

Boy, 14, drowns in Lake Wateree

By Lucas Vance

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LAKE WATEREE — A 14-year-old Great Falls boy drowned Friday night at Lake Wateree State Park.

Fairfield County Coroner Barkley Ramsey said Jeramie Coleman was swimming with family when he swam out too far and started having difficulty staying afloat.

Witnesses attempted to save Coleman, but were unable to hold on to him. He slipped back underneath the surface and disappeared.

“He (Coleman) swam a little bit too far from the shore and he got tired,” Ramsey said. “He tried to hang on to a buoy and he went under.”

Ramsey said Coleman died due to asphyxiation from drowning. He drowned about 100 yards from the shore in about 16 feet of water.

Ramsey said the youth was a decent swimmer, but became fatigued in the deeper water. Coleman was a basketball and football player who just turned 14 on July 21.

“He had just been out playing in the water most of the day and he was just swimming and got tired,” Ramsey said.

Dispatch received the emergency call at approximately 6:30 p.m., and most emergency personnel were on the scene at 7:15 p.m. Coleman’s body was recovered by the Fairfield County Rescue Squad at 7:48 p.m.

The Department of Natural Resources, Great Falls Rescue Squad and the Newberry County Dive Team also participated in Coleman’s recovery.

Coleman’s death is the second drowning death in Fairfield County in less than a week. Brooke Lynn Huffstetler, 26, drowned Wednesday in a rock quarry S.C. 901.

Funeral services for Coleman are scheduled for Wednesday at First Baptist Church in Great Falls at 4 p.m.

Visitation hours will be at Washington Funeral Home on Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.