

Boy hurt at Speedway dies

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sightseeing — then the car race. O'Leary said he and Hodge both enjoy race cars and motorcycles. Christopher had also become a fan, and even at age 4 already was riding a regular bicycle.

"He was a little daredevil," O'Leary said. "He was a super kid."

It was Christopher's first visit to a professional race track.

Co-workers at Hesser Oldsmobile & Toyota in Janesville said the two fathers had planned the outing for weeks. Melissa Kuolt, a clerk, said Christopher was so excited about going to the race track,

he could not contain himself last Friday.

"He was just running around and all excited," she said. "It was a big thing."

'Such a sad thing'

Christopher's mother, Theresa Cronin, stayed behind in Janesville. According to friends, she and Hodge are not married, but have been together several years. They have no other children and declined comment Monday through a hospital representative.

Christopher's great-grandfather, James Cronin of Janesville, said the young boy was happy-go-lucky.

"He liked everything," Cronin

said. "He was a nice boy. It's such a sad thing."

O'Leary said Christopher's father is tormented by memories of his son asking Sunday if he could run to a concession stand to get a hot dog. Hodge insisted that Christopher stay seated. Moments later, the tire flew into the stands.

Maureen Kvapil, a friend who spent part of the weekend with the father-son group, remembered playful Christopher as "a cute little blond."

She said the boy's death was difficult to accept.

"You go to have fun," Kvapil said. "You don't think something like this could happen."