

"He was just a great kid, a good athlete, hard-working, everything you want in a member of a high school sports team," Benitz said. "Our program is really saddened to hear the news."

Immediately after high school, Grimm began working for Reffner Motor Sports in Stevens Point, unloading cars from the previous race and getting them ready for the next, Reffner said.

"Matt worked in the shop, and in racing, that's 90 percent of the work," Reffner said.

Much of Grimm's work for the team involved maintaining the cars, his cousin said.

"He'd be looking for anything that might be falling off and tightening up nuts and bolts," Reffner said, adding that his cousin was more like a muscle-bound younger brother who lived life the way he worked out in the gym.

"He just wanted to do things right and then do them better," he said. "He was always looking to achieve a goal and then exceed it."

Grimm, who is also survived by his father, Eldon, is the 68th Wisconsin service member killed in Iraq and the first of 2007. He is also the second from Wood County killed in the war in the last six weeks.

Marine Lance Cpl. Jesse Tillery, 19, of Vesper died Dec. 2 from wounds during combat.

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