

## EXTREME HEAT POLICY

### **XLVIII. EXTREME HEAT**

The OSSAA recognizes that heat related illness is the leading cause of preventable death in high school students participating in activities. The Board adopted the following policies:

**Acclimatization Period:** Whenever students are participating in an environment in which the temperature cannot be controlled there should be acclimatization period. The acclimatization period is defined as the first 14 days of participation beginning with the first date of practice in that sport or activity, or the first date a participant begins practice, whichever is later. Any speed, strength, or conditioning programs shall not be considered a part of the acclimatization period. All students participating in athletics or activities, including those who arrive to preseason practice after the first day of practice, are required to follow the guidelines of the first days of the acclimatization period.

All athletic coaches and marching band directors are required to view *A Guide to Heat Acclimatization and Heat Illness Prevention* at [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com), annually. A certificate of completion shall be kept on file for each coach or marching band director at the member school.

### **FOOTBALL (Mandates)**

- a. Preseason practice shall be limited to 2 ½ hours per session with a minimum of one hour between practice sessions. No more than 5 hours of practice per 24-hour period will be allowed. There will be no physical activity during the one-hour rest period. Any time a coach is present during football practice, the time will count toward the maximum 5 hours, with the exception of strength training.
- b. If a practice session is interrupted by inclement weather or heat restrictions, and it is required the session be divided for the good of the student-athlete's welfare as long as the total practice time does not exceed 2 ½ hours.
- c. When multiple practices are conducted in the same day, it is required that either practice not exceed 2½ hours in length and students not participate in more than five total hours of practice activities, including walk-through sessions. Warm-up, stretching, cool down and conditioning activities are included as part of the practice time. Practices should be separated by at least one hour, where there is no physical activity between the end of the first practice and the beginning of the second practice.
- d. Immediately prior to any practice, coaches are required to use a smart-phone APP, or other mechanism or program to get heat index, such as CoachSmart or the OSHA APP. There are also programs available on the Internet, such as AccuWeather, or Weather.com. These programs are free and can be used on any smart-phone, tablet, or computer. A chart outlining recommendations for making concessions for extreme heat is available on the OSSAA website. Schools must develop their own form to record the heat index each practice session.
- e. All practices must be held under the supervision of a coach employed by the school.
- f. Practices must always be conducted with an open water policy.
- g. Cooling stations shall be made available for the athletes (buckets of cool water, wet towels, sponges, etc.)
- h. Each program shall have a heat related emergency plan on hand at all times.

### **Guidelines for outdoor activities:**

- a. Athletic Coaches or marching band directors should use a smart-phone APP, or other mechanism or program to get heat index, such as CoachSmart or the OSHA APP. There are also programs available on the Internet, such as AccuWeather, or Weather.com. These programs are free and can be used on any smart-phone, tablet, or computer. A chart outlining recommendations for making concessions for extreme heat is available on the OSSAA website. Schools must develop their own form to record the heat index each practice session.
- b. All practices should be held under the supervision of a coach, director, or sponsor employed by the school.
- c. Practices should always be conducted with an open water policy.
- d. Each program should have a heat related emergency plan on hand at all times.
- e. Preseason practice should be avoided if possible between the hours of 12 p.m. and 6 p.m.
- f. Parents and students should be educated on the importance of hydration during extreme heat conditions.
- g. Cooling stations should be made available when possible (buckets of cool water, wet towels, sponges, etc.)
- h. Equipment should be removed for conditioning.



# OKLAHOMA SECONDARY SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION

DAVID JACKSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TRINITY JOHNSON, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Assistants : Amy Cassell - Grant Gower - Mike Clark - Alex Claussen - Brian Lester - Wes Ruth



August 1, 2024

As we head into the fall 2024 preseason, particularly with the extreme heat we want to remind everyone that it is critical to alert all schools that this is the peak time of the year for risk of heat-related illnesses and deaths! A commitment to advanced planning and preparation are essential for ensuring the implementation of best practice prevention and management approaches that reduce the risk of death and disability.

Repeated alerts will be sent over the next few months as temperatures may fluctuate. This is not just a football issue. Any student participating in an outdoor sport or activity in the heat is vulnerable to heat illness, including participants in activities such as marching band, cheer and those players practicing in hot gyms without air conditioning.

The use of Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) devices is a very accurate predictor to address heat acclimatization and heat illness, however if one is not available other Aps are available on most phones.

In addition to issues related to heat, **Air Quality** continues to be a problem. During times of suspected high air pollution, the Air Quality Index (AQI) should be checked prior to all practices and contests. A particular location's AQI can be found at <https://www.airnow.gov>

**School administrators, athletic directors, coaches, parents and students will benefit from the following resources from the NFHS and the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC):**

**NFHS “Heat Acclimatization and Heat Illness Prevention Position Statement”**

<https://www.nfhs.org/media/5919613/nfhs-heat-acclimatization-april-2022-final.pdf>

**NFHS “Position Statement and Recommendations for Maintaining Hydration to Optimize Performance and Minimize the Risk for Exertional Heat Illness”**

<https://www.nfhs.org/media/5919614/nfhs-hydration-position-statement-april-2022-final.pdf>

**NFHS “Heat Illness Prevention” Online Course from NFHSLearn.com**

<https://nfhslearn.com/courses/heat-illness-prevention-2>

**NFHS “The Collapsed Student” Online Course from NFHSLearn.com**

<https://nfhslearn.com/courses/the-collapsed-athlete>

**NFHS “Sudden Cardiac Arrest**

<https://nfhslearn.com/courses/sudden-cardiac-arrest>

**NFHS “Position Statement on Physical Activity, Air Quality and Wildfires**

<https://www.nfhs.org/media/7212236/nfhs-position-statement-on-air-quality-april-2023-final.pdf>



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It is crucial that the

heat acclimatizing guidelines are strictly followed as published by the OSSAA as well as those provided by NFHS SMAC, with extra vigilance during the first 3-4 days of any transition or acclimatization period. This is the time when our students are most vulnerable to the heat.

Although prevention is our goal, it is vital for personnel to be able to rapidly identify, assess and appropriately treat exertional heat stroke. Remember, cool first and transport second.