CARDIO CRISIS ON THE COURSE

Emergency equipment for dealing with heart-attack victims on the golf course.

by BRIAN MALOY

DURING THE 1999 MOTOROLA Western Open, Garland Dempsey experienced a heart attack while caddying for John Maginnes. Fortunately, the caregivers at the scene acted quickly by using CPR and a portable heart defibrillator to save his life. Garland was lucky that day because he was only minutes away from becoming another national statistic.

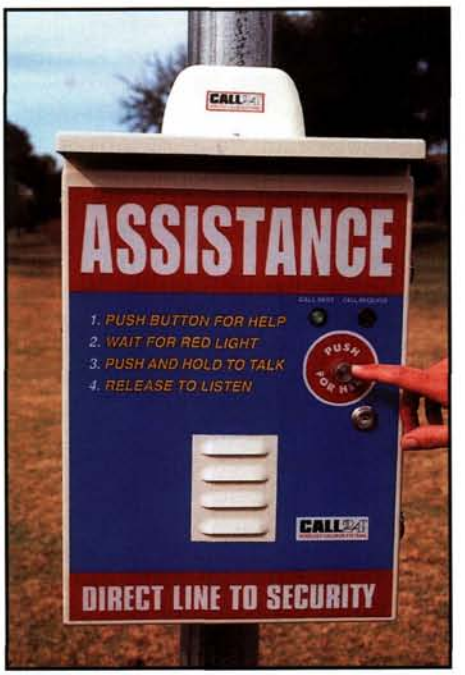
Heart failure is rated as the number-one killer in America. The American Heart Association (AHA) reports that each year 1.1 million Americans experience a heart attack, and 350,000 of those people become fatalities. Usually, a heart attack is caused by a clot in one of the vessels that supplies blood to the heart, and it may or may not be accompanied by unconsciousness. In extreme cases, the victim can die suddenly without warning.

The first ten minutes of a cardiac arrest are critical. If proper help doesn't arrive during this time period, the outlook is grim. In large cities where emergency medical service (EMS) response time is often delayed because of traffic congestion, the chance of survival is only one to two percent.

According to an American Heart Association study, golf courses are among the most common places for heart attacks to occur. The likelihood of surviving heart failure on the golf course is less than five percent (lower than the national average). Due to the remote location, paramedics are often slow to respond because of the limited accessibility to many golf courses. Consequently, a golf course is one of the worst places to be when your heart stops, or at least it was until now.

Brook Hollow Golf Club in Dallas, Texas, is a proactive golf course in the Mid-Continent Region. With the combined efforts of member Dr. Bill Weaver, general manager Dale Miller, and superintendent Ken Small, the club is now better prepared to handle an emergency situation. The club purchased three automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) and has placed them in key locations around the facility. Likewise, two solar-powered emergency call stations are strategically positioned so that they can be reached quickly in the event of an emergency. One AED is approximately $3,800, and the emergency call station costs $4,900 — a bargain if only one life is saved.

The care given to a heart attack victim is most critical during the first ten minutes. Automatic external defibrillators are used to help save lives at remote locations like golf courses.



Brook Hollow Golf Club (Dallas, Texas) has strategically located two solar-powered emergency call stations on the course. In an emergency event, they can be reached quickly to summon help.

Operating the portable defibrillators is easier than one might expect. In the past, portable defibrillators were heavy and cumbersome, but they have become more manageable and weigh less than 10 pounds. Once the electrode contacts are applied to the victim, the AED leads the caregiver with both voice and visual prompts through a three-step rescue procedure. The American Heart Association offers one-day training in CPR and the use of the AEDs for a nominal fee.

Perhaps once our culture embraces the necessity of this type of life-saving equipment there will be fewer casualties lost to this number-one killer. Maybe someday every police officer, restaurant owner, hotel manager, and golf course superintendent will be equipped with his or her own AED. What about your golf course? This small investment is worth serious consideration to potentially save a life.

For more information, visit the American Heart Association website at: www.americanheart.org. To acquire an AED, contact: www.avantech-heartsafe.com or www.compliant.com.

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