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## Footballer killed by lightning



The footballer died in a park in Leicester

A 23-year-old football player has been killed by lightning as he came off a pitch to escape a sudden rain shower.

Darren Griffiths, of Leicester, died instantly and two friends were injured as they walked down a tree-lined path at Saffron Lane Recreation Ground.

They heard a distant rumble of thunder before a bolt of lightning threw them to the ground, a friend said.

Lee Elliott, 23, and Carl Smith, 30, recovered from the shock of the blast to find their teammate had been killed.

The three men had just started their first training session of the season with Metro 76 football club on Saturday afternoon when the rain started.

Richard Smith, 37, brother of Carl and secretary of the club, said: "They heard a distant rumble of thunder but it sounded so far away they weren't sheltering or anything.

"They got to the end of the path where the last tree was and my brother said he saw a massive bright light and the floor shook.

“  
**He crawled over to Darren and tried to give him CPR but he knew he was dead as soon as he got there**  
”

**Richard Smith**

BBC Leicester

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"Carl couldn't feel his leg after the lightning, it was white like a sheet of paper and his knee was blue.

### 'Skilful player'

"He crawled over to Darren and tried to give him CPR but he knew he was dead as soon as he got there."

The two men who survived the lightning strike were treated at hospital and released.

Richard Smith said Mr Griffiths was a very skilful footballer with a great sense of humour and was liked by everybody.



The three men were sheltering from the rain

"We've known him for nine or 10 years, since he was a teenager. He was probably the most skilful player in the club.

A charity football match is being organised to raise money for Mr Griffiths' family and the club is hoping to place a plaque in his memory in the recreation ground.

Mr Griffiths leaves behind a partner, Louise, and two-year-old daughter Leonie.

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