



Lifeguards preach water safety

CLACKAMAS COLLEGE WRESTLER IS AMONG THOSE WHO TRIED TO SAVE 19-YEAR OLD VICTIM

BY DOUG FRY

For many Oregonians, when summer comes around, it means getting a group of friends and heading down to the river. Cooling off in your favorite swimming hole can seem like a harmless fun time, but at any given moment things can change. Water safety is a concern for many people in Clackamas County. Every year, as the weather heats up, we hear about a drowning due to not taking the proper precautions before getting in the water.

On May 23, at High Rocks Park in Gladstone, 19-year-old Said Osman jumped into the water and struggled before submerging without resurfacing. Clackamas Community College freshman wrestler David Campbell was at the river

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when Osman had jumped in the water.

“When he was yelling, someone jumped in to help, he didn’t make it very far,” said Campbell. “The guy that was drowning, we never saw his head pop back up after the bridge. After the guy jumped in to save the guy that was drowning, he was struggling. I jumped to help save him.”

Campbell, who is originally from California, was at High Rocks for his first time when he had witnessed a drowning and helped pull another bystander out of the water.

“I would just tell them to be really careful, you never know when you can go under,” said Campbell. “If you do end

up jumping off, you should jump in and immediately get off. It’s dangerous, very dangerous.”

Field Training Officer Leah Gordon, with AMR River Rescue, knows that the river is a great place to be during the summer, but can make a turn for the worst without warning.

“Medical issues happen and we never know when they’re going to happen,” said Gordon. “Wear a life jacket that is Coast Guard approved.”

In our area, some of the most dangerous swimming holes are lifeguarded, but that does not keep swimmers out of harm’s way. At High Rocks Park, lifeguards are on duty seven days a week, from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend.

“Some basic water safety tips are: wearing a life jacket in open water, always swim with a buddy so you have accountability, if you’re in or near water that is lifeguarded check in with them, drink water, don’t use something that is going to alter you and swim,” said Gordon.

A big mistake that many swimmers make is thinking that they are a strong enough swimmer to not need a life jacket. When adding in drinking and other mind altering substances, things can escalate to dangerous scenarios quickly.

“Be aware of the crowd around you. Young people can get rowdy over the summer,” said Gordon.

Lt. Steve Hoffeditz, Public Information Officer for the Clackamas Fire District #1, warned swimmers and floaters about the changing conditions this summer. After the wet winter we had, the rivers can look completely different this year.

“The rivers are extremely high, our river crews have been on the water all season long, there are new snagged trees that have been floated down river,” said Hoffeditz. “What you rafted last year can look totally different this year.”

A big thing that Hoffeditz has seen in our area is many swimmers get in the water in an attempt to cross the river. This is a problem because when swimmers hit a strong current, they struggle and try to fight the water.

“If somebody is getting tired and they’re out in an area where they’re not near the bank and they don’t have any floatation device, that’s where they end up drowning,” said Hoffeditz.

One of our dangers in this area is the misleading temperature change. On a hot day, jumping into cold water can be a very refreshing activity, but often times the temperature change can cause cold shock and muscles to seize up.

When you decide to spend the day on the river, make sure to be smart and aware of your changing surroundings.

photo by Collin Berend



photo by Doug Fry

