



# Accident Database

## Report ID# 3139

Help

2009-05-09

Date

Alberto Ramirez

Victim

20

Victim Age

Yakima

River

Confluence with Teanaway River to Thorp

Section

I-82 milepost 39; Wapato Diversion Dam United States Washington, US

Location

Gage

Water Level

N/A

River Difficulty

Caught in Low Head Dam Hydraulic

Cause

Cause Code(s)

- Caught in Low Head Dam Hydraulic
- PFD Not Worn or Present

Injury Type(s)

- Does not Apply

Factors

- Cold Water
- High Water



mp type

Raft

Boat Type

Group Info

Unidentified teenager

Other Victim Names

Reported

Status

## Accident Description

[http://www.seattlepi.com/local/6420ap\\_wa\\_missing\\_rafters.html?source=myspi](http://www.seattlepi.com/local/6420ap_wa_missing_rafters.html?source=myspi)

Last updated May 11, 2009 8:34 a.m. PT  
Search suspended for two Yakima River rafters

### THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

YAKIMA, Wash. -- The Yakima County sheriff's office says it will wait a few days before reassessing the search for two teens missing after their raft overturned in the Yakima River. Search-and-rescue Sgt. Jerrold Towell said Monday the water level, weather or other conditions may change. He says a full day of searching Sunday by air and water covered everything visible for now.

The two teens, one from Toppenish and one from Wapato, were in a group of four whose inflatable raft capsized Saturday evening, going over the turbulent water of the Wapato irrigation diversion dam at Union Gap. The other two - brothers from Wapato who were wearing life vests - safely made it to shore. **Of the two still missing, Towell says one wore a life vest and one did not.**

### Search Continues on Yakima River For Missing Rafter

Posted: May 12, 2009 03:52 PM

NEAR WAPATO, Wash. - Search and rescue crews were out on the Yakima River for a fourth day Tuesday looking for a missing rafter from an accident on Saturday night. The Yakima County Sheriff's Office had teams in two boats going back and forth in a 4.5-mile perimeter. The area was between the Sunnyside dam and the Donald Wapato Bridge. Lt. Brian Winter leads the water response team for the sheriff's office. He admits that finding the man will be difficult. "We know what passed experience and history have told us as far as our chances of finding him at this point are pretty slim," he said. "While that's not something that kept us from being out here today we recognize that fact." The sheriff's office says part of the reason the search for the remaining rafter will be more of a challenge is because **he did not have a life jacket on** when the raft overturned on Saturday. They are looking into getting additional help in the search from an airplane or helicopter.

### Body Recovered From Yakima River, Victim of Rafting Accident

Posted: May 11, 2009

PARKER, Wash-- Yakima Sheriff's deputies have recovered the body of a man missing from a rafting accident. It happened on the Yakima River late Saturday evening. The body recovered is Alberto Ramirez, a 20-year-old man from Wapato. He was found by family and friends who went searching for Ramirez early this morning. Yakima sheriff deputies called off their search Sunday evening after searching for over 24 hours.

Two men were pulled from the water Saturday night, Ramirez's body was found today and one man is still missing. Ramirez **was wearing a life jacket** when the raft capsized, however the water runs swiftly this time of year with many underwater hazards. His body was found south of Parker. "The eastern edge of the river hung-up in some foliage and trees that are down. The side of the river is just cluttered with windfall," said Lt. Max James, YSO. A plane and a helicopter were used Sunday to search the river. Deputies said the portion of the river where Ramirez was found was covered with lots of brush



I am a firefighter with the City of Union Gap. We were on the initial dispatch to this incident. I can try to answer any questions you have about the incident. Here is a quick summary.

Four boys aged 14 to 24 put in on the Naches River (which flows into the Yakima) at 16th Ave. in Yakima in the afternoon in an inflatable boat and an inflatable kayaks, all wearing PFDs, no helmets or wet/dry suits. Around 7pm **the boys went over the Wapato Diversion Dam** that spans the Yakima River around I-82 milepost 39 and State Route 97 milepost 174. There is only one sign at the dam at far river right. They went over a little left of center. Their PFDs and most of their clothes were torn off in the hydraulic at the base of the dam. **The dam is a vertical 7 foot drop** (more or less depending on flows). Boil line was approximately ten feet from the face. Initial indications are that all four were spit out within a few minutes. **Two survived with minor injuries/hypothermia; two didn't.** I haven't had a chance to contact the survivors since the day of the incident yet to get the rest of their story. We'd like to see some more signs put up to warn boaters of the danger ahead.



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## Administrator

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