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WINTER FESTIVAL WON'T MELT AWAY

WARM WEATHER WON'T PUT DAMPER ON CAPITOL SQUARE EVENTS.

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Madison Winter Festival fans, fret not. Organizers say the upcoming festival, which takes place on the Capitol Square Friday through Sunday, won't be affected by higher temperatures.

"The warm weather doesn't affect us," said Madison Winter Festival event director Yuriy Gusev. "I think it will actually bring more people to the festival."

Despite warm weather, Gusev said he expects all events weekend to go on as planned.

The high is forecast to reach 45 today and 53 Tuesday, with expected highs above freezing through Friday.

But Gusev said the huge piles of snow collected at the Alliant Energy Center for the festival would be sufficient.

As a backup, event organizers have an agreement with Tyrol Basin and Black Hawk Ski Club to supply snow. Gusev said Tyrol Basin snow was last used three years ago.

"We have done it before, so we know how to do it if we have to," Gusev said. "But it probably won't be necessary."

All events at the Winter Skills Games, held at Elver Park today through Thursday, will also proceed as planned, though Gusev said the schedule might be altered slightly.

Ice skating, which is scheduled for Tuesday, might be shifted to another day depending on ice conditions. Organizers will post any changes on their Web site.

Gusev said there remained a thick layer of snow at Elver Park as of Sunday. The slopes selected for events are mostly in the shade and have had less melting.

For updates and information about the festival, go to www.winter-fest.com.

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