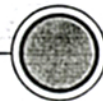


# LOCAL

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## \$1.3 million awarded teen hurt in big-rig accident

By **GREG HARDESTY**  
The Orange County Register

Travis Offtermatt was a star football player at Mission Viejo High School in April 2000 when a traffic accident nearly killed him.

Friday, a judge approved a \$1.3 million settlement for the Robinson Ranch teen-ager, who was thrown 40 feet from a pickup rear-ended by a speeding big-rig.

Although Offtermatt has recovered from his injuries, he no longer can participate in contact sports at school.

Because Offtermatt, 17, is a minor, a probate judge in Orange had to approve the award from defendant Baize Trucking Inc. of Crowell, Texas.

The settlement ended a lawsuit alleging negligence.

"Fortunately, the resolution of this case provides appropriate compensation to assist Travis in the future, as well as to provide for ongoing medical evaluations," said Larry Eisenberg, the youth's attorney.

Charles Manieri, attorney

for Baize Trucking, had no comment.

The Offtermatt family was not immediately available to comment.

According to the civil complaint, Brian Arnold Whitney was driving his truck 70-80 mph in a 45-mph zone on Interstate 15 near Route 138 in unincorporated San Bernardino County.

The brakes were out of adjustment on all the axles, diminishing Whitney's ability to stop, the lawsuit said.

He was cited for speeding and for the brake problem.

The smashup plunged Offtermatt into a coma for several days.

His bill at Loma Linda University Medical Center exceeded \$100,000, Eisenberg said.

"The facts of this case point to the serious need to enforce commercial truck owners and operators to have their vehicles maintained and in compliance with California law," he said.

### TODAY

#### Settlement nets teen \$1.3 million

**Courts** • A Robinson Ranch teen was awarded \$1.3 million for injuries suffered in an accident with a big-rig.