

# **Schools prepare for upcoming athletics with AEDs and sports physicals**

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MARSHALL COUNTY, KY — Schools in the Local 6 area are preparing for upcoming athletic seasons.

Sudden cardiac arrest is in the spotlight after athletes like [Damar Hamlin](#) and [Bronny James](#) suffered from them while playing. Last August, [Greenfield, Tennessee, High School](#) football player [Blake Rodehaver](#) collapsed when his heart stopped on the sidelines.

An AED, or automated external defibrillator, was used to save Hamlin's life.

This spring, a bill was signed into law requiring Kentucky schools to have AEDs by the start of the 2025-2026 school year.

Student athletes are also required to complete a physical before they can play.

One school that already has AEDs ready is Marshall County High School. Athletic Director Mike Johnson said the district always wants to be prepared in case of an emergency. That's why they have multiple AEDs in the building, and on other locations on campus.



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Other areas include the soccer field, the main football stadium and their softball field.

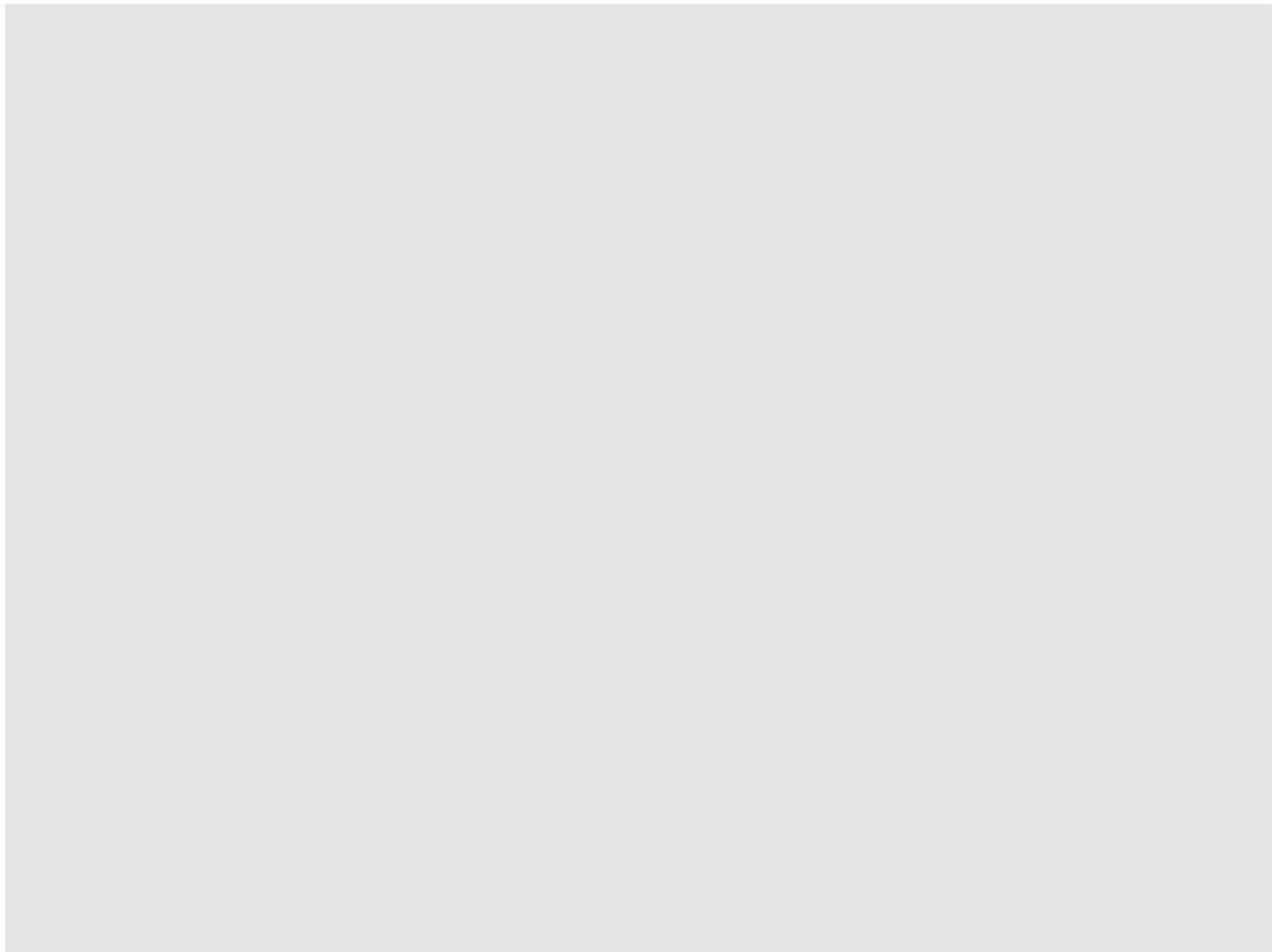
Johnson said medical issues like those experienced by Hamlin and James bring the topic of athlete safety forward.

"I think it does trickle down some, and I think a little bit more awareness to our coaches," Johnson said. "And, you know, to our players even our players to know that this can happen to anybody."

Brittney Gates with Baptist Health Paducah said sports physicals are another way for parents and kids to check for underlying issues they

may not know about.

"If you can find any sort of issues beforehand to prevent that from happening. There are going to be situations like we've seen recently where students aren't aware or parents aren't aware that they have it, and you know, then we respond at that time," she said.



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She said that's why it's important to have AEDs readily available. Johnson said he just wants to make sure students are taken care of.

"You just enjoy spending time with them and watching them succeed, and you know, they're just a big part of our school," he said.

Six west Kentucky districts that already have AEDs in, at least, their middle and high schools with trained coaches include Hickman County, Paducah, Livingston County, Marshall County, Calloway County and Caldwell County.

Lyon County Schools also have AEDs in middle and high schools, and their training is coming up.

Paducah Middle School athletes and Paducah Tilghman athletes will be able to get \$35 physicals from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Aug. 1 at the Tilghman wrestling facility on South 24th Street.