



HEAT ACCLIMATIZATION

Heat illness is a cause for concern for high school student-athletes beginning pre-season practices in the warm, summer months and other times of extreme heat. The most serious heat illness, exertional heat stroke, is one of the leading causes of preventable death in these athletes. Heat production during intense exercise is 15 to 20 times greater than at rest and can raise body core temperature one to two degrees Fahrenheit every five minutes unless heat is dissipated. The following policy provides guidelines and procedures for conducting preseason practices and activities to insure the well-being of student-athletes.

41.1 Education of Management of Heat Illness

41.1.1 Requirement for Coaches and Student Athletes. All FHSAA member school head coaches, and paid/supplemented coaches and student athletes are required to annually view the FREE NFHS online education course “Heat Illness Prevention”. This free NFHS heat illness course may be viewed online at www.nfhslearn.com.

41.1.2 Recommendation. All member school personnel, contest officials, student-athletes, parents and media are strongly encouraged to educate themselves by viewing the FREE NFHS online education course “Heat Illness Prevention”. This free NFHS heat illness course may be viewed online at www.nfhslearn.com.

41.2 Intent. The intent of this policy is to require FHSAA member schools to follow a preseason acclimatization and recovery model for all sports that enhances student-athlete well-being. The policy also requires individual schools, or districts, to select and promote a method of environmental monitoring to be used outside the acclimatization period and comply with standard recommendations for practice modifications, for the safety of the student-athlete.

41.2.1 These policies provide general regulations for conducting preseason practices for secondary school-age student athletes and to provide recommendations for voluntary conditioning workouts.

41.2.2 These policies should be applied before and during the academic year to ensure the athletes arrive with and maintain adequate sport-specific conditioning.

41.2.3 Application of these regulations should not be based solely on the information contained here within; but, should represent the minimal safety precautions promoted through the FHSAA. Coaches and Schools are encouraged to review published recommendations through the NFHS or the National Athletic Trainers Association to further protect student-athletes from the harmful effects of the heat.

41.2.4 Individuals using these guidelines are responsible for prudent judgment with respect to each practice, athlete and facility and each athlete is responsible for exercising caution when following these general requirements.

41.3 Rationale. The recommendation of the National Federation of High School Association’s (NFHS) Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) and the National Athletic Trainers’ Association’s (NATA) Secondary School Committee, that all sports use acclimatization and recovery principles to develop their preseason practice schedules for the purpose of enhancing the student athlete well-being, is based on the following: The primary focus of the preseason period should be to provide an adjustment period to the intensity and duration of exercise and environmental conditions. These procedures are based upon medical literature. Careful consideration should be given to the various levels of fitness in the high school student-athlete.

41.4 Definitions.

41.4.1 Voluntary Conditioning. Voluntary conditioning is defined as any conditioning (i.e. running, weight lifting, warm-up, stretching, or cool-down) that occurs outside the season as defined in Policies 20 and 21.

41.4.2 Official Practice. An official practice is defined as one continuous period of time in which a participant engages in physical activity. It is required that each practice be no more than three hours (3 hours) in length and consist of no more than 90 minutes of intense exercise. Warm-up, stretching, and cool-down activities are to be included as part of the official practice time. All conditioning and/ or weight room activities shall be considered part of the official practice beginning on the first calendar day of official sport season.

41.4.3 Acclimatization Period. The acclimatization period is defined as the first 14 calendar days of a student-athletes' participation, beginning with the first allowable date of practice in that sport or the first day an athlete begins official practice, whichever is later.

All student-athletes, including those who arrive to preseason practice after the first official day of practice, must adhere to the safety precautions afforded by this acclimatization policy. This period does not restrict an athletes' availability to participate in a contest but does restrict the amount of total hours an athlete can participate on a daily and weekly basis.

41.4.4 Walk-Through. A walk-through shall be defined as an additional teaching/learning opportunity for student-athletes and coaches with no protective equipment (i.e. helmets, shoulder pads, shin guards) or equipment related to a given sport (i.e. footballs, blocking sleds, pitching machine, soccer balls, etc.). The duration of any walk-through must not exceed one hour in length. A walkthrough shall not include conditioning or weight room activities.

41.4.5 Recovery Period. A recovery period is defined as the time between the end of one practice or walk-through and the beginning of the next practice or walk-through. Physical activity is restricted during this time period (i.e. speed , strength, conditioning, or agility drills). Walk-throughs are prohibited during this recovery period.

41.5 Procedures

41.5.1 Prior to participation in any preseason practice activities, all student-athletes are required to undergo a Pre-Participation Physical Evaluation (see Bylaw 9.7, Form EL 2) administered as required by state law.

41.5.2 The student and parent or legal guardian, duly appointed by a court of competent jurisdiction, must submit release forms provided by the association (Form EL3 – Consent and Release from Liability Certificate).

41.5.3 During the first seven days of an athlete's participation, it is required that participants not engage in more than one practice per day.

41.5.4 If a practice session is interrupted by inclement weather or heat restrictions, it is required the session be divided for the good of the student-athlete's welfare as long as the combined total practice time for that session does not exceed three (3) hours. The addition of a walk-through session in this situation is acceptable provided it is added because of a weather related disruption, and occurs inside an air-conditioned facility.

41.5.5 Competition is counted as three (3) hours. An official practice is not permitted on the same day of a competition.

41.5.6 A walk-through is permitted during Days 1 – 6 of the acclimatization period. However, a one-hour recovery period is required between the end of practice and the start of the walk-through or vice-versa.

41.5.7 Football only (including spring): Due to the protective equipment required in football, these additional procedures apply:

the first two (2) days of practice are restricted to helmets only, days 3-5 can introduce shoulder-pads with shorts and then beginning

day six (6) of practice, full gear can be utilized and body-to-body contact is permitted. Student-athletes who begin practice with a team after the start of official practice will be required to follow this same 6 day procedure. During the initial five (5) days, the use of arm shields, tackling and blocking dummies, sleds and other devices can be used for instructional purposes, however, deliberate body-to-body contact is prohibited.

41.5.8 For football athletes, the first availability for a contest would be after completion of the 6 practice sessions as listed above in 41.5.6.

41.5.9 Beginning Day 8, it is required that the practice schedule not exceed a 2-1-2-1 format. This means that a day consisting of two practices should be followed by a day with only one practice. On a day consisting of two practices, the two practices must be separated by at least three (3) hours of continuous rest. One walk-through session may be added to a day with a single practice session, with a minimum of three (3) hours of continuous rest time between the practice and walk-through. If a two practice day were followed by a day off, a two-practice day would be permitted on the next day.

41.5.10 On days when two practices are conducted, it is required that either practice not exceed three (3) hours in length and student-athletes not participate in more than five (5) total hours of practice activities on these days, Warm-up, stretching, and cooldown activities are included as part of the official practice time. Practices must be separated with at least three continuous hours of recovery time between the end of the first practice and the beginning of the very next practice. A walk-through is not permitted on days that have two (2) official practices. Weekly practice time shall not exceed twenty-four (24) hours for days 8-14.

41.5.11 On days when a single practice is conducted, it is required that practices not exceed three hours (3 hours) in length. A walkthrough is permitted after a minimum one-hour recovery period between the end of the first practice and the walk-through, or vice-versa.

41.5.12 It is recommended that any voluntary conditioning session is limited to three (3) hours maximum per session and these sessions should include the safeguards listed within 41.6 below.

41.5.13 Cross Country: Individuals must participate in a minimum of 10 practice sessions on 10 separate days prior to the first contest.

41.6 Hydration and Rest. Once the 14 day acclimatization period expires or within ANY voluntary conditioning session, each individual school, or district, must select and promote a method of monitoring the environment for heat related concerns and comply with standard recommendations for practice modifications, for the safety of the student-athlete, including, but not limited to, the following:

41.6.1 Rest time must involve both unlimited hydration intake and rest without any activity involved.

41.6.2 For sports utilizing helmets (i.e. football, lacrosse, baseball, softball and others) helmets should be removed during rest time.

41.6.3 The area identified for rest should be considered a “cooling zone” and out of direct sunlight.

41.6.3.1 It is strongly recommended that cooling zone areas include ice sponges/towels, cold immersion tubs and other cooling alternatives to facilitate the cooling process.

41.6.4 Coaches must promote a heat injury prevention philosophy by promoting unrestricted access to water at all times without consequence.

41.6.5 A student-athlete should never be denied access to water if he/she requests.

41.7 It is strongly recommended that all member schools use methods of monitoring the environment using devices like a Wet Bulb Globe Temperature device.

41.8 Sanctions on Coaches

41.8.1 Level 1 Suspension. A head coach who commits a violation of any condition listed in Policy 41 will be ineligible to coach or attend any contest, at any level, for a minimum of the next two (2) contests during the period of suspension, in all sports except football. For football, the coach will be ineligible for a minimum of one (1) football game; or

41.8.2 Level 2 Suspension. A head coach who receives a second Level 1 Suspension due to a violation of any condition listed in Policy 41, or commits multiple violations in Policy 41 will be ineligible to coach or attend any interscholastic athletic contest in any sport, at any level, for a period of up to six (6) weeks; or

41.8.3 Level 3 Suspension. A head coach who receives a second Level 2 Suspension for violating any condition of Policy 41 or commits an egregious violation of Policy 41, as determined in the sole discretion of the Executive Director, will be ineligible to coach or attend any interscholastic athletic contest in any sport for a period of up to one (1) year.

Football Contact Procedure

The purpose of this procedure is player safety. This procedure is intended to limit live action drills and simulations and not the number of practices a team may participate in full pads. A team may participate in "AIR," "BAGS," AND "THUD" during any point after the acclimatization period.

4.7.3.1 Definitions

- (a) AIR - Players run a drill unopposed without contact
- (b) BAGS - Players run a drill against a bag or another soft-contact surface
- (c) THUD - contact above the waist only, after initial contact each player takes his first two or three steps, then both relax and nobody goes to the ground. There is no winner or loser. Coaches are not grading physical domination in "thud." Teammates are merely trying to give each other a simulation of game action. Thud is not "live contact" format. "Thud" is an alternative to "Live Contact."
- (d) LIVE CONTACT - Players run a drill in game-like conditions and is the only time that players are taken to the ground
- (e) HELMETS - Helmet, shirt/practice jersey, shorts- NO SHOULDER PADS OR LEG PADS
- (f) SHELLS - Helmet, Shoulder pad, Thigh pad, shorts
- (g) FULL- Helmet, Shoulder pads, pants with all pads

4.7.3.2 Preseason-Spring Practice. Day 6 through the Monday of the First Regular Season game or end of spring practice:

- (a) Live Contact shall be allowed in no more than 2 consecutive practice days
- (b) LIVE CONTACT IS LIMITED TO 40 MIUNTES EACH DAY DURING THE PRESEASON
- (c) Air/Bags/Thud unlimited

4.7.3.3 Regular Season and Post Season

- (a) Live contact during practice shall be allowed in no more than three (3) practice days per week;
- (b) Live contact during practice shall not be allowed on more than two (2) consecutive days;
- (c) Live contact during practice shall be limited to not more than 30 minutes per day;
- (d) Live contact during practice shall be limited to not more than 80 minutes per week.
- (e) Unlimited Air/Bags/Thud

4.7.3.4 Written Practice Plans. A written practice plan in compliance with this Administrative Procedure shall be prepared in advance by the head coach prior to every practice and maintained by the school for a period of at least twelve (12) months. Such practice plans shall be made available upon request.