Tennis players rally to save woman's life



As Jane approached to see if the woman was alright, she was joined by other players.

Jane had recently completed her New Zealand Resuscitation Council CORE Advanced Training which equips health professionals with the knowledge and skills to respond to a cardiac arrest, typically in a hospital or medical environment. Jane did not expect to have to use her resuscitation training at one of her tennis matches.

The woman collapsed in a way that made Jane think that she had fainted from sunstroke. However, the woman was unresponsive and making a snoring sound. This noise is known as

an agonal gasp, this is a sign that someone is in cardiac arrest. This is not normal breathing, and an indicator that CPR should begin.

Another player who was trained in first-aid began CPR as Jane, her teammates, and competitors rallied to help. Jane took over CPR and organised her team to save the woman's life.

Jane tasked Julie with finding a defibrillator also known as an AED. Julie knew that there was one in the clubhouse where they were playing. Unfortunately, AED wasn't in its usual place as there had been a medical event a few weeks prior that required its use.

Julie reacted quickly and found the replacement battery. Julie brought the AED to Jane who was continuing CPR, and Julie did a quick round of the other courts to see if any other players had any CPR knowledge to assist Jane with the woman in cardiac arrest.

Julie referred to herself as the "gofer". Once she had asked the other courts if anyone knew CPR, Julie went to ensure the gate was open, so the ambulance could easily access the courts and she helped direct the ambulance when it arrived.

Michelle, the woman's friend, and teammate, recalls holding her hand and reassuring her that it was going to be ok.

Because of the heat, another teammate found an umbrella to shade them from the sun while Jane was doing CPR. Jane knew what she was doing, and she continued chest compressions.

"You remember the training, and the DRS ABCD, but you have got to push so much harder than you do on a CPR mannikin." Jane recalls.

When the AED arrived, Jane connected it and followed the instructions.

Jane continued CPR, and the woman became conscious after a few shocks from the AED. By the time the ambulance arrived, the woman was awake and talking.

Michelle went with the woman in the ambulance to the hospital where she was immediately assessed and had to have a triple bypass surgery.

The passionate tennis players are continuing to play, and the woman is back on the court playing against them. The women estimate that they have all been playing together for 15 to 20 years.

Sometimes it takes a team to save a life. Even if you aren't the person doing CPR, taking steps such as getting an AED, directing an ambulance, calling 111, and supporting your friends can help to save a life.

The quick actions of the woman's teammates and competitors saved her life. They decided to call the game as a draw.