

JOY-RIDE CRASH SURVIVOR FACES NEGLIGENCE CHARGE

BYLINE: Pat Moore, Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

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A teenage passenger who survived a Palm City crash that killed four of his friends in December will face a misdemeanor negligence charge, prosecutors said Monday.

Florida Highway Patrol Trooper Cpl. Mark Zook filed a criminal complaint last week accusing Robert Marks, 14, of helping underage driver Chad McComas quietly push a car out of the McComas family driveway before they picked up their neighborhood friends and went on a "joy ride" on Dec. 3, prosecutors said. Marks was in bed sleeping when he received a telephone call from McComas asking him to come to his home at 1286 Evergreen Lane, Palm City, Marks family attorney **Lance Richard** said.

Both boys pushed the 1994 Audi onto the street, where McComas started the engine and eventually picked up their friends, investigators said. McComas lost control of the car on Southwest Pine Tree Lane.

Marks was seriously injured in the crash, which claimed the lives of Josh Michaels, 12; his brother, Sam Michaels, 10; Karen "Tori" Morris, 13; and Alicia Brennan, 14.

McComas, now 16, was charged last week with four counts of vehicular homicide and will be prosecuted in juvenile court.

Assistant State Attorney Robert Belanger said Marks will not be prosecuted through the judicial system but will be required to participate in a non-judicial juvenile program such as teen court, community service or junior ROTC.

pat_moore@pbpost.com