



OKLAHOMA SECONDARY SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION

DAVID JACKSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TRINITY JOHNSON, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Assistants : Grant Gower - Mike Clark - Alex Claussen - Brian Lester - Wes Ruth - Lenny Hatchett



TO: SOCCER COACHES
FROM: WES RUTH
DATE: NOVEMBER 10, 2025
RE: 2025-2026 SOCCER SEASON

Attached you will find:

- 2025-2026 NFHS SOCCER RULE BOOK-SENT TO COACH
- INCLEMENT WEATHER AND OUTSIDE ACTIVITY INFORMATION
- NFHS LIGHTENING GUIDELINES
- EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN
- VISITOR INFORMATION SHEET
- EXTREME HEAT INFORMATION
- SPORTSMANSHIP
- EDUCATION-BASED ACTIVITIES/SUMMERTIME DEAD PERIOD

Districts for each class for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years are posted on the OSSAA website (www.ossaa.com). This is the second year of the two-year Soccer district cycle.

Important information:

1. All district matches shall be completed by Friday, April 24, 2026.
2. There shall be a maximum of three scrimmage dates with the first scrimmage date to be no earlier than February 15, 2026. The regular season shall open on March 1, 2026. **No team shall be allowed to scrimmage in soccer after March 1st. There will be no loss of instructional time for scrimmages or scrimmage tournaments.**
3. Each team is allowed fifteen total matches, teams may participate in no more than two tournaments, and no team shall play more than three matches in any tournament. This total shall include all conference and conference play-off matches and all district matches. Junior High teams are allowed eleven total matches (11 games and no tournament, or 8 games and 1 tournament).
4. **Any player receiving 3 yellow cards in a season must sit the next regularly scheduled contest on the same level of competition. Two additional cautions after a sit-out will result in an additional one-game suspension, one additional caution after a sit-out due to yellow cards will result in another one-game suspension, etc. All cards should be reported to the OSSAA within 24 hours of being issued. Reports should be emailed to wruth@ossaa.com. A violation of this rule may result in a penalty imposed on the coach and/or team by the OSSAA.**

Points of emphasis:

1. A player receiving 3 yellow cards in a season will be required to sit out the next regularly scheduled contest at the same level.
2. If a player receives a 5th yellow card after the sit-out period, the player will be required to sit out the next regularly scheduled contest at the same level.
3. If a player receives a 6th yellow card in the same season, the player will be required to sit out the next regularly scheduled contest at the same level. Any player receiving a yellow card after the 6th will be required to sit out the next regular scheduled contest at the same level for each yellow card received.
4. Yellow card accumulation will be set to zero at the end of the pre-season and at the end of the regular season. If a player receives the 3rd, 5th or 6th yellow card at the end of the pre-season or regular season, the player will be required to comply with the sit-out period.

Best wishes for a successful season.

Inclement Weather and Outside Activities

In the event of possible inclement weather during an outside activity, best practice is to have an agreed procedure in place to determine when play should be interrupted. The following information is offered to assist in the decision making process but in no way should be taken as an OSSAA or NFHS mandated rule or guideline for interruption of play. Sole authority for starting the contest rests with the home team administration and sole authority for play interruption after the contest begins rests with the lead official, however; best practice is that these decisions involving inclement weather and interruption of play are a collaborative effort made by administration from both schools and the officials assigned to the contest.

Prior to the Beginning of the Contest

- Identify the decision makers on site: administrators from each school and game officials.
- Identify shelters in case evacuation of game facility is needed.
- Identify resources available: such as lightening detectors and radar access.
- Discuss non-acceptable limits: distances for lightening, flashes vs thunder.
- Identify liaison to the official from the home administration.

For more detailed information, refer to the NFHS Sports Medicine Committee's "Guidelines for Lightening Safety" a link on the Home page of the OSSAA website.

Terminating a Contest Due to Inclement Weather

Termination and/or rescheduling of the contest must be agreed by both schools. District contests may have specific re-scheduling provisions in OSSAA policy; such as, football district games must be completed by the following Monday and baseball/softball/soccer district contests have a district play completion date in the OSSAA manual.

SPORTS MEDICINE

Handbook



**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF
STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS**

PO Box 690

Indianapolis, Indiana 46206

Phone: 317-972-6900, Fax: 317.822.5700

www.nfhs.org

Fourth Edition

May 2011

Updates and final documents prepared for the NFHS by: NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee

NFHS Staff Liaison: Bob Colgate, Assistant Director

NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee Chair/Editor: Michael C. Koester, M.D., ATC

NFHS is a registered trademark of the National Federation of State High School Associations and use in any manner is prohibited without prior approval of the NFHS.

Member state associations and schools in those associations may reproduce information in this publication for their own use, provided the NFHS copyright is included in the material. The Preparticipation Physical Evaluation Chapter may not be reproduced.

Copyright 2011, by National Federation of State High School Associations.
Printed in the United States of America.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Lightning Safety

By Kevin D. Walter, M.D., FAAP

- Education and prevention are the keys to lightning safety.
- Practice and competitions should be immediately suspended as soon as lightning is seen or thunder is heard.
- All athletes and spectators should seek safe shelter during severe weather.
- Play should not resume for at least 30 minutes after the last lightning strike or thunderclap.

SIGNIFICANCE

Lightning is one of the most consistent causes of weather-related deaths and injury in the U.S. According to the National Severe Storms Laboratory, there are approximately 100 lightning-related deaths and over 1000 injuries yearly.

BACKGROUND

Lightning-related injuries mainly occur between May and September. Most lightning-related casualties happen between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m., with the majority of those occurring between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. Therefore, the risk of lightning-related injury appears to be highest during some of the most active periods for outdoor athletic activities. The average distance between successive lightning flashes is about two to three miles, which means that **risk is present WHENEVER lightning can be seen or thunder can be heard.**

Game administrators, officials and the sports medicine staff can be aware of adverse weather by following local forecasts and by monitoring the National Weather Service (NWS). The NWS issues storm watches and warnings during times of severe weather. A watch means that the conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop, while a warning indicates severe weather has been reported and appropriate precautions should be taken. It must be remembered that any thunderstorm poses a risk of injury, even if not deemed "severe" by the NWS.

MANAGEMENT

As soon as lightning is seen or thunder is heard, practice and competition should be suspended immediately. A **Lightning Safety Plan** should be a component of the Emergency Action Plan (see Emergency Action Plan chapter) and should be in place for every sport and facility. This plan should contain instructions for participants and spectators, designation of safe shelters, and designation of warning and all clear signals. This plan must be disseminated to the proper personnel and reviewed and practiced on a routine basis.

There should also be a systematic plan for monitoring weather. The weather forecast should be closely followed throughout the day prior to any practice or competition. A weather radio is helpful in providing current information. Weather can also be monitored over the Internet or through the use of lightning strike monitors. However, such

technology should never be a substitute for directly hearing or seeing dangerous weather. There should also be one person designated to monitor threatening weather and make decisions regarding participation. However, if anyone hears thunder or sees a lightning strike, appropriate action should begin.



If lightning is imminent or a thunderstorm is approaching, all personnel, athletes and spectators should be evacuated to safe structures. A list of the closest safe structures should be announced and displayed on placards at all venues. The ideal safe structure is a fully enclosed building with plumbing, telephone and electrical service, which aid in grounding the structure. A fully enclosed automobile or school bus with all of the windows rolled up is a reasonable shelter, although care must be taken to avoid contact with any metal inside the vehicle. The hard metal frame and roof, not the rubber tires, dissipate the current around the vehicle. Golf carts and convertible cars are not safe shelters. Dugouts and golf shelters are not safe shelters and are not grounded for the effects of lightning.

Avoid the use of shower facilities for shelter and do not use showers or plumbing during a thunderstorm as the electrical current from lightning can enter the building through plumbing connections. It is also unsafe to stand near utilities or use a landline telephone during a thunderstorm because of the risk of the current traveling through the lines. Cellular and cordless telephones are considered to be safe.

If a suitable safe shelter is not available, it is best to avoid tall objects (trees, light poles, etc) that allow lightning an easy path to the ground. It is important to avoid being the tallest object. In an open field, people should crouch with their legs together, the weight on the balls of their feet, arms wrapped around their knees, and head down with their ears covered. The person should minimize contact with the ground and should NOT lie flat.

People who have been struck by lightning do not carry an electric charge. Therefore, it is safe to perform CPR, if needed. Ideally, injured persons are moved into a safe shelter. Lightning-strike victims who show signs of cardiac or respiratory arrest need emergency help.

RETURN TO PLAYING FIELD

The NFHS recommends following the 30-minute rule when making return-to-play decisions. After the last flash of lightning is witnessed or the last thunderclap is heard, it is recommended to wait at least 30 minutes before resuming practice or competition. Given the average rate of thunderstorm travel, the storm should move 10 to 12 miles away from the area, reducing the risk of local lightning strike. **Any subsequent lightning strike or thunder after the beginning of the 30-minute count should reset the clock and another count should begin.**

PREVENTION

In order to prevent lightning-related injuries, it is important to formulate and implement a Lightning Safety Plan and provide adequate education for all athletes and personnel. The plan needs to be reviewed and practiced periodically. The plan also must include a systematic approach for monitoring local weather activity and recognizing signs of nearby danger (thunder and lightning strikes). Criteria for suspension and resumption of activity should be clear. Appropriate safe shelters for each athletic venue should be clearly identified.

References

- Bennett BL. A model lightning safety policy for athletics. *Journal of Athletic Training* 1997;32:251-253.
- Cooper MA, et al. Lightning injuries. In: Auerbach PS, ed. *Management of Wilderness and Environmental Emergencies*. 5th ed. C.V. Mosby, 2007:68-108.
- Holle R, Lopez R. Lightning-impacts and safety. *WMO Bulletin* 1998;47:148-155.
- National Collegiate Athletic Association. Guideline 1d: Lightning safety. 2010-11 Sports Medicine Handbook (21st edition).

Resources

www.lightningsafety.com
www.weather.com
www.weather.gov

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

SPORT: _____

YEAR: _____

1. FIRST TO ARRIVE ON THE SCENE PROVIDES FIRST AID.
2. SEND A COACH, MANAGER, OR UNINJURED ATHLETE TO NOTIFY THE ATHLETIC TRAINER (ATC) AND GET THE AED (IF NOT ON-SITE).
3. IF THE ATC CAN NOT BE LOCATED, THE HEAD COACH WILL BECOME THE LEADER.

LEADER: _____

- Will be in charge of the emergency situation and will instruct all others on the emergency team

LEADER'S ASSISTANT: _____

- Will assist the leader in the evaluation of the injured athlete

PHONE CALLER: _____

- Will go to the nearest phone and activate the EMS
- Will inform the dispatcher of:
 - The nature of the injury and age of the athlete
 - The location of the athlete and directions to the site
 - Will not hang up until the dispatcher advises him/her to do so

NEAREST PHONE: _____

AMBULANCE ENTRANCE: _____

PERSON TO MEET THE EMS: _____

- Will contact any necessary staff to assure access for the ambulance
- Will meet the ambulance at the designated entrance and lead them to the injured athlete

PERSON TO ACCOMPANY ATHLETE TO HOSPITAL: _____

- Will ride with the athlete in the ambulance in the event the parents cannot be located
- Will take the athlete's emergency info to the hospital

- * It is the certified athletic trainer or coach's responsibility to inform the administrator of the incident
- * It is the certified athletic trainer or coach's responsibility to inform the athlete's parents of the injury immediately.
- * It is the certified athletic trainer's responsibility to document the circumstances surrounding the activity and all actions taken.
- * Emergency medical info for each athlete is to accompany the team at all times.

EMS (Fire, Police, Ambulance): 911
Athletic Department:

Any High School:
Athletic Training Room:

ATC:
Nearest Hospital:

Site contact:

VISITOR INFORMATION SHEET

SCHOOL NAME_____

Physical Address_____

Contact Information:

Primary contact:_____Cell number:_____

Superintendent:_____Cell number:_____

Principal:_____Cell number:_____

Athletic Director:_____Cell number:_____

Athletic Trainer:_____Cell number:_____

Security present at event: Yes_____No_____

Closest Hospital:_____Address_____

Closest Urgent Care:_____Address_____

Local restaurants:_____

.....
Visitors seating location:

Visitors dressing room location:

Bus Parking:

.....
Additional Information:

Effective July 1, 2013, there is a new policy with regard to Extreme Heat. Information will be sent to Coaches of Fall Activities as well as local School Administrators.

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, 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.

HEAT RELATED EMERGENCY PLAN

SPORT _____ DATE: _____

1. First responder should begin first aid.
2. Send additional responders, i.e. manager, uninjured student, or coach to notify Athletic Trainer, or call 911 if no Athletic Trainer is available.
3. If Athletic Trainer is unavailable, head coach will become leader, if head coach is unavailable another person shall be designated as leader.

- Leader shall instruct all others responding to situation.
- Leader's assistant shall assist in the evaluation of the student in distress.
- Designate someone to call 911 and activate EMS if situation necessitates.
- Gather information:

Name of student and gender, approximate age

Nature of distress

Location of athlete and directions to the site

Call back number for EMS to contact caller if needed

Designate a person to meet EMS

Designate person to ride with student if it is necessary to be transported

Contact parent or guardian of student

It is the Certified Athletic Trainer, or person designated as the Leader to report the incident to a school administrator.

It is the Certified Athletic Trainer, or person designated as the Leader to report the incident to the parent or guardian.

It is the Certified Athletic Trainer, or person designated as the Leader to document the circumstances surrounding the activity and all actions taken.

DOCUMENTATION OF EVENT:

Leader's Name _____ Asst. Leader's Name _____

Person to meet EMS _____

Person accompanying student with EMS _____

Contact information:

Athletic Trainer: Name and Phone _____

School Administrator: Name and Phone _____

Fire/Ambulance/EMS: 911

DESCRIBE CIRCUMSTANCES:

HEAT RELATED ILLNESS CHART

Under 95 degrees Heat Index	All activities ➤ Provide ample amounts of water. This means that water should always be available and students should be able to take in as much water as they desire. ➤ Optional water breaks every 30 minutes for 10 minutes in duration ➤ Ice-down towels for cooling ➤ Watch/monitor students carefully for necessary action.
95 degrees to 99 degrees Heat Index	All activities ➤ Provide ample amounts of water. This means that water should always be available and students should be able to take in as much water as they desire. ➤ Mandatory water breaks every 30 minutes for 10 minutes in duration ➤ Ice-down towels for cooling ➤ Watch/monitor students carefully for necessary action. ➤ Helmets and other possible equipment removed while not involved in contact. ➤ Reduce time of outside activity. Consider postponing practice to later in the day. ➤ Re-check temperature and humidity every 30 minutes to monitor for increased Heat
100+ degrees	All activities ➤ Provide ample amounts of water. This means that water should always be available and students should be able to take in as much water as they desire. ➤ Mandatory water breaks every 30 minutes for 10 minutes in duration ➤ Ice-down towels for cooling ➤ Watch/monitor students carefully for necessary action. ➤ Alter uniform by removing items if possible ➤ Allow for changes to dry t-shirts and shorts. ➤ Reduce time of outside activity as well as indoor activity if air conditioning is unavailable. ➤ Helmets and other possible equipment removed if not involved in contact or necessary for safety. If necessary for safety, suspend activity. ➤ Re-check temperature and humidity every 30 minutes to monitor for increased Heat

TYPES OF HEAT ILLNESS:

Heat Cramps:

- Some students may experience heat cramps. This type of cramp is the tightening and spasms experienced in muscle. It is often preceded by heavy sweating and large electrolyte losses, this may look like white residue on clothing or equipment.
- If an student is experiencing heat cramps, he or she should stop the activity, find a cool spot to gently stretch and massage the muscle, and drink appropriate fluids like sports drinks (or salty foods and other fluids) that contain significant levels of sodium.

Heat Exhaustion:

- Another type of heat illness is heat exhaustion. Conditions and signs of this problem can include profuse sweating, dehydration, fatigue, lightheadedness, rapid pulse, and low blood pressure. Body temperature may be slightly elevated. If heat exhaustion is suspected, the student should lie in a cool place with legs elevated, have cool, wet towels applied to the body, drink cool fluids, and have someone monitor their vital signs. With heat exhaustion, often the ill student feels better when he or she rests in a cool place and replenishes fluids by drinking cool liquids. Continue to monitor the student. If signs are present that the illness is severe or progressing, activate the emergency action plan. Check the student for warning signs. Call 911 or the local emergency number immediately. Have someone administer your emergency care plan.

Heat Stroke:

- This is the most serious heat-related illness. With heat stroke, an student will have a high body temperature – 104° F or higher - and could have red, hot, dry or moist skin, vomit, be incoherent or lose consciousness, have shallow breathing and/or a weak pulse. He or she might experience mild shock, convulsions, or a coma, and can die from heat stroke.
- If he or she goes into respiratory or cardiac arrest, begin rescue breathing or CPR, as appropriate. Cool by any means possible, as quickly as possible. If necessary, medical or coaching personnel should place the player in an ice bath or “cool pool” and call for emergency medical services (EMS). Continue to cool and monitor the student while awaiting EMS.

HEAT INDEX	HEAT-RELATED EFFECTS
80-89	Fatigue
90-104	Heat cramps, and heat exhaustion
105-129	Heat cramps or heat exhaustion likely
130+	Heat Stroke Highly likely

SPORTSMANSHIP

The OSSAA's vision for sportsmanship is built on expectations. Expectations that the school community—administrators, teachers, coaches, students, and patrons strive for displaying only positive behavior and good sportsmanship in everything they do at all interscholastic contests.

As educators we have the unique opportunity to teach the value of discipline, dignity, integrity, fairness and respect to young people each day.

We encourage all school personnel to take advantage of the opportunity and make a lasting difference.



EDUCATION-BASED ACTIVITY PROGRAMS

The National Federation of State High School Associations and the Oklahoma Secondary School Activities Association recognize the numerous potential benefits of participation by students in education-based activities. While education-based activities may differ between the stakeholder groups, all should be centered on optimizing the student's scholastic activity experience. Students will change, develop and expand abilities over time; coaches, administrators and parents should not only be cognizant of the fluid process, but also foster a safe, positive environment in which development can occur. Education-based activities must always be viewed as an evolving and unpredictable path.

The NFHS and the OSSAA recognize the influential role played by coaches and directors in all activities, and therefore emphasis should be placed on those individuals to instill and reinforce fundamentals and best practices, not only to minimize risk but also to promote an environment in which a student has the opportunity to reach his or her full potential. The common goal for all the stakeholders involved with education-based activities should be to make the experience enjoyable and rewarding for all.

While our position is not intended to squelch dreams of achieving a college scholarship or professional or Olympic glory, we do place emphasis on the student's entire scholastic activity experience with the goals of enhancing participation, reducing injury risk, and optimizing performance and success (however defined) during the student's high school career. The ultimate goal: Producing an individual who is competent, confident, connected to his or her peer group and community, and of high character. This essential principle is at the core of the scholastic activity experience and is fundamental to the mission of the OSSAA and NFHS.

SUMMERTIME DEAD PERIOD

The dead period will occur during the week in July that includes the 4th of July each year. The dead period will be nine (9) days in length and begin the weekend preceding the 4th of July and the weekend following the 4th of July.

Secondary-level students enrolled or pre-enrolled at a member school may not use any member school's athletic facilities during the dead period in connection with any athletic activity governed by the OSSAA. Member school coaches, assistant coaches and sponsors may not have any contact with secondary-level enrolled or pre-enrolled students in that member school in any athletic activity governed by the OSSAA for the purpose of coaching, training, or instructing.

Summertime policies, including beginning and end of season restrictions, can be found in OSSAA Board Policy XII in the Administrator's Handbook.

Violations of the summertime dead period policy will result in the coach or sponsor being suspended from the first half of the regular season in that athletic activity. School personnel not designated as a coach or sponsor in violation of the summertime dead period policy will result in the head coach being suspended from the first half of the regular season in that activity.