

ATHLETIC HEAT RELATED ILLNESS POLICY

Prevention

Education

Student-Athletes & Parents/Guardians

Information regarding heat related illnesses can be found on the Norfolk Public Schools Athletics website. Information regarding heat related illness includes risk factors, types of heat illness, signs/symptoms, and commonly used management techniques.

Heat Illness information and additional resources on NPS Athletics website

Coaches

On an annual basis, coaches of outdoor athletics will complete the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Heat Illness Prevention course. Upon the completion of the course, coaches will present their completion certificate to their Athletic Director prior to the start of their contract.

Condition Monitoring

The Athletic Director, Athletic Trainer, and coaching staff will be responsible for monitoring weather conditions using either WetBulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) or heat index. Based off on the WBGT and/or heat index readings, participation will be modified in accordance with the Norfolk Public Schools Heat Guidelines (see attached).

Heat Acclimatization

Norfolk Public Schools fall athletic teams will follow the *Fall Practice Guidelines* as set fourth by the Virginia High School League, found in the VHSL Handbook, section 20-10-4 (see attached).

Recognition

Any student-athlete suspected of sustaining a heat exhaustion or heat stroke (the most serious heat related illness), as indicated by signs/symptoms, will be removed from participation immediately. Signs and symptoms that may be observed are:

- Irrational behavior, irritability, or emotional instability
- Altered consciousness
- Excessive fatigue
- Disorientation
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Confusion
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

- Collapse
- Staggering or sluggish feeling

Management

Each school's athletic department will have an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) in place, which includes specific instructions for heat related emergencies. The EAP should include the following:

- Oral thermometry will be utilized to assess temperature
- ATC will delegate coach to activate EMS
- Polar Life Pod cold water immersion will be used to immediately cool the patient, when available. In situations where cold water immersion is not available, cooling will be attempted through the use of appropriately placed ice bags
- Vitals will be monitored every 5-10min
- Patient will not be transported prior to achieving a core temperature of 102°F

Treatment method will depend on the heat related condition. Cold towels, ice packs and cold immersion equipment (where available) may be used to aid in the cooling of a student-athlete.

Virginia High School League (VHSL) Handbook 2022-23 – Excerpt

27-10-4 Fall Practice Guidelines-Schools will follow practice guidelines which would apply to all students in all fall sports except golf. If schools choose not to follow the guidelines listed in the Handbook they must have locally approved policies and procedures that are reasonably calculated to keep student athletes safe from hot and humid weather conditions, and meet adequate conditioning, based on current sports medicine research and recommendations.

The first violation will result in an official warning.

(1) During their first six days of tryouts:

(a) No practice, full or walk-thru, may exceed three hours.

(b) Total practice time per day is limited to five hours.

(c) Only one full practice is permitted per day; it may be broken into two segments.

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(d) One walk-thru practice is permitted on the day of a full practice.

(e) Two walk-thru practices may be substituted for a full and a walk-thru practice(s).

(f) A one-hour minimum recovery period must be included between practices.

(2) For weeks two and three the following regulations apply in addition to (a) through (f) above:

(a) Two full practices are permissible per day provided they do not exceed five total hours, or three hours in a single session.

(b) No more than three full practices may be conducted in two consecutive calendar days.

(3) For the purpose of the regulations above, a full practice is defined as a session allowing the use of any available equipment, involving all levels of activity permitted in the specific sport and includes necessary conditioning and weight training. A walk-thru practice is a limited exertion session that includes skill-based, educational technique and oriented activities using sports appropriate equipment. Conditioning and weight training may not be included as part of a walk-thru practice. Recovery period is defined as a session in which the athlete is not involved in physical activity.

Note: The following restrictions are in place for football only: Day 1-3 helmets only; Day 4-5 helmets and shoulder pads; Day 6+ full pads.

HEAT GUIDELINES FOR ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION

The following guidelines have been established for the safety and health for all athletes during the time of high temperature/humidity.

Green Zone – WBGT: 82.0 or Heat index: less than 90

- Regular practices
- Water breaks unlimited
- Observe athletes who tend toward obesity
- Observe new or unconditioned athletes
- Rest breaks every 30 minutes

Yellow Zone – WBGT: 82- 86.9 or Heat index: 90 - 96

- Regular practice
- Water unlimited
- Water breaks scheduled every 15 minutes
- Cold towels available for cooling athletes
- All athletes should be under careful supervision
- Equipment regular: (helmets need to be off when not participating)

Orange Zone– WBGT: 87 – 89.9 or Heat Index: 97-103

- Maximum practice time is 2 hours
- Athletes should take a 15 minute break every hour
- Water unlimited
- Cold towels and cold immersion available when needed
- Equipment: (shorts, t-shirts, helmets and shoulder pads)
- Equipment should be removed during conditioning phase of practice.

Red Zone– WBGT: 90-92 or Heat Index: 104-125

- Maximum length of practice time is 1 hour.
- Cold towels and cold immersion available when needed
- NO protective equipment may be worn during practice.
- NO conditioning activities.
- Must be a 20 minute break during the 1 hour practice.

Black Zone: - WBGT: 92.1 and Heat Index 125 and up

- NO Outdoor workouts
- Delay practices until a cooler WBGT reading occurs.

The athletic trainer will notify the coaches on the current conditions 1 hour before scheduled practice time. The athletic trainer will monitor conditions during practice and will make adjustments as needed. Coaches **must adhere to the guidelines that have been established.

Method of Determining the WBGT (Wet –Blub Globe Temperature):

The athletic trainer will determine the status by using the Kestrel Heat Stress Tracker. WBGT reading has been proven as best practices to measure heat stress on the body during activity.