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AED saved life of Fort Worth Trimble Tech senior baseball player

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By **John Henry**

Special to the Star-Telegram

In his last regular-season high school baseball game Friday, Fort Worth Trimble Tech senior left fielder Luis Rubio chased down fly balls with a youthful enthusiasm typical of someone his age.

Thanks to quick-thinking, well-trained coaches and a trainer toting an AED, Rubio will be able chase his dreams with the zeal of a young man.



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Rubio almost died after collapsing on the school track on Sept. 10, 2009. His heart had stopped beating.

Coaches Michael Garza and Tyson Wormsbaker administered CPR almost immediately.

Rubio's life was saved by trainer Jason Braud, who with an automated external defibrillator brought his heart back into rhythm with an electric shock.

"I love my coaches," Rubio said. "I'm grateful they knew how to take control and knew what to do in that situation and knew how to use the machines."

While his family, friends, teachers and coaches celebrate his life every day, Rubio's episode underscores the importance of AEDs on school campuses and the need for athletes -- or anybody who leads a physically active life -- to undergo testing to detect

underlying problems with the heart.

The UIL requires that schools have an AED on campus.

"He more than likely wouldn't be here" without the AED, Braud said of Rubio, echoing the sentiments of doctors who discovered that Rubio had a blockage to a main artery. He wasn't getting enough blood flow to his body, and his heart eventually stopped beating.

Rubio underwent three surgeries to fix the problem, including open-heart surgery and a procedure to implant a defibrillator. He plays with a chest guard under his jersey.

Rubio's condition might have been discovered through precautionary testing, said Ashley Long of Cypress ECG, which conducts cardiac testing of athletes. Long and a colleague were at Trimble Tech on Friday offering testing to athletes at a nominal fee of \$15.

"We're all about early detection," Long said. "We want to catch these things before they end up in an

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unfortunate situation like Luis."

For example, she said, "We're trying to get kids screened to see if they show any signs of genetic abnormalities."

Long said the Cypress' results over the course of eight years are not alarming. Of more than 20,000 tests of young people, 95 percent have come back with no problems.

Only 0.5 percent show a clearly detectable problem that forces kids to quit competing immediately.

The other 4.5 percent were tests that indicated a possible abnormality that required more testing or a visit to a cardiologist. That's not to suggest that the demographic had a problem, just a test result that suggested there could be a problem.

The Bulldogs and Rubio fell short in a 4-3 loss to Western Hills on Friday, though they'll still enter the playoffs as District 7-4A co-champions.

Rubio, who is planning to enroll at UT Arlington and study civil engineering when he's done studying at Tech, ran in from his position in left having earned a perspective of life more of a man twice his age.

He knows someone was looking after him that day. And he plans to pay him back.

"It opened my eyes about taking advantage of your second chances and to never give up," he said.

"I think about that day every night ... what if I'm gone tomorrow. I try to do everything right and my best every day so I have no regrets."

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