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Archery Instructor Tragically Killed by Lightning at Scout Event

July 18, 2025

— Categories: *Crime*



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Police have confirmed the death of a longtime archery instructor following a deadly lightning strike that injured more than a dozen people, many of them children, during a Cub Scout event in Jackson Township, New Jersey. The incident has stunned the community and reignited conversations about outdoor safety during unpredictable summer storms.

The deceased was identified as Robert Montgomery, 61, of Cinnaminson Township. Montgomery was a longtime archery instructor and a dedicated figure within the Black Knight Bowbenders community.

The lightning strike occurred shortly after 7 p.m. on July 16 at the Black Knight Bowbenders archery range in Jackson Township, a suburb located in Ocean County, New Jersey. Authorities on July 17 confirmed Montgomery's passing. The gathering was part of a Cub Scout competition, and among the attendees were children as young as seven. According to township public safety information director Joseph Candido, one individual suffered severe burns and was transferred to a specialized medical facility for treatment.

Jeff Becker, a board member of the club, described the event as "absolutely horrible," noting the group's usual caution when it comes to weather-related safety. "We're all a little bit in shock," Becker told the Asbury Park Press. "This came out of nowhere."

USA Archery, the national governing body for the sport of archery in the United States, released a statement expressing deep sorrow over Montgomery's passing. "Our hearts are with all the families, friends, and fellow archers impacted by this devastating event," the organization said. "We stand in solidarity with the entire archery community during this difficult time."

This marks the second fatal lightning strike in New Jersey this month. On July 8, Simon John Mariani, 28, was struck during a golf competition at Ballyowen Golf Club in Hardyston. Despite efforts from bystanders who performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), Mariani died days later. A University of Notre Dame graduate, he had been working in New York City as a banking associate. His obituary remembered him as a passionate, driven young man with "the heart of a champion."

According to the National Weather Service (NWS), there have been 12 lightning-related deaths across the United States as of July 15. Earlier this month, a 36-year-old man in Ohio died from burns and cardiac arrest after being struck while playing soccer. In Georgia, two teenagers lost their lives after being struck by lightning following a fishing trip.

The NWS warns that lightning strikes remain a deadly yet preventable danger, especially during summer. Statistically, the odds of being struck in a lifetime are roughly 1 in 15,000. Officials urge Americans to take storm threats seriously: monitor forecasts, avoid electrical

appliances and plumbing during storms, and remain indoors for at least 30 minutes after the last thunderclap.

If someone is struck by lightning, immediate aid is critical. Bystanders should call 911, begin CPR if trained, and use an automated external defibrillator (AED) if available. Contrary to common myths, lightning victims are safe to touch and cannot shock rescuers.

The tragic loss of Robert Montgomery serves as a sobering reminder of nature's unpredictability and the importance of vigilance, even during seemingly routine events.