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Quick Response, AED Helps Save Heart Attack Victim Headed To Duke Game

POSTED: 3:19 pm EST December 16, 2004

UPDATED: 4:34 pm EST December 16, 2004



DURHAM, N.C. -- A life and death situation played out Sunday night just before Coach Mike Krzyzewski earned his 700th win at Duke University.

A fan of the University of Toledo was headed to Cameron Indoor Stadium to watch the Blue Devils play his team when he had a heart attack and collapsed in the parking lot.

Thanks to the quick response of people with him and two Duke police officers who had the equipment and training, Russell Monjar, 67, is on the road to recovery.

"Our response time was approximately one minute. Fortunately for him, we were right around the corner," said Officer Orlando Soto of the Duke Police Department. When they arrived, Soto and Officer David Johnson saw volunteers attempting CPR. "I checked Mr. Monjar's pulse and we didn't have any pulse, no breathing," Soto said. A paramedic visiting from Virginia helped. "I did the chest compressions, he did the breaths," Soto said.

Johnson set up the AED -- an automatic external defibrillator. "It's foolproof. It will tell you exactly what to do at a given time," Johnson said.

Many groups and individuals receive AED and CPR training. The unit can be used by one person, but is best when two or more work as a team. Two years ago, an AED was placed in each Duke patrol car. This was the first time officers put their training to use. "Between the CPR and the one shock that he got, he began breathing and his heart began beating again," Johnson said. "It's one of those things you hope you never have to need, but you're thankful that you have it when you do need it. It was a lifesaver the other night."

Monjar, 67, continues his recovery at Duke Medical Center. While his family came down from Ohio to be with him, police were able to arrange for tickets so they could see Duke play Charleston Tuesday night.

This time, they were cheering for the Blue Devils.