

Rangers star George, two others die in road crash

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Ifeanyi George, a striker with Nigeria Professional Football League side Enugu Rangers, on Sunday died in a road crash in Edo State.

George, alongside Emmanuel Ogbu, a member of Ranger's feeder team, and Eteka Gabriel, a footballer and friend of George, died after the vehicle they were travelling in bumped into a stationary truck.

The accident occurred around Onitsha-Agbor-Benin road while they were on their way to Lagos, after the Nigerian topflight league was suspended due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Media officer of Rangers, Nobert Okolie, confirmed the news to The PUNCH in a telephone interview.

Okolie told our correspondent that the incident occurred at Owa, near Abudu on the Benin-Agbor Expressway.

Rangers General Manager, Davidson Owumi, said. “ We just heard this disturbing news this (Sunday) morning and what we hear is not palatable. We call for prayers in this hour of pains.”

A Federal Road Safety Corps member, who refused to disclose his name when our correspondent called the Edo State Sector Command’s official phone, also confirmed that three occupants of the car died on the spot.

“From what they sent to us from Abudu, three persons died on the spot and they have been taken to the morgue, they have also cleared the road,” he told The PUNCH.

“We wait to get the full details tomorrow (Monday) before we go on air on the accident,” he added.

George joined the former Nigerian champions in 2017 – scoring his maiden goal against Kano Pillars in an NPFL game on April 23, 2017.

He was part of the Flying Antelopes’ campaign in the CAF Confederation Cup. His only goal in the competition was in the 1-1 draw against Al Masry at the Nnamdi Azikwe Stadium, Enugu.

On the international scene, he marked his debut in the country’s 2018 African Nations Championship qualifier against Benin Republic. However, he did not make the final cut for the championship, where Nigeria ended as runners-up in Morocco.

Meanwhile, Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Sunday Dare, the Nigeria Football Federation and the League Management Company on Sunday released separate statements to mourn the loss.

“Sad day for football. Again, the death of Ifeanyi George of Rangers in a ghastly motor accident concentrates the mind. A very painful death. Emmanuel Ogbu, a youth footballer died along with Ifeanyi. May God console their families. I share in their grief,” Dare wrote on Twitter.

“We are shocked to hear of the sad passing of striker Ifeanyi George and Emmanuel Ogbu, players of Rangers. May their souls rest in peace,” the NFF also tweeted.

“We sympathise with the club at this trying time and pray for the repose of the souls of the players,” LMC chairman Shehu Dikko said.