

EXERTIONAL HEAT ILLNESS

4.19*+

I. Purpose of policy:

The intent of this policy is to keep student-athletes safe by emphasizing safety parameters at the start of any sport season as students begin exertional activities. The policy reminds coaches of all sports that heat, especially here in Florida and across the southeast United States, can be dangerous and is regarded as one of the top causes of sudden death in young athletes. This policy applies to all staff members, including but not limited to athletic trainers, physicians, athletic administrators, coaches, strength and conditioning staff, and school administrators who are associated with activities where heat illness poses a risk, including but not limited to, outdoor and indoor activities where high temperature and specifically, high humidity environmental risks are present (e.g., athletics, intramurals, course instruction, marching band). This policy requires schools to follow a preseason acclimatization and recovery model for all sports that to enhances enhance student-athlete well-being. This includes preseason practices and voluntary conditioning sessions for secondary school student athletes. The policy also requires a method of environmental monitoring to be used outside the acclimatization period to monitor environmental conditions during and after the acclimatization period (14 days) and comply with standard recommendations for practice modifications, for the safety of the student-athlete. This policy applies to all on- and off-campus athletic activities.

II. Definitions:

- A. *Acclimatization* – The process of gradually increasing the intensity of activity in a progressive manner that improves the body’s ability to adapt to and tolerate exercise in the heat. 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 the sport of the first day an athlete begins official practice, whichever is later.
- B. *Wet Bulb Globe Temperature* – The WBGT is a measurement tool that uses ambient temperature, relative humidity, wind, and solar radiation from the sun to get a comprehensive measure that can be used to monitor environmental conditions during exercise. WBGT is different than heat index, as it is a more comprehensive measurement of environmental heat stress on the body.

Chapter 4 – Curriculum and Instruction

- C. *Non-Practice Activities* – Activities that include meetings, injury treatment, and film study.
- D. *Practice* – The period of time that a student-athlete engages in coach-supervised, school approved sport or conditioning related-activity. Practice time includes from the time the players report to the field until they leave.
- E. *Walk Through* – A period of time where players are reviewing positional strategy and rehearsing plays. Players do not experience contact and thus they do not wear equipment and the intensity of the activity is minimal often involving walking. This period of time shall last no more than one hour. It is not considered part of the practice time regulation. It may not involve conditioning or weight room activities. Players may not wear protective equipment during the walk through.
- F. *Recovery Time* – This period of time is defined as non-activity time outside of practices or games. NO ACTIVITY, including non-practice activity, can occur during this time. When it is possible, proper recovery should occur in an air-conditioned facility for a minimum of 3 hours in duration.
- G. *Rest Breaks* – This period of time occurs during practice and is a non-activity time that is in a 'cool zone' out of direct sunlight.
- H. *Exertional Heat Stroke (EHS)*– Defined as having a rectal temperature over 104°F-105°F (40.5°C), and central nervous system dysfunction (e.g. irrational behavior, confusion, irritability, emotional instability, altered consciousness, collapse, coma, dizzy, etc.).
- I. *Cooling Zone*- An area out of direct sunlight with adequate air flow to assist in cooling. A cold-water or ice tub and ice towels should be available to immerse or soak a patient with suspected heat illness This may be outdoors or indoors depending on proximity to field.
- J. *Qualified Health Care Professional (QHP)* - As defined by the American Medical Association (AMA), "is an individual who is qualified by education, training, licensure/regulation (when applicable), and facility privileging (when applicable) who performs a professional service within his/her scope of practice and independently reports that professional service." NEW FHSA *Healthcare Personnel* - Healthcare personnel is defined as qualified healthcare practitioners listed under §456.001, F.S., including those licensed under chapter 458 (MD), chapter 459 (DO), chapter 460 (DC), or §464.012, F.S. (ARPN) and chapter 468 (AT), who are in good standing

Chapter 4 – Curriculum and Instruction

with their regulatory board. Other adjunctive healthcare personnel may include emergency services personnel (EMS) regulated under §401.23, F.S. and lifeguards regulated under §514.071, F.S. Ideally, healthcare personnel that provide healthcare services to student-athletes, defined below, during athletic activities shall be trained and familiar with best practices for the prevention, care, and management of common sports-related injuries, illness, conditions, and emergency situations.

- K. *Hypohydration*- (reduced hydration status) is a deficit of body water that is caused by acute or chronic dehydration.

 - L. *Central Nervous System dysfunction*- includes any sign or symptom that the central nervous system is not working properly, including: dizziness, drowsiness, irrational behavior, confusion, irritability, emotional instability, hysteria, apathy, aggressiveness, delirium, disorientation, staggering, seizures, loss of consciousness, coma, etc.
- III. Monitoring Heat Stress - Schools must monitor heat stress. Heat stress is determined by measuring the ambient temperature, humidity, wind speed, sun angle and cloud cover at the site of the athletic activity. School are required to follow and adhere to the guidelines set forth by the FHSAA for heat stress readings.
- A. A pre-participation history and physical exam is required. Individuals with risk factors will be identified and counseled on heat illness.
 - B. The athletic trainer or persons responsible will be notified of individuals with pre-existing conditions that place the individual at risk of exertional illness.
 - C. Coaches will be notified of individuals at higher risk as needed.
- IV. Each athletic coach involving outdoor practices or events shall annually complete training in exertional heat illness identification, prevention, and response, including the effective administration of cooling zones.
- V. Environmental Monitoring and Activity modification/Cancellation
- A. Environmental monitoring will occur utilizing a WBGT device
 - B. Environmental monitoring will occur any time it is warm outside (i.e. over

Chapter 4 – Curriculum and Instruction

70°F)

- C. Environmental monitoring and activity modifications may be necessary for certain types of indoor facilities.
 - D. A WBGT device shall be set up in the sun, not under shade, and allowed to acclimatize at the venue at least 15 minutes prior to starting the activity. Monitoring of WBGT will occur every 30 minutes beginning at the scheduled practice time.
 - E. All environmental monitoring will be recorded and stored either hard copy or electronically.
 - F. The School District will follow the guidelines based on the Florida High School Athletic Association policy (FHSAA Bylaw 41.8 WBGT Index for Practices and FHSAA Bylaw 41.9.5 WBGT Index for Interscholastic Contests).
- VI. Acclimatization protocols apply to all sports. Days 1 through 6 of the heat acclimatization period consists of the first 6 days of formal practice. During this time, athletes may not participate in more than one (1) practice per day. If a practice is interrupted by inclement weather or heat restrictions, the practice will recommence once conditions are deemed safe. Total practice time will not exceed 3 hours in a single day. To allow for acclimatization, approximately two (2) hours of activity in the heat would be considered a practice day. A 1-hour maximum walk-through is permitted during days 1-6 of the heat acclimatization period. A 3-hour recovery period shall take place between the practice and walk-through (or vice versa).
- VII. During the first seven (7) days of an athlete's participation, the participants shall not engage in more than one practice per day.
- VIII. Beginning Day 8, the practice schedule shall 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 shall 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.

Chapter 4 – Curriculum and Instruction

Student-athletes who participate in activities that last for an extended amount of time or multiple activities in a day should be provided electrolytes to assist in rehydration. Rest breaks must involve unlimited hydration intake and rest without any activity involved. The use of shade tents is strongly recommended for low-shade areas.

- IX. Coaches are required to adopt a heat injury prevention philosophy by promoting unrestricted access to water at all times. A student-athlete should never be denied access to water.

- X. The school's emergency action plan must include a procedure for onsite cooling using cold-water immersion or equivalent means before a student-athlete is transported to a hospital for exertional heatstroke. This plan shall be reviewed annually and a written copy shall be on file with the Principal and/or Athletic Director, shared with all athletic staff, and key steps shall be posted at each athletic venue.

- XI. Cooling zones must be available for each outdoor athletic contest, practice, workout, or conditioning session. Cooling zones must include the immediate availability of cold-water immersion tubs or equivalent and may also include ice sponges and towels or tarps that can be filled with ice and wrapped around individuals to rapidly cool internal body temperature. An employee or volunteer trained to administer cold-water immersion must be present.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY:

1001.41, 1001.42, F.S.

LAW(S) IMPLEMENTED:

1006.165, F.S.

HISTORY:

ADOPTED: 12/07/21
REVISION DATE(S): 06/2024
FORMERLY: NEW