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Prior Lake American

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PHOTO BY TOM SCHARDIN

Some Friday night high school football games across the state have been moved to either Thursday or Saturday due to the lack of officials across the state.

Prior Lake smoke shop sues city over ban on flavored vape products

BY CHRISTINE SCHUSTER
cschuster@swpub.com

The City of Prior Lake is facing a lawsuit brought by a local business over the city's ban on the sale of flavored vaping products.

The city's ordinance, adopted in April, bans the sale of most flavored vaping products with a stated purpose of protecting youth and young adults from the harms of smoking.

Prior Lake Tobacco & Vape, which opened in November 2020, brought the lawsuit days before the city's ordinance took effect in August. The lawsuit alleges the store will be forced to go out of business if the ordinance is upheld.

In a court memo, V. John Ella, the store's attorney, argues the city's ordinance had singled-out Prior Lake Tobacco & Vape, the city's only adult-only smoke shop.

Ella argues the ordinance should've included an exemption for stores that do not allow customers under 21-years-old, such as Prior Lake Tobacco & Vape.

He draws a parallel to liquor stores, which may include flavored liquors that appeal to youth, but are not subject to similar regulations.

In the memo, Ella claims the city's ban on flavored vaping products places unfair blame and punishment on the store's owner, despite there being no history of sales to minors.

Ella also argues the ban results in the

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OFFICIALS SHORTAGE ADDS PRESSURE TO PREP SPORTS

Athletic directors get creative to schedule games

BY TOM SCHARDIN
tschardin@swpub.com

A lack of officials has been making the jobs of athletic directors a little tougher this fall.

Prior Lake Athletic Director Jeff Marshall is in his first season

running the Lakers' programs and he's had to move two football games from Friday to Thursday night, as well as be more creative with scheduling games at the lower levels.

"The officials shortage is definitely a reality," Marshall said. "We've had a number of lower-level soccer games where we have not had referees, so we've either had to have coaches step in as a scrimmage or rescheduled the game.

"Additionally, both soccer and volleyball have moved to different dates on specific weeks to spread games out so officials end up working every night of the week," Marshall added.

Last week, Marshall had to reschedule

volleyball to Monday and Wednesday evenings, which is different from the normal Tuesday and Thursday night slots. Varsity soccer for both boys and girls are being forced to do the same for one week.

"Our (ninth-grade and sophomore) football games will typically be played on Wednesdays back-to-back, so the same crew can work both games as there isn't enough football officials to spread these out," Marshall said.

LARGER PROBLEM

Prior Lake is not the only school being forced to get more creative with their

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