**Freak lightning storms strikes fishermen in Mpumalanga [South Africa]**

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<https://citizen.co.za/news/south-africa/local-news/2063121/freak-lightning-storms-strikes-fishermen-in-mpumalanga/>

A camper described a big black ball of a candy-floss-like texture floating towards him after the accident.

Two friends were seriously injured after the graphite fishing rod one of them was using was struck by lightning at the Loskop Dam in Mpumalanga, reports [Middelburg Observer](https://mobserver.co.za/88616/groot-swart-bal-wat-soos-spookasem-lyk-nadat-weerlig-hengelaars-tref/).

Jaco le Roux, 35, was expected to travel to Life Kosmos Hospital, where doctors would be able to give him and his family a bill for their medical expenses. Le Roux sustained a serious burn wound on his stomach where the lightning struck him.

His mother Mariaan said they travelled directly from Johannesburg to the Life Midmed Hospital to support their son.

Fellow fisherman Clinton Fleming, 29, is still in Midmed Hospital’s intensive care unit. His wife, Charné, said the shock from the lightning resulted in complications with his heart. She insists on taking him to a cardiologist “just to make sure that everything is alright”.

The traumatic incident took place right in front of the men’s shocked children, wives, and other fishermen.

According to Le Roux’s wife, Desiree, their family and Fleming’s family were spending the day together at Forever Resorts Loskop Dam.

They noticed the weather was turning and decided to pack up and head back to Middelburg to braai their fish at home.

It suddenly began to rain, and the men began to reel in the rods. Le Roux had a fish on the line and Fleming told him to reel it in while he fetched the fishing net.

Fleming was still standing next to Le Roux when lightning struck the end of Le Roux’s fishing rod.

Desiree described how the lightning struck the rod, splitting the rod in two before hitting Le Roux and Fleming.

Charné said all she heard was a loud explosion, saw a white light, and saw how the two men fell.

“I thought they were dead,” she said.

The stick in Le Roux’s hand was burnt to a crisp within seconds, the clothes on his body were burnt, and a massive gaping wound was found on his abdomen where the rod was resting after he fell.

People who witnessed the incident said that smoke was coming out of the men. Charné said it was the smoke coming out of the fishing rod, which was set alight.

Chaos ensued in the next few seconds.

Charné said that everything was very confusing. “The wind was blowing, our children were screaming and our husbands were lying on the ground.”

She stood with her 9-month-old baby, Dylon, in her arms while her other children, Megan, 3, and Michael, 9, were crying hysterically. “Megan said: ‘Dad has been struck by the generator!’”

Le Roux’s two daughters, Deoné, 7, and Elmike, 10, also began to cry.

Desiree said her husband was disorientated for a few seconds, and couldn’t feel his legs. After a while, he crouched and tried to stand while telling his wife to put the children in the car, because his greatest concern was that they would also be struck. “After ten minutes, the storm had blown over,” she said.

Campers, security guards, and Forever Resorts Loskop Dam personnel helped to make the two men comfortable while they waited for an ambulance.

ER24 and Swift EMS paramedics arrived swiftly on the scene and transported the two men to Life Midmed Hospital.

Le Roux faces possible reconstructive surgery and multiple operations to fix the wound on his stomach, but does not have medical aid to pay for the inevitable bills.

He has since been sent home. Fleming remains in ICU.

Le Roux’s sister-in-law Corlene Vogel began an emergency fund from Musina to help the family with their medical expenses. Anyone interested in contributing can contact Desiree on 072 617 9958 for more information.

Both men wished to thank everyone from Forever Resorts Loskop Dam who helped them.

Another camper, Hennie Joubert, who happened to have been at Forever Resorts Loskop Dam as well took to Facebook to describe his experience of the freak storm.

“There was lightning, but nothing serious. The next moment, a massive clap of thunder boomed, and my wife and I jumped in fright.”

Joubert said that immediately after the thunder, they saw a big black ball “that looked like candyfloss coming towards us from the water, before falling onto the grass”. According to him “the lightning struck the men so badly that smoke was coming from them. The fishing rod disintegrated and their clothes were burnt off their bodies. The black candyfloss was apparently one of their fishing rods!”