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U.S.

Mountain lion victim upgraded to fair condition

Woman, 30, is expected to survive, doctors say

Saturday, January 10, 2004 Posted: 10:03 PM EST (0303 GMT)

LOS ANGELES, California (CNN)
-- The victim of a mountain lion attack has improved, a hospital spokesman said Saturday.

Anne Hjelle, 30, has been upgraded from serious condition to fair, the spokesman said. Doctors said they expect Hjelle to survive, but further information on the woman's condition was not available.

Hjelle was bicycling Thursday with a friend on a wilderness trail in Whiting Ranch Wilderness Park in Orange County when a 110-pound mountain lion pounced on her, dragging her by her head into the brush.

Debbie Nichols said the lion dragged her friend 100 yards while she tried to fight off the animal. She said it bit Hjelle on her helmet, face and neck.

Hjelle was taken to Mission Hospital in Mission Viejo.

A second attack victim died from his wounds. The body of Mark Jeffrey Reynolds, 35, an account executive for a sports marketing company in Anaheim, California, was discovered as police searched for the mountain lion.

Officers hunted and killed the mountain lion.

A necropsy on the 2-year-old male cat is expected to be complete Tuesday, according to California Fish and Game. DNA tests were being performed on the contents of its stomach to determine if it was involved in both attacks.

The fatal attack marked the sixth time in more than 110 years of record-keeping that a

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mountain lion has killed a human in California. There have been 41 fatal attacks nationwide, 10 of those since 1990.

A second mountain lion in the area was struck by a car and killed. Authorities said tests would also be performed on that animal.

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