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President Michael M. Crow (email only: Michael.crow@asu.edu)

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE AUGUST 20 WORKOUT

A report to President Michael M. Crow from members of the Arizona State University men's hockey team, responding to the September 21, 2026 Initial Report of Senior Vice President James Rund

Submitted anonymously through counsel, out of fear of retaliation

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The signers' identities, and their agreement with this report, have been confirmed by undersigned counsel, who holds their signed attestations. Parts One and Two are the signers' own account. Part Three was prepared by counsel at the signers' request and is identified as counsel's where appropriate.

Letter to President Crow

Dear President Crow:

We are members of the Arizona State University men's hockey team. We were at Sun Angel Stadium on the morning of August 20, 2026, when our teammate Matthew Mayich collapsed. We have read the Initial Report that Senior Vice President James Rund delivered to you on September 21.

The Rund report attaches two ASU policies: the Sun Devil Athletics policy on outside consultants and the Exertional Heat Illness Policy signed by ASU's team physician. It recommends that a panel study best practices. It does not compare what happened on August 20 with those two policies, and it does not identify who was responsible for following them.

This report makes that comparison. Part One is our account of the morning. Part Two sets the Rund report's statements beside what we saw. Part Three, prepared by our counsel, compares the record with ASU's policies and published safety standards. Part Four lists the failures that ASU's own documents already establish and asks what has been done about them.

To our knowledge, no one involved has been placed on leave, suspended, or disciplined. The head coach who selected the instructor and scheduled the session continues to lead our program.

We are submitting this report anonymously because we fear retaliation from the coaching staff. That fear is not directed at one person. The head coach and his assistant coaches were all on the field on August 20, all remain in their positions, and together they decide our playing time, scholarship levels, and roster status. No one has separated us from them since that morning. Our counsel has confirmed our identities and holds our signed attestations.

ASU's own manual places "ultimate responsibility and final authority for the conduct of the Sun Devil Athletics (SDA) program" with you (SDA 103-01). We ask that you review ASU's policies against the record in this report, consider the questions in Part Four, and take action before our season opens on October 2. If the facts in this report warrant it, we ask that you name an interim coaching staff, if only for as long as it takes to complete the investigation and hear from us directly. We should not have to choose between telling the truth about August 20 and keeping what we have worked our whole lives for.

Respectfully,

Seven (7) members of the 2026–27 ASU men's hockey team, identities confirmed by

counsel.[1]

[1] Each of the seven members are personally aware of other hockey team members who share the concerns and questions set forth in this letter but who do not join this letter because they fear retaliation for publicly speaking the truth.

Summary

1. **The instructor was not approved under ASU's Outside Consultants policy.** The policy bars an outside consultant from working with student-athletes until approval documentation is received. ASU's timeline shows a request submitted August 12 without a written plan, and does not show that it was reviewed or approved. The approval process is ASU's vetting step. It is a safety device designed to help protect student-athletes. It is the point at which the University is supposed to learn who an outsider is, what he intends to do with student-athletes, and whether he is qualified and certified to do it. None of that was done.
2. **The session lasted more than 75 minutes, not 45.** We were on the field around 7:05 a.m. The workout began within minutes and continued until Matthew collapsed at about 8:23.
3. **Matthew was not acclimatized.** He had been in the Valley eight days and involved with the Hockey program five. Contrary to some comments from various parties, it is important to recognize that acclimatization under ASU's policy is ***not*** time spent ***in Arizona***. It is progressive conditioning for the workout itself: doing the same exercises, in the same heat and humidity, starting from a baseline and building up over 7–14 days. Matthew's sole outdoor exercise before August 20 was, at most, two workouts that included about 15 minutes outside, in three separate five-minute trips from an air-conditioned room to push a weighted plate on his feet, with rest between pushes and water available when needed. That was a different workout, in different conditions, for a fraction of the time, and it was not repeated or built up over days. It did not acclimatize Matthew to the August 20 session.
4. **The Rund report does not report any on-field heat measurement,** which the policy requires. Its figures are estimates from a weather station about a mile away in downtown Tempe, not measurements taken on the field where we worked. As read from the policy's heat-risk chart, ASU's own temperature and humidity figures, which we understand understate conditions on the field, fall in its "High" zone, where only heat-acclimatized athletes may participate.
5. **Matthew received no water.** There was one water break, which we estimate was offered 35 to 45 minutes into the session, not 20 as the Rund report found. It lasted seconds and only the first finishers of a drill reached the water, about eight of us. Everyone else was pushed directly into the next task.
6. **Extra exercise was used as punishment,** and those of us who finished behind a cutoff line did additional work.

7. **The session continued after some of us showed signs of distress,** including dropping to a knee, vomiting and, in Matthew's case, visible disorientation well before the final task. Video of the workout published by *Arizona's Family* shows us on the ground in plank position in direct sun—which contradicts the Rund report's use of a generic weather report of cloud cover—many unable to hold it. Ziesel left before the final event. The medicine-ball relays in which Matthew collapsed were run with no one supervising but ASU's own coaches and athletic trainer.
8. **The emergency equipment the policy requires was not on the field,** including a cold-water immersion tub and ice chests **and it does not appear that staff were properly trained in identifying or treating heat stroke**. The athletic trainer, for example, sat Matthew upright twice, which is contrary to medical protocols, as understood by our counsel. Nothing effectively cooled him from his collapse at about 8:23 until EMS arrived at about 8:40. Prompt cold-water immersion is the recognized standard of care for exertional heat stroke, and results in a survival rate nearing 100%. No one took his core temperature. Exertional heat stroke is diagnosed, and cooling is guided, by rectal temperature; it is a prerequisite to treating properly, and without it, no one on the field could know how hot Matthew was or whether anything being done was working.
9. **Police interviews were shared with the administrative review,** according to the Rund report. Statements given to the police were shared with, and used in, the university's administrative review of its own conduct. A police investigation conducted on those terms is not independent of that review.
10. **The Rund report does not identify anyone responsible,** and its organization chart omits the Athletics Compliance Office, which administers the consultant approval process. The compliance office reports to ASU's Office of General Counsel rather than to athletics, and ASU's own compliance website says it must review all outside consultants before they work with athletes.

Part One. What we saw

This part is our own account. Each statement is something one or more of us saw, heard, or was told directly. If there were a different recall or objection to a fact stated herein, it would be noted.

Before August 20

- Many of us come from, or had been living in, cold climates. Several of us, including Matthew, had arrived in Arizona within the prior two weeks.

- Before August 20, our only outdoor work came in short trips outside during otherwise indoor, air-conditioned workouts. Working in pairs, we walked outside, and one of us pushed a 45-pound weight plate, laid flat on the turf, about 10 yards down and back while the other stood and rested; then we switched. Then, after the second push, we walked back inside. Each outside exercise period took about five minutes depending on the person, of which each of us spent roughly three minutes pushing and two minutes resting while our partner pushed. A workout included three of these trips outside, or four on days we did not skate, for about 15 minutes outdoors in total (about 20 on a four-trip day), always separated by indoor exercises and always followed by a return to air conditioning. Some of us had been doing these workouts for weeks; Matthew and others who had recently arrived in the Valley took part in only one or two of them. Matthew skated whenever he could, so his were skate days with three trips: about 15 minutes outside in total, in three separate pieces.
- In the eight days between Matthew's arrival and August 20, the team did this outdoor circuit together once, or at most twice. The Rund report lists workouts on August 14, 17, and 18. Whatever Matthew did on those days, we saw him do the plate push circuit on, at most, maybe two days. August 19 was a student-athlete orientation day with no outdoor activity.
- That outdoor work was nothing like August 20. It was not continuous; we were back in air conditioning within minutes. It was not on the ground; we were on our feet pushing a plate. And no one kept us from water or rest. We are told that acclimatization means building up to a workout by doing that workout, in that heat, a little more each day over one to two weeks. None of us did any of the August 20 exercises outdoors before August 20, at any level, on any day. Simply being in the state of Arizona is not the same thing; like Matthew, most of us spent our time here in air-conditioned apartments, rinks, and weight rooms.
- Matthew spent most of his "off" time in his air-conditioned apartment because the heat was too oppressive for him.
- On September 23, Coach Powers said publicly, "I don't run workouts. Our strength and conditioning coach does." Notwithstanding the Coach's claim, as far as we could tell the strength and conditioning coach was basically left out of this one: she did not plan it and, though she knew it was going to occur, she was not told in advance how strenuous it would be or what specifically was involved. She was on the field when the session began; and she was on or near the stands when players began to struggle. We, like her presumably, were told a "team building launch" would run Thursday through Saturday at 7 a.m., and that it would include calisthenics.
- No one paired us up to watch each other for heat illness, and no one told us, before or during the workout, what signs or symptoms to watch for.

The morning of August 20

This is our best recollection of the workout. We have not reviewed video footage or photos of the training other than one short video online. We reserve the right to modify or otherwise clarify this timeline upon further investigation.

Everyone gathered on the field at about 7:00 a.m. The workout started at 7:05 and continued until Matthew collapsed around 8:23.

Time (approx.)	What happened
6:40–6:45	We reported to Mullett Arena, changed into the shirts provided, had a meeting (with Tim Ziesel and coach Powers explaining the ground rules for the workout and the power dynamic between the two during the workout)and walked to Sun Angel Stadium.
7:00-7:05	We assembled and within a few minutes Ziesel began the session: sprints, push-ups, planks, flutter kicks. We repeated his commands aloud. A miscount or slow response meant sprints, squat jumps, fireman carries, fireman squats and/or bear crawls for the whole team.
Early in the session	One of us dropped to a knee, and all of us were sent to sprint. Later, two of us vomited. Ziesel asked one player who had vomited whether he was "throwing up or just taking a break."
Before any water	We held a plank while Ziesel told stories. Many of us could not hold the position. The water on the sideline rack had not been touched. The photograph published by *12News* shows us in that position with the untouched water bottles on the bench behind Ziesel; it was taken before anyone had been to the water.
About 7:40–7:50	Bear crawl with a cutoff: the first eight could stop and rest, the others continued where only the first six stopped. Coach Powers said to get us water. Ziesel said, "Oh yeah, I forgot, you guys need water," and said he had not had water in combat. The first of us to finish had a few seconds at the bottles before being ordered back while others, including Matthew, were still crawling. This was the only water break.
Later circuits	Matthew crawled on hands and knees and appeared disoriented. When he stood, he nearly fell. In the buddy carry, one of us carried him, but he could not carry his partner back. During the workout an assistant coach held his phone sideways, pointed at us, recording video or taking photographs.

Time (approx.)	What happened
About 8:05	Ziesel had us drop into push-up position, then come up out of it, and talked to us for several minutes while we stood in the sun, without water. Matthew was struggling to stay on his feet and leaned on a teammate to stay upright. Ziesel belittle the player saying his eight-year-old son could do the workout, that none of us were worthy of his daughter (which was odd because we understood his daughter to be quite young) and that he would not stay for the last event, then said, "Oh, by the way, you're not done yet," assigned the medicine-ball relays, and left. Ziesel also told us he did not like hockey and that the games he played were "life or death."
After the huddle	The final event, relays carrying 10 to 20-pound medicine balls, went forward with the coaches and athletic trainer present. Matthew had one of the heavier medicine balls.
About 8:23	Matthew dropped his ball, missed it twice trying to pick it up, continued, stumbled, fell, got up, and fell again. An assistant coach directed teammates to check on Matthew and help him. None of had any training on how to help a teammate in Matthew's condition.
Following minutes	We laid Matthew down. He was then sat up and held upright back to back with one of us. Water was squirted on him from squirt bottles, in a stream rather than a spray, and towels were put on him. Water was held to his mouth; he spat it out. He stopped responding. He remained in the sun.
Then	We carried Matthew to the shade of a permanent structure just south of the bleachers, about 15 yards off the edge of the track, where ASU parks utility vehicles, where he was again held upright. A garden hose ran warm water over him for less than a minute.
About 8:40	Police and paramedics arrived and took him.

Water and rest

1. The water was on a rack at the sideline. We could not leave formation to drink.
2. There was one water break, lasting seconds, for the first of us to finish the bear crawl, maybe eight of us.
3. When those of us who reached the water drank, Ziesel stood behind us and declared that he did not get water in combat.

4. Matthew, and many of us, did not get water at any point.
5. Rest periods consisted of holding a plank or standing in the sun. None were in shade. It was direct sunlight for virtually the entire workout. Late in the workout, just before the medicine ball task, Ziesel put us in push-up position, then had us come up, and talked for several minutes while we stood in the sun; Matthew leaned on a teammate to stay upright. Ziesel told anecdotes from his past. As already mentioned, Ziesel told us he did not like hockey and that the games he had played were "life or death."

After Matthew fell

1. Matthew was unintelligible and non-responsive. His lips were gray.
2. The athletic trainer sat him up and held him upright twice, once on the field-event surface where he fell and again in the shade.
3. He was in direct sun for several minutes before he was moved.
4. The only cooling on hand was one small cooler holding a few Powerade sideline towels (small cotton logo towels, about 16 by 25 inches, sold for wiping down and cooling off during activity), squirt bottles that put out a stream of water rather than a spray, and later, after he was moved, a garden hose with warm water. None of the towels had been used during the workout; the first came out of the cooler for Matthew.
5. There was no immersion tub, no ice chest, no ice for cooling, no fan, and no stretcher. We carried him to the parking slab just south of the bleachers.
6. The cold tub in Mullett Arena was not used. We heard there was not enough time because the ambulance was coming.
7. As far as any of us saw, no one took Matthew's temperature at any point before the ambulance arrived.

What we were told afterward

- Coach Powers told us Matthew's condition was "just a little heat stroke" and "heat exhaustion," that he had "seen this a million times," and that Matthew "just needs an IV."
- After the ambulance took Matthew to the hospital, Coach Powers told us that we working closer to making the Frozen Four because of the workout and Matthew having pushed himself to the maximum.
- At the hospital we were told to leave so as not to "draw a lot of attention" to Matthew and the workout.

- The next day we were told by Coach Powers that he had "good news:" Matthew would be fine, was being slowly weaned off of sedation, and that all his organ functions were okay (however, Coach Powers made no mention of Matthew's brain function or status), and we practiced.
- From what we could tell, at no point did Coach Powers seem to appreciate the severity of the situation.

Our police statements

Some of us gave statements to ASU Police, some without a parent or lawyer present. We were not told that our statements would be shared with the university's administrative review. The Rund report states that they were.

Part Two. The Rund report compared with what happened

The Rund report states	What happened
Three workouts before August 20 each included about 15 minutes of outdoor exercise	The 15 minutes are not disputed; what they consisted of is disputed. Matthew did that circuit once, or at most maybe twice. Whatever the dates show, we saw Matthew do the plate push no more than twice. Those minutes came in three separate trips from an air-conditioned room, on his feet, with rest and water. They did not resemble August 20.
Precautions included a "hydrate and rest" message, light-colored shirts, water, and a cooler of iced towels	The precautions required by ASU's heat policy were not in place: no immersion tub, no ice chests, no on-field heat measurement, no scheduled breaks in shade. Water was available only for a few seconds to the first finishers of one drill and to no one else. The "iced towels" were a few Powerade sideline towels in a small cooler, a comfort item for athletes who are still exercising, not equipment for treating heat stroke. None was used during the workout; the first came out for Matthew after he fell.
About 20 minutes in, Coach Powers directed a water break; players were "observed drinking water at other times"	The one break came much later, maybe 35 to 45 minutes in, lasted seconds, and reached only the first of us to finish a drill. Matthew never got water. There were no other breaks.
Staff "did not submit a plan of training activities" to ASU's strength and conditioning coaches	The report identifies no review of the session's content by anyone at ASU before it occurred.
A request to use Ziesel "as an outside consultant on teambuilding" was submitted August 12	The report does not say whether the request was approved or by whom. The report does not mention the Athletics Compliance Office, which at ASU, unlike at most universities, reports to the Office of General Counsel rather than to the athletic director. Nor does the report say what was in the request or that anyone confirmed that Ziesel had the necessary and proper safety training to safely conduct the workout.

The Rund report states	What happened
Estimated WBGT of 82–85°F in full sun; "mostly cloudy"	The figures are estimates, not the on-field measurement the policy requires. We were in direct sun, as the video of the workout published by *Arizona's Family* shows. No WBGT instrument was on the field, and no measurement was taken at any point.
Matthew "appears to struggle" during the final run	Matthew showed signs of distress earlier, in the bear crawl and the buddy carry, well before the medicine ball task during which he collapsed. At the talk before the final event he was struggling to stand and leaning on a teammate, *in front* of Ziesel, the coaches, and the trainer. No one at ASU properly monitored him during the workout and no one intervened.
Coaches, staff, and the athletic trainer were present throughout	Ziesel left before the last event. The coaches and athletic trainer ran the medicine-ball relays themselves, and Matthew collapsed under their supervision alone.
The trainer and players told him "to remain on the ground"	The trainer sat him up and held him upright, on the field and again in the shade.
The trainer applied "iced towels and cool water"	A few Powerade sideline towels from one small cooler, streams of water from squirt bottles, and less than a minute of warm water from a garden hose.
Not addressed	Who approved Ziesel; whether he held the required first-aid, CPR, and AED certifications; whether the team physician was contacted; whether a core temperature was taken; the role of the Athletics Compliance Office.

Part Three. Issues and analysis presented by counsel

At the signers' request, counsel compared their account with ASU's published policies, ASU research, national safety standards, and other information available to counsel. This part is counsel's analysis.

A. Outside Consultants policy

ASU's Outside Consultants policy (Rund Attachment A, § 6) states that consultants "are not permitted to work with student-athletes … until all procedural steps are followed, the process is completed, and approval documentation is received." The record does not show that these steps were completed.

The process is ASU's vetting step to ensure those who interact with student-athletes are qualified and can maintain a safe environment for the students. The request form asks for a description of the consultant's activities, dates, and location and whether he will interact with student-athletes, and the Compliance Office and SDA administration must review it before approval. A review conducted as the policy requires would have examined who Ziesel was, what he proposed to do, and whether he was qualified and certified to do it.

1. **Coverage.** The policy applies to any non-staff person, "whether compensated or not," who interacts directly with student-athletes (§ 1).
2. **Approval.** The request was submitted August 12, eight days before the session, without a written plan. The Rund report does not state that it was reviewed or approved.
3. **Description.** The request sought approval for "teambuilding." The session was a grueling, military-style workout. Zeisel himself declared that the workout was not about team building.
4. **Plan review.** The Rund report states that no plan was submitted to ASU's strength and conditioning staff. On September 23, at the NCHC preseason media day, Coach Powers said, "I don't run workouts. Our strength and conditioning coach does." If that is how the program works, the August 20 session was the exception. The hockey strength and conditioning coach reserved the stadium at the head coach's request, and players report she knew the event was coming but not what it would involve. The one session run outdoors in August, by an outsider who had not been approved, is the one session the program's qualified strength professional did not design, review, or run. NCAA and inter-association

recommendations call for conditioning to be planned by qualified strength and conditioning staff (Part Three, E). The Rund report does not say who decided to exclude her, or why.

5. **Certifications.** Consultants must carry and be able to prove first-aid, CPR, and AED certification (§ 2(c)). The Rund report does not address this, and the record contains no evidence that Ziesel held these certifications. In any event, Ziesel left the field near the end of the workout and could not observe the athletes while they were still following his instructions.
6. **Coaching instruction.** Consultants may not provide coaching instruction (§ 2(a)). The Rund timeline states that Ziesel "directs the student-athletes in a series of calisthenic circuits," which is coaching instruction.
7. **Contract.** The Rund report states there was no contract.
8. **Booster involvement.** The Rund report states that a booster introduced Ziesel and arranged his return. It does not address how that arrangement was reviewed.
9. **Compliance office.** ASU's Sun Devil Compliance website states that coaches "must complete the outside consultant request form and receive approval before the consultant starts working with SDA" and that "[t]he Compliance Office and SDA administration must review all outside consultants." ASU's Office of General Counsel website states that athletics compliance has been delegated to that office. The Rund report does not say whether the compliance office received the August 12 request, and its organization chart does not include the office.
10. **Volunteer registration.** If Ziesel was a volunteer, as his attorney says, a second requirement applied. ASU's Office of General Counsel states that "[i]ndividuals wishing to volunteer must first complete a Volunteer Registration Form" and that "[t]he university department is responsible for completing the form and submitting it to ASU Insurance Services." ASU's Environmental Health and Safety Manual adds that "departments may only accept volunteer services for non-high-risk positions" (EHS 705-08, citing SPP 212). By his attorney's account, Ziesel "didn't fill out any forms." The Rund report does not mention volunteer registration, and it does not address whether leading an outdoor conditioning session in August is a position ASU may fill with a volunteer at all. (ASU Office of General Counsel, Insurance Coverage by the State, ogc.asu.edu; EHS 705-08, University Volunteer Insurance Coverage.)

What the public record already shows

The University did not have to look far. Reporting in *The Arizona Republic*, based on

statements by Ziesel's own attorney, establishes the following: Ziesel was engaged on a handshake. He "didn't fill out any forms"; he "met coaching staff and shook hands" and "spoke to the head coach." He volunteered at the head coach's request. The head coach did not involve him in any vetting process. He was not asked to sign anything and had "nothing to do" with agreeing to ASU's rules or procedures. On that basis he was given a planned three-day program with the team where he was given carte blanche to conduct a grueling, military-style workout, and he left the field before the first session ended and before he could confirm that all the student-athletes were safe.

The *Republic* also reported, on August 28, that Ziesel was seriously injured in a 2023 motorcycle crash and that, by his own account, the crash "left Ziesel with lasting problems with his memory, decision-making, emotional regulation and physical abilities," contributed to the loss of his job, and "required significant assistance from his family."

Counsel does not know the full picture of Ziesel's background, and this report does not attempt to state it. The point is narrower. The consultant review exists to answer a short list of questions before an outsider is given free rein over student-athletes: who he is, what he has done before, what he proposes to do, and whether he is qualified and certified to do it. On the public record alone, none of those questions were asked. The reporting shows there were things to ask about. Whether a person who describes lasting difficulty with decision-making and emotional regulation should be put in sole command of a punishing workout session for student-athletes in August heat is a question the University may answer either way. It is also the kind of question a review exists to answer, and no one at ASU asked it. Whatever a review would have turned up, the failure to conduct one, contrary to ASU's own policy, is established.

B. Exertional Heat Illness Policy

ASU's Exertional Heat Illness Policy (Rund Attachment B) required the following. The right column states what the record shows.

Policy requirement	Record
Acclimatization "gradually over 7–14 days"	One or two workouts, each with about 15 minutes outdoors in three short trips from air conditioning, on his feet, with rest and water. He was otherwise indoors for virtually his entire time in Arizona. Acclimatization is progressive conditioning for the activity to be performed: the same exercises, in the same heat and humidity, begun at a reduced level and increased over 7–14 days. Nothing about the earlier workouts approximated the August 20 exercises, surfaces, duration, or conditions, and it was not repeated or increased over days. He is from Ontario, Canada, and was unaccustomed to the heat.
Heat-risk chart: at "High," "[o]nly fit and heat acclimatized athletes can participate"	ASU's figures (86°F/51%, 87°F/49%, 89°F/46%) are above the chart's "High" line (about 85°F at 51% humidity, read from the chart). The policy calls for measurements using wet-bulb globe temperatures, not estimates from a weather station, which cannot take into account radiant/solar heat or wind at the level of the exercises. ASU supplied only estimates, from a station a mile from the field. ASU's own researchers found that such estimates understate on-field conditions at this stadium, so the true reading was likely higher still (Part Three, C).
"[R]egular measurements" using wet-bulb, dry-bulb, and globe temperature	No on-field measurement. No WBGT instrument on site.
During extreme heat, modify "practice times and duration"	No modification.
"Frequent rest periods should be scheduled"; breaks "in the shade if possible"	No scheduled rest; no shade.
Fluids "whenever they feel like they need fluids—even if it is during a non-scheduled break"	One break, only for those doing well in the task; players could not leave formation.

Policy requirement	Record
Cold-water immersion tub "half-filled … and prepared before event," with "3–4 coolers of ice"	Not on the field. Not available.
Move the athlete "out of direct sunlight … preferably indoors with air conditioning"	Several minutes in direct sun on synthetic, hotter surface; moved to outdoor shade under a permanent utility-vehicle structure about 15 yards off the track.
"First choice of treatment is with immediate cold water immersion"	Not immersed.
"[C]ontact team physician immediately"	Not addressed in the Rund report. No evidence of a call to the team physician.
911 for "altered level of consciousness"	The report says the call was made when his condition "deteriorated," not when it was clear that he had an altered level of consciousness. Tempe Fire was dispatched at 8:31 a.m., according to public reporting.

The Rund report cites Matthew's workouts of August 14, 17, and 18 as outdoor exposure. The table compares that work with August 20.

	Before August 20	August 20
How often	One or two workouts in Matthew's eight days, each with about 15 minutes outdoors in three separate trips out of an air-conditioned room.	One hardcore session of 75–80 minutes, mostly in direct sunlight. Other than a huddle to hear Ziesel's combat stories, the only rest was holding planks. Water reached only some players, not Matthew. No air conditioning and no shade.
Time outdoors at a stretch	About five minutes, then back into air conditioning.	About 75 minutes of constant exertion without going indoors
Actual work per stretch	About three minutes of pushing a plate, with rest while a partner pushed.	Continuous circuits, bear crawls, flutter kicks, planks, sprints, body carries, and runs

	Before August 20	August 20
Body position	Bent over, pushing a plate	Largely on or close to the ground: planks, push-ups, bear crawls, flutter kicks
Water and rest	Available	One water break; Matthew received none. Rest was a plank or standing in the sun, with a short talk about combat by Ziesel.

ASU's Environmental Health and Safety office also publishes a university-wide *Heat Illness Prevention Program* (rev. May 22, 2026). Its Appendix E applies to "outdoor events, athletics and any other event that involves heat exposure." It directs that people new to a hot climate "[i]ncrease heat exposure gradually over 7–14 days," and that participants take "frequent breaks in shaded or air-conditioned locations." It also directs planners to "[t]rain event staff on signs, symptoms and responses to heat-related illnesses," noting that ASU's heat-stress training is available through Workday Learning; to "[p]air individuals and instruct them to monitor each other for heat illness"; and, for suspected heat stroke, first to "[m]ove the person to a cool location." It advises that "[e]vents requiring high levels of physical activity should be best rescheduled for cooler times of the year." The Rund report does not mention this program. Neither pairing nor any instruction on signs and symptoms occurred on August 20 (Part One).

The Rund report treats Matthew's eight days in Arizona and the three workouts as heat exposure. Neither is acclimatization. Heat acclimatization is a set of physiological adaptations (earlier and heavier sweating, expanded plasma volume, a lower heart rate and core temperature at a given workload) that the body develops only through repeated exercise in the heat, with duration and intensity increased gradually over one to two weeks. It is specific to the work performed: an athlete is acclimatized to the exercises, surfaces, duration, and conditions he has progressively trained in, not to others. ASU's own policy describes it that way: exposure "gradually over 7–14 days" by "steadily increasing the intensity and duration" of activity in the heat. On that definition the August 20 session was a first exposure. No player had done bear crawls, planks, flutter kicks, buddy carries, or medicine-ball sprints outdoors, on the ground, in August heat, at any level before that morning. Living in the Valley while moving between an air-conditioned apartment, rink, and weight room produces none of the adaptations. Neither does a five-minute plate push. Matthew had done neither the amount nor the kind of work that acclimatization requires,

and the Rund report does not indicate that anyone at ASU assessed whether he had.

C. Field conditions

1. **Source of the Rund report's figures.** The figures come from a privately operated weather station at 33.424° N, 111.946° W in downtown Tempe, about 1.1 miles west of the stadium, with its sensor 6 to 8 feet above the ground. WBGT was then estimated on an assumption of "mostly cloudy" skies, taken from a weather report. The players were in direct sun for virtually the entire session, and the *Arizona's Family* video shows direct sunlight and no cloud cover well into the workout.
2. **ASU's own research at this stadium.** A 2021 study by ASU researchers reports that they measured WBGT at Sun Devil Athletics venues, including the track at Sun Angel Stadium, and found on-field values "on average, significantly higher than WBGT estimated from regional weather stations by 2.4 °C–2.5 °C" (about 4.3–4.5°F). They recommended on-site monitoring. (H. Guyer et al., 16 Env't Res. Letters 124042 (2021).)
3. **The surface was hotter than the air the station measured.** Rubberized track surfaces absorb sunlight and cannot cool by evaporation, so in direct sun they run well above air temperature. Matthew collapsed on the rubberized field-event apron.
4. **The air near the field was more humid than at the station.** It had rained the night before. Wet grass releases moisture into the air closest to the ground, while a station over city pavement reads drier. Players described the air near the ground as so humid it was hard to breathe.
5. **Ground-level drills prevented evaporative cooling.** Planks, push-ups, bear crawls, and flutter kicks kept the players' bodies at or near the ground, in the most humid and stillest air on the field, with the sun above and a hot surface below. The body cools mainly by evaporating sweat; humid, still air (or worse, ground contact) sharply limits that, and sweat drips off instead of cooling. ASU's own estimate records 0 mph wind at 6:51. The combined effect of humidity, temperature, sun, and wind is why ASU's policy requires regular WBGT measurements.

D. Supervision and emergency response

1. **Work-to-rest ratio.** National recommendations for conditioning in a transition period begin at about one part work to four parts rest. No rest schedule was set.
2. **Exertion level.**
3. **Exercise as punishment.** NCAA and inter-association recommendations advise against using exercise as punishment.

4. **Signs of heat illness.** Disorientation and loss of coordination are recognized signs of exertional heat illness. Disorientation and confusion were observed by us, and would have been obvious to anyone trained to look for them, well before the final event, in the bear crawls and other tasks; loss of coordination was observed during it (medicine ball runs).
5. **Medical authority.** NCAA rules for autonomy-conference schools give athletics health-care providers independent authority over medical decisions, including stopping activity. The session was not stopped despite the trainer being present.
6. **Supervision at the collapse.** Ziesel announced he would not stay for the last event and left. The coaches and athletic trainer then chose to run the medicine-ball relays, watched Matthew drop the ball, miss it twice, stumble, fall, and get up, and did not stop him. Whatever responsibility attaches to the outside instructor for the first hour, the final event and the collapse occurred under ASU staff supervision alone.
7. **Positioning.** Standard first-aid guidance is to lay a collapsed or confused person flat, not to sit him up. Matthew was sat upright twice, a position that can reduce blood flow to the brain.
8. **No effective cooling.** Nothing effectively cooled him from his collapse at about 8:23 until EMS arrived around 8:40: squirt bottles, a few towels, and less than a minute of warm hose water (Part One). When cold-water immersion begins promptly after collapse, survival from exertional heat stroke approaches 100 percent (D.J. Casa et al., NATA Position Statement: Exertional Heat Illnesses, 50 J. Athletic Training 986 (2015); J.K. DeMartini et al., 46 Med. & Sci. Sports & Exercise 240 (2014) (274 cases treated with immersion at the Falmouth Road Race; all survived)). The squirt bottles delivered a stream of water, which wets a small area and does little for evaporative cooling. The towels were Powerade sideline towels, a product for wiping down during activity, and had gone unused all morning. The NATA position statement identifies cold-water immersion as the standard of care and treats wet towels and ice packs as lesser alternatives for use only when immersion is unavailable.
9. **Core temperature.** Exertional heat stroke is diagnosed by rectal temperature, and cooling is guided by it; oral, ear, and skin readings are unreliable in a collapsed athlete. The NATA position statement (National Athletic Trainers' Association, 2015) calls for a rectal thermometer on site, a reading at the time of collapse, and cooling to continue until core temperature falls to about 102°F. The Rund report does not indicate that a temperature was taken at any point before transport, and the players saw none taken. Without one, no one on the field could know how hot Matthew was, whether he was being cooled, or when it was safe to stop. The thermometer and the immersion tub work together: the tub is the treatment, and the thermometer is what tells the trainer it is working. Neither was there.

10. **Training.** ASU's Heat Illness Prevention Program directs that event staff be trained on the signs, symptoms, and responses to heat illness (App. E), and EHS 108 makes supervisors responsible for ensuring that staff complete required safety training before assuming their duties. The Rund report does not say whether any coach or staff member on the field on August 20 had completed ASU's heat-stress training or any equivalent.

E. National standards

Standard	Requirement	Record
NATA Position Statement: Exertional Heat Illnesses (2015)	Rectal temperature for diagnosis; cold-water immersion on site; cool before transport	None of these. Without a rectal thermometer, core temperature cannot be determined. Rapid cooling is the central treatment for exertional heat stroke.
Inter-Association Task Force, *Preventing Sudden Death in Collegiate Conditioning Sessions* (2012)	Phased transition periods; about 1:4 work-to-rest initially; no punitive conditioning	Not followed
NCAA, *Inter-Association Recommendations: Preventing Catastrophic Injury and Death in Collegiate Athletes* (2019)	Conditioning planned by qualified strength staff; no exercise as punishment; venue emergency action plans	Not followed

F. Police interviews and the administrative review

The Rund report states that ASU Police interviews were shared with the administrative review. Counsel notes three concerns. First, the signers who gave police statements report that they were not told their statements would go to the administration. Second, ASU Police and the administrative review report to the same university leadership whose staff are the subjects of the inquiry. Third, it is uncommon, especially this early in an investigation, for a criminal investigation to provide its results to an administrative review; that disclosure may create problems for any later prosecution, particularly where, as the report states, the ASU Police findings will be forwarded to the Maricopa County Attorney for independent review. Separately, ASU's Environmental Health and Safety Manual requires that any injury to a student be reported to EHS within 24 hours and that

a root-cause investigation follow, with corrective action (EHS 115). The Rund report does not mention EHS.

G. Positions not addressed in the Rund report

Position	Question not answered
Head coach	Who approved the session? Who decided its content, duration, and location?
Assistant coaches	Were the head coach, assistant coaches, and staff (including trainers) properly trained to identify and address exertional heat stroke and to intervene?
Assistant athletic trainer	Why were the required tub and ice not on the field, and why was Matthew not immersed? Why was he not transported to the indoor immersion tank for cooling before the ambulance arrived? Why was he sat upright? Was there an emergency action plan for exertional heat stroke?
Strength and conditioning staff	Coach Powers says the strength and conditioning coach runs the team's workouts. Why was she excluded from planning or reviewing this one, and who decided that? Did she know beforehand what it would involve? Did she have authority to modify or stop it? Was she still on the field when players began to struggle, and if not, when and why did she leave?
Sport administration (the SDA administrators who route the outside-consultant form; distinct from the Compliance Office)	Who received the August 12 request? Was it reviewed by anyone prior to the workout?
Head athletic trainer; team physician	Was a venue emergency action plan in place? Was the physician contacted?
Athletics Compliance Office; Office of General Counsel	Did compliance receive or act on the August 12 request? Why is the office not on the organization chart? What role did the Office of General Counsel have in the review?

Part Four. Established failures and the actions taken

Each item below is established by ASU's policies, the Rund report, or both. The signers are not aware of any action taken on any of them.

Failure	Established by	Action known to signers
Consultant worked with athletes with no approval shown in the record	Rund timeline; Consultants policy §6	None
No written plan submitted for review	Rund report	None
Required certifications not shown	Consultants policy §2(c); Rund report silent	None
No volunteer registration shown	OGC volunteer guidance; EHS 705-08; Ziesel's attorney ("didn't fill out any forms")	None
An athlete with eight days in Arizona and one or two brief outdoor circuits participated in "High" conditions without modification	Heat policy; Rund timeline and weather estimates	None
No on-field heat measurement reported; no WBGT on site	Heat policy; Rund report	None
No immersion tub or ice chests on site	Heat policy; Rund report lists only water and a cooler of iced towels	None
No cold-water immersion before transport	Heat policy; Rund timeline	None
Police interviews shared with administrative review	Rund report	None

Requests

1. Issue written findings on whether each requirement of the Outside Consultants and Exertional Heat Illness policies was met on August 20.
2. Place the staff responsible for approving, conducting, and supervising the session on administrative leave pending an independent investigation.
3. Name an interim coaching staff for the period of the investigation if the facts set out in this report, together with what the investigation finds, indicate that step is appropriate. An interim staff would allow the investigation to be completed, and the players to be heard, without asking players to put their scholarships, roster positions, and playing time at risk in order to be heard. It is not fair to require that.

4. Should the University take that step, the signers note that the Valley is home to former professional players with coaching experience who could serve on an interim basis and help the University reach the truth without placing the entire burden of that effort on the players. People who have the expertise and connection to ASU, former players such as Shane Doan would be excellent candidates for interim coaching.
5. Refer the investigation to an agency outside the university.
6. Confirm in writing that no player will lose a scholarship, roster position, or playing time for participating in any investigation or in this report, and each will be protected from retaliation if their identities are revealed.
7. Before any further outdoor or conditioning activity, require on-site heat measurement, an immersion tub with ice, a venue emergency action plan, and an athletic trainer with authority to stop the session.
8. Publish the final findings, which at a minimum should answer the questions presented below:

Questions

1. Who approved Tim Ziesel to work with the team, and when?
2. Why was the strength and conditioning coach, who Coach Powers says runs the team's workouts, excluded from planning or reviewing the August 20 session, and who made that decision?
3. Did the Athletics Compliance Office receive the August 12 request, and what action did it take?
4. Did anyone verify Ziesel's first-aid, CPR, and AED certifications?
5. What vetting of Ziesel's background, qualifications, and proposed activities was performed before August 20, by whom, and what did it consist of?
6. Why was the session held outdoors, without on-field heat measurement, with athletes who were not acclimatized?
7. Why did the review rely on an off-site weather station?
8. Why were the immersion tub and ice required by the heat policy not on the field?
9. Was the team physician contacted? If not, why not?
10. Was a core (rectal) temperature taken at any point before transport? If not, was a rectal thermometer available on the field, and are the athletic training staff trained and authorized to use one?

11. Were the coaching staff and athletic trainer trained that exertional heat stroke requires a cool first, transport second approach, and had they completed ASU's own heat-stress training (Heat Illness Prevention Program, App. E; EHS 108)?
12. Why was Matthew not taken to the cold-water immersion tub in Mullett Arena? Was it operating and available?
13. Why did the coaching staff and athletic trainer, who observed the entire workout, not ensure that hydration and rest requirements were followed?
14. Why was no one assigned to monitor each player for signs of heat illness, including altered consciousness?
15. Did any staff member record athletes struggling on a personal device, and are those recordings being preserved?
16. Why were police interviews shared with the administrative review, and why were players who gave statements not told that this would happen?
17. For each failure listed above, has any personnel action been taken? If not, why not?
18. Was a Volunteer Registration Form completed for Ziesel and submitted to ASU Insurance Services, and by which department head?
19. Was the August 20 incident reported to Environmental Health and Safety within 24 hours, as EHS 115 requires, and has EHS conducted the root-cause investigation that policy calls for?

Please direct any response to our counsel, Tim Casey. The best number for him to reach him is his cell telephone number of 602-538-6450.

Respectfully submitted,

Seven (7) members of the 2026–27 Arizona State University men's hockey team

Identities and agreement confirmed by: Timothy J. Casey, 1221 East Osborn Road, Suite 105, Phoenix Arizona 85024

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Sincerely,

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