

ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Northwood football team pays tribute to Crean Lutheran's Garrett Cox

By [TIM BURT](#)

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Crean Lutheran football players and coaches were moved by Northwood's show of support last week in honor of Garrett Cox, the Saints popular football player, who died in June.

Led by first-year head coach Phil Roh, players from Northwood dropped by Crean and presented the Saints with an autographed No. 44 Northwood jersey in honor of Cox, the linebacker and running back. Cox wore No. 44 for Crean Lutheran.

"I was moved by Northwood's generosity," said Crean Lutheran's first year head Coach Matt Bowman. "Coach Roh is a class act. Their team shirts said 'Family' and they really showed that. Their whole varsity

signed a 44 jersey and said no one on their team would wear 44 next season.

"Northwood's players also shared a card with us. Several of them said they were thinking about us and praying for us during this difficult time. Football is a brotherhood and this just shows you how this game, and the young men who play it can unite whole communities together.

"I shared the photos and videos we took with the Cox family and Mr. Cox (Garrett's father) said he was very touched and encouraged by Northwood's support. He says thank you from the bottom of his heart."

Crean Lutheran's executive director Brian Underwood first shared Northwood's visit on July 22, calling it "an extraordinary act of kindness and brotherhood extended to Crean Lutheran."

"We're still a community that's grieving but God has been good to give us support like that of Northwood to help us through," Bowman, the football coach, added.

Cox, 18, died June 24 at 1:55 a.m. when he was hit by a vehicle near the 17th Street on-ramp off the 55 in Santa Ana, according to police.

The Tustin resident was an All-CIF football player last year for Crean Lutheran, where he transferred his sophomore year.

The 6-foot Cox was named the Academy League's defensive player of the year, helping the Saints reach the semifinal round of the CIF-Southern Section East Valley Division playoffs for the first time in school history. He was also named to the Irvine all-city team.

Roh and the Northwood program could relate to the death of Cox. In 2008, Northwood mourned the loss of

15-year-old Dylan Bradshaw, who died after a football practice. Roh was offensive coordinator at Northwood at the time.

"When when we heard of Crean Lutheran's loss of Garrett Cox, we couldn't help but remember the tragic loss of one of our own in 2008, Dylan Bradshaw," Roh said Tuesday. "I remember the outpouring of support our program received from a number of coaches back then, so we felt it was the right thing to do now to extend our condolences and love to Coach Bowman, his team, and the Crean Lutheran football family.

"A few of our players actually grew up playing football with Garrett and they all remembered him as being a tenacious and intense competitor on the field, but a kind and compassionate human being off it. And because football, more than any other sport, I think, is a fraternity, a loss like this is inevitably felt by all of our members. We just wanted to make sure that the community at Crean knew they had our support.

"No one on our football team will wear number 44 this year and while that number has great significance to the two-way starter who was planning on wearing it, he, too, felt it was the right thing to do so he gave the number up in Garrett's honor.

"All of these things are just small steps in keeping the memory of Garrett and Dylan alive."

After Bradshaw's death, members of the Beckman football team attended a candlelight vigil for Bradshaw.

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