

Woman Knocked Unconscious While Shopping

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ORANGE CITY, Fla. - A mob of shoppers rushing for a sale on DVD players trampled the first woman in line and knocked her unconscious as they scrambled for the shelves at a Wal-Mart Supercenter.

Patricia VanLester had her eye on a \$29 DVD player, but when the siren blared at 6 a.m. Friday announcing the start to the post-Thanksgiving sale, the 41-year-old was knocked to the ground by the frenzy of shoppers behind her.

"She got pushed down, and they walked over her like a herd of elephants," said VanLester's sister, Linda Ellzey. "I told them, 'Stop stepping on my sister! She's on the ground!'"

Ellzey said some shoppers tried to help VanLester, and one employee helped Ellzey reach her sister, but most people just continued their rush for deals.

"All they cared about was a stupid DVD player," she said Saturday.

Paramedics called to the store found VanLester unconscious on top of a DVD player, surrounded by shoppers seemingly oblivious to her, said Mark O'Keefe, a spokesman for EVAC Ambulance.

She was flown to Halifax Medical Center in Daytona Beach, where doctors told the family VanLester had a seizure after she was knocked down and would likely remain hospitalized through the weekend, Ellzey said. Hospital officials said Saturday they did not have any information on her condition.

"She's all black and blue," Ellzey said. "Patty doesn't remember anything. She still can't believe it all happened."

Ellzey said Wal-Mart officials called later Friday to ask about her sister, and the store apologized and offered to put a DVD player on hold for her.

Wal-Mart Stores spokeswoman Karen Burk said she had never heard of a such a melee during a sale.

"We are very disappointed this happened," Burk said. "We want her to come back as a shopper."