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Avondale High School in Auburn Hills (WJBK | myFOXDetroit.com)

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Avondale Ballplayer Hospitalized after Freak Accident

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By ROOP RAJ
WJBK | myFOXDetroit.com

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. (WJBK) - Students are being counseled at Avondale High School in Auburn Hills. A baseball player was taking part in preseason conditioning Monday morning. Somebody threw a ball and hit him in the chest. His heart was jarred and he passed out. He's now in intensive care at Children's Hospital in Detroit.

This kind of injury is rare. Dr. Christian Machado of the Providence Heart Institute explained what may have happened.

"A baseball hits the chest of the individual, and that causes a reaction, an electrical reaction, in the heart that stops the heart. But it can happen in many other sports," he said.

You may remember the NHL playoffs in May of 1998. St. Louis defenseman Chris Pronger was hit in the chest by a puck and had sudden cardiac arrest. Those were scary moments on the ice, but he's alright now.

It doesn't matter the size of the athlete. It's about when somebody is struck and where the heart is in its rhythm at the second of impact.

"That blow causes a particular mechanical-electrical injury or force, and that force, when it occurs exactly at the perfect timing of the ... heartbeat cycle, it can cause cardiac arrest," Machado said.

In a statement, school Superintendent Dr. George Heitsch said, "We are all praying for an immediate and complete recovery. Avondale is a very tight-knit community, and we will do whatever we can to assist the family during this young man's recovery."

In this case, the junior varsity coach did chest compressions while they waited for an ambulance. A lesson for all athletes, doctors insist help should never be far.

"If you don't get to that patient, that individual, within three to five minutes with a defibrillator, probably the outcome is going to be a fatal outcome," said Machado.

The cardiologist we spoke with said the first 48 hours are crucial. So, as you can well imagine, a lot of prayers are coming from Avondale High School for a quick recovery for that 16-year-old.

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