

## It Can Wait

Picture a high school football game. Your team is playing at their home stadium, and the crowd is rumbling with anticipation as their guys line up at the corner of the field. Suddenly, the team bursts across the field. Leading the pack is the player whom everyone can tell is the life of the team—not only is he an excellent athlete, but he’s also full of passion. The crowd feeds off of his erratic energy, cheering loudly until kickoff.

Now, picture the scene of a crash. Firetrucks and rescue squads surround a car, which has been totaled after running off the left shoulder of the road and colliding with two trees. The driver has suffered a serious head injury.

At the hospital, relatives, coaches, and friends congregate, holding onto hope for the driver to wake up. He dies two days later.

Unfortunately, this was reality for the family and friends of Gage Edwards, a former student of East Surry High School in North Carolina. Gage would have graduated in 2016 and gone onto college, where he would continue to play football and pursue his passions. His life was cut short on January 31, 2015, because he was texting and driving (Merrill, 2015).

One in four car accidents in the United States are caused by texting and driving. It’s six times more likely to cause an accident than driving while drunk. And yet, at any given time throughout any day, about 660,000 drivers are attempting to use their phones while driving (Texting and Driving Accident Statistics, n.d.).

Teenagers often feel invincible, like nothing in the world can touch or harm them. This may be part of the reason that teen driving and cellphone use statistics are so alarming. Eleven teenagers die each day as a result of texting and driving, and they are four times more likely than adults to crash while texting and driving.

If these statistics do not illustrate the consequences of texting and driving, then perhaps the second part of Gage Edwards' story will. Many people in Gage's life were crushed following his accident. He was his mother's life. She had sent the text that Gage was reading before he died. His father wishes that he had given Gage a sturdier car.

Although this tragedy is not the parents' fault, they will forever wish they had done something differently to save their son's life.

The football team felt lifeless without Gage. He had always been there to lift everyone's spirits when the game became tough. In fact, quitting crossed many players' minds—but they decided to keep playing for him, because they knew that is what Gage would do.

Each individual, whether they are a driver or a passenger, has a role in ending teen texting and driving. After all, 90 percent of teen drivers say they'd stop texting if a passenger asked them to (Texting while driving, 2016).

Take the pledge to never text and drive. You could save your family and friends a lot of heartache, as well as your own life.

References

- Merrill, E. (2015, December 10). Mother who lost son to distracted driving urges friends to put down phones. Retrieved November 27, 2017, from [http://www.espn.com/espn/otl/story/\\_/id/14321714/mother-shares-story-losing-son-dangers-distracted-driving](http://www.espn.com/espn/otl/story/_/id/14321714/mother-shares-story-losing-son-dangers-distracted-driving)
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