of policy, that's where TULIP comes in," Kaithern said.

Kaithern said the borough was not advising people on their insurance needs, saying it was up to the individual to determine the need and level of coverage.

Kaithern said TULIP plans are not something unusual.

"The more I've looked around the Internet, this is not something new. It's new to us, but it's in place all over the country," she said.

Kaithern said the borough was advised the cost could be as low as \$40. The borough has registered with the insurance carrier and is waiting for information. It's an Internet-based program, and vendors could pay with a credit card. Kaithern said insurance verification would be part of the application process.

Police

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Frazier's hands. Police allege Frazier then produced two large fillet-type knives, one in each hand, while continuing to advance on the officers, constantly yelling that he was going to kill them.

The officers backed up several times as Frazier advanced on them, while they continually ordered Frazier to drop the weapons. The officers then discharged two full cans of pepper mace and Frazier threw the knives in the direction of the officers. Police said Frazier continued to resist arrest before being handcuffed.

Lower Township Police Chief Edward Donohue said this is the third time in less than a year township officers have been threatened with bodily harm by suspects with edged weapons.

Last summer, a man with a knife threatened police officers at the Villas Wawa, and in the second incident a man threatened to kill police officers with a large machete. Donohue said in all three cases, officers were able to de-escalate the situation through mechanical and physical force in lieu of deadly force, which police said could have certainly been an option in all three cases.

Donohue said this is a testament to the officers' training and control while dealing with these highly stressful situations.

Frazier was charged with the following offenses: aggravated assault on a police officer, terroristic threats, possession of a weapon, possession of a weapon for unlawful purpose and resisting arrest.

Frazier was transferred to Cape May County Regional Medical Center for treatment of a minor self-inflicted knife wound to the chest which occurred before police arrived on scene. He was then lodged in the Cape May County Jail on \$75,000 cash bail.

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