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FEATURED

Series of fights Saturday causes Brat Fest carnival to shutter early in 'anomaly' incident

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LOGAN WROGE, STATE JOURNAL

From left to right, Dane County Sheriff Dave Mahoney, Tim Metcalfe and Michael Johnson speak with reporters Sunday about fights Saturday evening at the Brat Fest carnival.

A series of fights Saturday closed the Brat Fest carnival early that night and resulted in three people being arrested.

Five separate fights broke out throughout the event involving middle school- and high school-age kids, but Dane County Sheriff's Office deputies in the area quickly de-escalated the situation, said Sheriff Dave Mahoney on Sunday. As a result of the "anomaly" incident, the carnival was shuttered 15 minutes early Saturday night, he said.

"Our deputies worked very diligently to de-escalate a situation," Mahoney said at a news conference. "I want our families, in Dane County, to be reassured that this is a safe, family event. It has been for years, and nothing changes."

Tim Metcalfe, co-owner and president of Metcalfe's Market, which helps put on Brat Fest, said the carnival will close at 7 p.m. Sunday as opposed to a previously scheduled 9 p.m. ending.

Mahoney said he made the decision to staff a few more deputies at Brat Fest, held on the grounds of the Alliant Energy Center, for the remainder of the festival.

"We've decided to close the carnival early. We also brought in some additional resources so that Brat Fest will always continue to be a safe, family event," Metcalfe said.

The fights happened between 8 and 9 p.m. Saturday, Mahoney said, and "no significant injuries" resulted from the brawls.

Two of the three arrested were juvenile girls, he said.

"Young kids are going to be young kids. Kids fight at school. Kids fight in after-school programs," said Michael Johnson, CEO of the Boys and Girls Club of Dane County. "They're going to make mistakes, but we've done everything that we can to make sure that the public feel good about what's going to take place here over the weekend."

Mahoney, Metcalfe and Johnson encouraged people to come out for the remainder of Brat Fest, which wraps up Monday on Memorial Day.

"We've had 35 very successful years," Metcalfe said Sunday around noon. "So far we've sold a little over 100,000 brats. We're right on pace to break the record."



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