

The Augusta Chronicle (GA)

Originally created 01/04/98

Late Wolverines wrestler waited too long to shed weight, school says

By The Associated Press

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (AP) -- A Michigan wrestler who died during a workout last month tried to lose too much weight, too quickly, the school's wrestling coach told an investigator.

Dale Bahr likened Jeff Reese's crash weight-loss regimen to a student who waits until the night before a test to cram, according to an investigation by the school's Department of Public Safety.

The probe's findings were published in the Detroit Free Press on Saturday.

Ed Reese, the wrestler's father, told the newspaper Friday from the family's home in Wellsburg, N.Y., that Bahr gave his son just four days to lose 21 pounds, nearly 12 percent of his body weight.

Reese starved and dehydrated himself over several days, exercising hard Dec. 9 before collapsing and dying in a 92-degree room while trying to qualify for the 150-pound weight class.

Reese's father said Bahr gave his son little warning he would need to diet and exercise down from 174 pounds to 153 pounds, the maximum allowed for wrestling in the 150-pound class.

Reese had not wrestled at the 150-pound weight class all fall. He was moved to that level after the mother of another wrestler told Bahr she didn't want her son dieting down to 150 pounds, according to the university report released last week.

The Free Press said it could not reach Bahr to comment.

The investigative report -- obtained by the Free Press under a Freedom of Information Act request -- also said:

-- A university phone near the locker room where Reese collapsed had been unable to reach 911 emergency operators. Instead, assistant coach Joe McFarland, who supervised Reese during the four-hour weight-loss session before his death, called twice on a nearby pay phone before reaching 911. The report says the school since has fixed the university phone.

-- The ambulance arrived less than 15 minutes after Reese collapsed on the locker room floor after crawling on hands and knees to the scale.