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Girl's heart failed 'after bully attack'

By **ANDREW NORFOLK**

A YOUNG dancer collapsed and died in a field after a group of bullies picked on her, a court was told yesterday.

Aimee Wellock, 15, was strolling with three friends in a wooded beauty spot when they were targeted by a group of four older teenagers who began to intimidate them.

The frightened girl and her companions, a boy aged 15 and girls aged 15 and 14, tried to walk away but were followed and taunted by the older group, who had been drinking.

A jury at Leeds Crown Court was told that the bullies, girls aged 18, 17 and 15 and a boy aged 15, then launched an unprovoked attack in which Aimee was punched in the face and kicked as she lay on the ground. The friends tried to run away but Aimee collapsed within 25 yards of her home.

Adults, including her parents, tried but failed to resuscitate her.

What no one — including Aimee and her parents — knew was that the 15-year-old, a member of a local dance school, had a rare condition that was liable to cause her heart to beat out of rhythm.

The court was told that her heart was defective and that under stress, such as that caused by the attack, she was liable to suffer heart failure.

Simon Myerson, QC, for the prosecution, said that the events unfolded on a June evening at Chellow Dean, a beauty spot in the Allerton area of Bradford, West Yorkshire. When the groups encountered each other, the older group asked Aimee and her friends for cigarettes, but did not receive any because none of the younger children smoked.

The older group — Claire Carey, 18, and three younger teenagers who cannot be named for legal reasons — became intimidating and abusive, Mr Myerson said. They began to follow Aimee and her friends, calling them names, and the physical assault began when Ms Carey slapped the 15-year-old boy on the back of the head. He ran for help, but Aimee and her female friends — who were surrounded and backed against a wall — were each punched in the face by the older girls.

Ms Carey is said to have thrown the first punch before egging on her companions, saying: "I've hit one — now you hit one."

A vertical sidebar advertisement for an interactive Sudoku puzzle. It features a blue background with a yellow triangle in the top left corner. The text reads: "The first and the best (beware of imitations) INTERACTIVE SU DOKU The puzzle everyone is talking about". Below the text is a 3x3 grid of numbers: 6 4 5, 3 6 2 7, 7 2 3 1 8, 4 9 8 7 3, 3 7 9 6 1, 6 3 2 4 5. At the bottom, it says "in association with CISCO SYSTEMS" with the Cisco logo.

As Aimee lay on the ground, the boy in Ms Carey's group ran up to her and kicked her, either in the back or on the back of her head. Two young men on motorcycles arrived, told the bullies that enough was enough, picked up the victims and advised them to run home.

The three girls started running, but Aimee slowed down and had to be helped up the hill by her friends, who each took one of her arms. They had no idea that she had only minutes to live.

Ms Carey, the 17-year-old girl and the boy each deny charges of manslaughter and affray. The fourth member of the group, the 15-year-old girl, denies manslaughter but has pleaded guilty to affray.

Mr Myerson said: "What they intended was to have some sport at the expense of (Aimee) and her friends, to look big and grown up in their own eyes by making other people look small.

"They were bullies . . . If this attack caused Aimee's death then these defendants are guilty of manslaughter."

The trial continues.

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