

Seattle Man Dribbling Soccer Ball to Brazil Dies After Being Hit by Car

A man less than two weeks into a planned journey to dribble a soccer ball from his home city of Seattle to Brazil, the host nation for the 2014 World Cup, died on Tuesday after being struck by a car in Oregon, police and the man's supporters said.

Richard Swanson, 42, was struck as he walked on the shoulder of a road on the outskirts of Lincoln City just east of the Oregon coast, said Lincoln City Police Sergeant Randy Weaver. Swanson's soccer ball was found nearby, Weaver said.

Swanson's death was mourned in a post on the Facebook page titled "Breakaway Brazil," which he had used to document his planned journey. It was supposed to culminate with his arrival in Brazil in time for the World Cup, which begins in June 2014.

"It is with a heavy heart to notify you that Richard Swanson passed on this morning," said the post, signed "Team Richard." "His team, family, friends, and loved ones will miss him and love him dearly. You made it to Brazil in our hearts, Richard."

Swanson wrote on his Facebook page that he planned to dribble the ball from Seattle to Brazil and sought donations for the trip, which would take him through countries such as Mexico, Nicaragua and Colombia.

He is survived by two sons, aged 22 and 18, whom he mentioned in a YouTube video he uploaded in March.

In that video, Swanson explained that he was making the trip

after being laid off and having difficulty finding a new job.

He had worked in graphic design, after spending eight years as an investigator of suspected insurance fraud, he said in the video.

After losing his job, Swanson said he became “a little bummed out” and started thinking about what he wanted from life, leading him to the realization that he had always dreamed of attending the World Cup.

Because his children were grown, he had no mortgage payments and no job to protect, Swanson said in the video, “all the pieces seemed to fit and it felt right that I should be planning this trip.”

He set out from Seattle on May 1 carrying a sleeping bag in his backpack and sought out people to put him up along the way. He was scheduled to stop next at the coastal Oregon town of Newport, just over five miles (eight kms) west of the city where he died.

He had written, “NEWPORT help me out! Couch still needed.” on Facebook early on Tuesday morning.

© 2013 Thomson Reuters. All rights reserved.