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### Officials: Brat Fest security increased after fights Saturday

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MADISON (WKOW) ---Dane County officials stepped up security for the final days of Brat Fest after three people were arrested during several fights Saturday night.

The event draws thousands of people, like Cornelius Martin, to the event each year.

"This is like the third year," Martin said.

He said it's a good way to spend time with his two grandchildren.

But he'll keep a watchful eye over them after a series of fights Saturday night forced organizers to close the carnival early.

"There was a lot of people down here fighting last night. And they had to close the carnival rides down. That's not good."

"It was about 8:30 last evening when deputies who were on the ground at the carnival were alerted to a number of fights that were breaking out among young people, said Dane County Sheriff David Mahoney.

Authorities said 17-year-old Arieauna Webster and two others under the age of 16 were arrested.

Mahoney said when deputies arrived around 8:30 p.m., between 100 and 200 young people had gathered.

"Our deputies worked very diligently to deescalate the situation."

Mahoney said the crowd was mostly middle and high school aged kids. He said alcohol is not suspected, nor do officials think the fights were gang related.

"This was an anomaly. As Tim said, we work very closely with the Metcalfe family over the 35 years of Brat Fest. And as long as Alliant Energy Center has sponsored Brat Fest, we've staffed the grounds and had very minimal problems. And last night was the same."

"We've also brought in some additional resources so that Brat Fest will always be, and continues to be, a safe family event," said event organizer Tim Metcalfe.

Martin said they'll be back next year. But he said they will "leave before it gets dark."

19-year-old Maurice Graham was also arrested at the festival for an unrelated charge. Mahoney said the arrest was not connected to the fighting incident.

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MADISON (WKOW) - Both county officials and event planners at Brat Fest said it will continue to be family-focused and that extra security is being brought in after several fights broke out at the carnival site Saturday night.

At a news conference today from the VIP tent, Dane County Sheriff Dave Mahoney says the carnival area, which is separate from the rest of the festival grounds, will also close tonight at 7:00 instead of 9:00 p.m. to help with security concerns.

The sheriff says the total of about five fights that broke out were "just an anomaly," and that they're unsure what sparked the incidents originally.

He says about 100 young people had gathered on the carnival grounds, which are separate from the rest of the festival, when the fights broke out around 8:30 p.m. Saturday. He says three people were arrested.

The sheriff says there were no significant injuries - and no indication that alcohol was involved.

Madison Boys and Girls Club President Michael Johnson, who also spoke at the news conference, says the fights shouldn't be blown out of proportion.

He says they don't suspect the fights were gang related.

Event organizer Tim Metcalfe wants to assure the public that Brat Fest is still family-friendly and that the event, which runs through Monday night, will continue to offer great entertainment to the public. He says they're "committed to providing an enjoyable and safe experience for everyone."

Planners say the event, which bills itself as "World's Largest Brat Fest," is an annual fundraiser that benefits over 100 local charities.

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