

Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S0167-577X(18)31169-8

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.matlet.2018.07.126>

Reference: MLBLUE 24692

To appear in: *Materials Letters*

Received Date: 27 March 2018

Revised Date: 9 July 2018

Accepted Date: 28 July 2018

Please cite this article as: F. Li, Z. Xu, K. Zhao, Y. Tang, Fabrication of ZrB₂-ZrC composite nanofibers with eutectic composition by electrospinning and carbothermal reduction, *Materials Letters* (2018), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.matlet.2018.07.126>

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Fabrication of ZrB₂-ZrC composite nanofibers with eutectic composition by electrospinning and carbothermal reduction

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Abstract: Addition of ZrC to ZrB₂ is favored to improve the fracture toughness of ZrB₂. In this paper, ZrB₂-ZrC composite nanofibers with eutectic composition are fabricated by electrospinning and carbothermal reduction. The precursors prepared by electrospinning are smooth and uniform. ZrB₂-ZrC composite nanofibers could be fabricated by heat-treatment of precursors at 1300°C in argon. Heat-treatment temperature influences the crystalline structure and grain size of nanofibers. The diameter of ZrB₂-ZrC composite nanofibers is about 250nm. The mole ratio of ZrB₂ and ZrC in the nanofibers is 47:53, very close to the eutectic composition of ZrB₂-ZrC composites. Some amorphous carbon is present in the nanofibers. The effect of heat-treatment temperature on amorphous carbon content is analyzed. The interface between ZrB₂ and ZrC nano-grains is characterized.

Keywords: ZrB₂-ZrC composite nanofibers; Eutectic composition; Electrospinning; Fibre technology; Microstructure

1. Introduction

Zirconium diboride (ZrB₂) possesses properties of low density, high melting point and strength, exceptional thermal and electrical conductivity [1]. It has wide applications in harsh environment such as hypersonic flight and aircraft engines [2]. However, the low fracture toughness and poor high-temperature stability have limited its applications [3]. In the past decades, many studies have been done on the

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