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HEALTH

Beer league saves a life



By MARIA CALABRESE, North Bay Nugget
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An automated external defibrillator was back in service Friday at Memorial Gardens after players used one to help revive a colleague who passed out on the bench during a game the previous night. (DAVE DALE The Nugget)

NORTH BAY - Quick-thinking beer leaguers worked as a team off the ice to save a life at Memorial Gardens.

The Thursday Hockey League played for about 50 minutes and were near the end of the game when one of the players on the bench slumped to the floor at about 10:30 p.m.

Sean Madigan and Justin Corbeil were on the bench with him and called for help.

"It was just kind of a whirlwind after that," Madigan said.

Dr. Rick Trenker, a family physician, and North Bay Police Service Const. Steve Chabbert, a former Centennial, were both off duty and pulling shifts during the game when their medical first response training kicked in to help one of the players.

Trenker performed mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and Chabbert administered chest compressions while Bruce Marietti, an acting administrator at St. Joseph-Scollard Hall Catholic Secondary School, operated one of the arena's automated external defibrillators.

Marietti was on the ice when he heard the commotion on the bench.

"I thought someone was hit with a puck or cut," he said.

He hustled for one of the arena's two defibrillators, applied the pads with the electrodes and the device walked the players through the next steps, advising when to shock, when to perform compressions, and analyzed if the compressions were too soft or hard.

First aid training and CPR is mandatory for the educator and other people at the scene playing that night.

"I don't think that anyone that does this training is expecting to use those skills," Marietti said.

The players cut off the man's jersey and were taking off his skates, and the device wouldn't shock when their hands were on him, they said.

They had revived the player before paramedics arrived.

As of Friday he was recovering at Health Sciences North in Sudbury.

This is the first time a defibrillator has been used at Memorial Gardens. There are 130 defibrillators throughout the district, and this is the fifth time one of these devices has been used to save a life, said Jean Guy Belzile, manager of Nipissing District Emergency Medical Services.

"Every time you save a life, it's a success. It's not just the patient, it's the family and the community," he said.

When a defibrillator is activated, information from the device is downloaded as a medical record to show how the device was used, if a shock was delivered and vital signs during treatment.

"It's all good information, and it's great for research and development for medical practise," Belzile said.

Memorial Gardens has been equipped with two defibrillators since 2005, and at \$8,000 apiece there was a lot of fundraising in the early years to get them.

Belzile and his family are among 13,000 cyclists who take part in the annual Becel Heart and Stroke Ride for Health in Toronto, making it the largest charity cycling event in Canada. The money they raise is brought back to the community for defibrillators and mannequins used during CPR training to demonstrate the device.

Heart and Stroke through the Chase McEachern Tribute Fund has allocated more than 3,000 defibrillators across the province. The fund is named after a Barrie boy with a heart condition who started a campaign to make defibrillators mandatory in arenas after he learned hockey great Mario Lemieux also had an irregular heartbeat.

He died in 2006 at the age of 11 after he collapsed during gym class.

Pete Palangio Arena and West Ferris Arena each have a defibrillator. All the machines are tested monthly, and pulling one out of the box automatically triggers a 911 medical call.

Defibrillators are not mandatory in schools, arenas and other public places in Ontario.

In Manitoba, they will be mandatory in all sports complexes and other public places by January 2014.

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