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**NEW JERSEY STATE INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION**  
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**NJSIAA Pre-season Heat Acclimatization Policy**  
**REVISED**

**Definitions:**

The heat-acclimatization period is defined as the initial 14 consecutive days of preseason practice for all student-athletes. The goal of the acclimatization period is to enhance exercise heat tolerance and the ability to exercise safely and effectively in warm to hot conditions. This period will begin on the first NJSIAA approved practice start date. Any practices or conditioning conducted before this time will not be considered a part of the heat-acclimatization period. Regardless of the conditioning program and conditioning status leading up to the first formal practice, all student-athletes (including those who arrive at preseason practice after the first day of practice) must follow the 14-day heat-acclimatization plan. During the preseason heat acclimatization period, if practice occurs on 6 consecutive days, student-athletes should have 1 day of complete rest (no conditioning, walk-throughs, practices, etc.).

Days on which athletes do not practice due to a scheduled rest day, injury, or illness do not count toward the heat-acclimatization period. For example, an athlete who sits out the third and fourth days of practice during this time (e.g., Wednesday and Thursday) will resume practice as if on day 3 of the heat-acclimatization period when returning to play on Friday.

A practice is defined as the period of time a participant engages in a coach-supervised, school-sponsored sport, or conditioning related physical activity. Each individual practice should last no more than 3 hours. Warm-up, stretching, and cool-down activities are included as part of the 3-hour practice time. Regardless of ambient temperature conditions, all conditioning and weight-room activities should be considered part of practice.

A walk-through is defined as a teaching opportunity with the athletes not wearing protective equipment (e.g., helmets, shoulder pads, catcher's gear, shin guards) or using other sport-related equipment (e.g., footballs, lacrosse sticks, blocking sleds, pitching machines, soccer balls, marker cones). The walk-through is not part of the 3-hour practice period, can last no more than 1 hour per day, and does not include conditioning or weight-room activities.

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. During this time, athletes should rest in a cool environment, with no sport, or conditioning-related activity permitted (e.g., speed or agility drills, strength training, conditioning, or walk-through). Treatment with the athletic trainer is permissible.

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## **Procedure for the 14-Day Heat Acclimatization Period**

### **Core Principles:**

1. Days 1 through 5 of the heat-acclimatization period consist of the first 5 days of formal practice. During this time, athletes may not participate in more than 1 practice per day.
2. If a practice is interrupted by inclement weather or heat restrictions, the practice should recommence once conditions are deemed safe. Total practice time should not exceed 3 hours in any 1 day.
3. A 1-hour maximum walk-through is permitted during days 1–5 of the heat-acclimatization period. However, a 3-hour recovery period should be inserted between the practice and walk-through (or vice versa).
4. During days 1–2 of the heat-acclimatization period, in sports requiring helmets or shoulder pads, a helmet should be the only protective equipment permitted (goalies, as in the case of field hockey and related sports, should not wear full protective gear or perform activities that would require protective equipment). During days 3–5, only helmets and shoulder pads should be worn. Beginning on day 6, all protective equipment may be worn, and full contact may begin.
  - A. Football only: On days 3–5, contact with blocking sleds and tackling dummies may be initiated.
  - B. Full-contact sports: 100% live contact drills should begin no earlier than day 6.
5. Beginning no earlier than day 6 and continuing through day 14, double-practice days must be followed by a single-practice day. On single-practice days, 1 walk-through is permitted, separated from the practice by at least 3 hours of continuous rest. When a double practice day is followed by a rest day, another double practice day is permitted after the rest day.
6. On a double-practice day, neither practice should exceed 3 hours in duration, nor should any student-athletes participate in more than 5 total hours of practice. Warm-up, stretching, cool-down, walk-through, conditioning, and weight-room activities are included as part of the practice time. The 2 practices should be separated by at least 3 continuous hours in a cool environment.
7. Because the risk of exertional heat illnesses during the preseason heat-acclimatization period is high, we strongly recommend that an athletic trainer be on site before, during, and after all practices.



### NJSIAA Heat Participation Policy

Schools should follow this “Best Practices” policy when conducting outdoor practices and contests in all sports. The policy shall follow modified guidelines of the American College of Sports Medicine in regard to:

1. The scheduling of practices during times of various Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) levels
2. The ratio of workout time to time allotted for rest and hydration during times of various WBGT levels
3. The WBGT levels which will result in practice(s) being modified or terminated

An instrument scientifically approved to measure WBGT must be utilized at each practice. WBGT readings should be taken on the practice site a minimum of every hour, beginning 30 minutes before the beginning of practice or contest. All readings should be recorded or data logged (e.g. written or electronic form). In the event that a modification or cancellation was required, documentation using the WBGT *NJSIAA Hot Environment Modification/Cancellation Log* must be completed.

WBGT READING	Flag	Risk for Heat Illness	ACTIVITY GUIDELINES AND REST BREAK GUIDELINES
Under 80.0°F	Green	Very Low	Normal activities – Provide at least three separate rest breaks each hour of minimum duration of 3 minutes each during workout.
80.0 F – 85.0°F	Yellow	Low	Use discretion for intense or prolonged exercise; watch at-risk players carefully; Provide at least three separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 4 minutes each.
85.1 F – 88.0°F	Orange	Moderate	Maximum practice time is 2 hours, <u>For Football</u> : no protective equipment may be worn during practice. All protective equipment must be removed for conditioning activities. If the WBGT rises to this level <b>during</b> practice, players may continue to work out wearing football pants without changing into shorts. <u>For Field Hockey Goalies</u> : All protective equipment must be removed for conditioning activities. <u>For All Sports</u> : provide at least four separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 4 minutes each.
Over 90°F	Black	High	Maximum length of practice is 1 hour. <u>For Football</u> : no protective equipment may be worn during practice and there may be no conditioning activities. <u>For All Sports</u> : there must be 20 minutes of rest breaks distributed throughout the hour of practice.
		Very High	NO OUTDOOR WORKOUTS. Delay practice until a cooler WBGT level is reached.

## **GUIDELINES FOR HYDRATION AND REST BREAKS**

1. Rest time should involve unrestricted access to fluids (e.g water or electrolyte beverages).
2. Sports requiring helmets (e.g. football, lacrosse, field hockey) should remove helmets during rest time.
3. The site of the rest time should be a in a shaded area.
4. When the WBGT reading is  $>85.0^{\circ}\text{F}$ 
  - a. Ice towels, spray bottles filled with ice water or equivalent should be available to aid in the cooling process within the shaded area.

### Definitions

1. Contest: Any NJSIAA sanctioned event.
2. Practice: the period of time that a participant engages in coach-supervised, school-approved sport or conditioning-related activity. Practices are timed from the time the players report to the field until they leave.
3. Walk through: this period of time shall last no more than one hour and is not considered to be a part of the practice time regulation, and may not involve conditioning or weight-room activities. Players may not wear protective equipment.

Implementation Note to be included in NJSIAA Handbook:

The aforementioned policy must be carried out by the athletic trainer, certified designee or individual as appointed by the athletic director which includes any individual responsible or sharing duties for making decisions concerning the implementation of modifications or cancellation of practice and contests based on WBGT (e.g. coaches).

Compliance note to be included in NJSIAA Handbook:

In accordance with the current school compliance checks, the compliance monitors checklist will include items specific to:

- Presence of a WBGT device
- Documentation of all practices/games requiring modification on the NJSIAA Hot Environment Modification/Cancellation Log
- Proof of written and signed off Heat Participation Policy document



## **NJSIAA Cold Water Immersion Policy**

All schools participating in interscholastic athletics should have a comprehensive, detailed Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for most catastrophic scenarios, including heat injury. When treating a potential Exertional Heat Stroke (EHS), schools should be properly *prepared and equipped* to initiate Cold Water Immersion (CWI) or other approved cooling technique. Cooling techniques should be implemented immediately, and concurrently EMS should be contacted.

### **Cold Water Immersion Tub Accessibility Policy:**

All summer conditioning on school grounds, or when a coach, paid or otherwise, is present, and the 1<sup>st</sup> 21 days of fall practice, and any day the temperature is greater than 80°F WBGT; it is required that a 150-gallon industrial tub (e.g. Rubbermaid) with water temperature of less than 60°F be filled and accessible for cooling within 5-10 minutes of the practice/competition/event site. External clothing/equipment should be removed prior to cooling or removed immediately after entering tub. Water should be aggressively stirred during cooling process.

If the temperature is below 80°F WBGT, mandatory alternative cooling measures of a cooler with ice and towels or a tarp (taco/burrito method) to be available at the practice/competition/event site.

If medical staff is onsite, utilize the principle of Cool First, Transport Second. When cooling, use CWI or other approved cooling technique, until core temperature is at 103°F. If medical staff is not onsite, cool immediately until the athlete starts to shiver, or for a minimum of 20 minutes based upon the known cooling rate of 1 degree per 3 minutes. If no athletic trainer is present, EMS assumes control of the EHS patient upon arrival and continues cooling for the minimum of 20 minutes or until rectal temperature is obtained.

### **Cold Water Immersion Tub set up:**

- CWI tubs mandated for:
  - Football, summer conditioning, and pre-season practices
  - Yellow, red, black levels of WBGT
    - WBGT over 80.0F
- Ice, water, towels mandated over 65 WBGT
- Ice, water, towels should be available under 65 WBGT



**Collaborative Solutions for Safety in New Jersey Sports  
Concussion Injuries**

1. The recognition of the symptoms of head and neck injuries, concussions, risk of secondary injury, including the risk of second impact syndrome; and
2. It is accepted by the NJSIAA that the priority of student-athletes is education. After sustaining a concussion, student-athletes should successfully return to full academic participation (when school is in session), using a multi-step return to learn protocol, prior to student-athletes return to play for sport.
  - a. Simultaneously, student athletes may engage in activities of sub-symptom threshold, such as vestibular, vision and exertional therapy (ex. sub-maximum aerobic strength training activity) in their recovery from sport related concussion as directed by their healthcare provider. However, this is part of the treatment protocol and is not considered return to play for sport.
3. Current guidelines for return to play consist of a graduated 5-step program as referenced in the state's model concussion protocol. However, it should be understood that management of concussion is an evolving public health concern which requires annual review of evidence-based management.



### **NJSIAA Strength and Conditioning Policy**

- A. Conditioning periods should be phased in gradually and progressively to minimize risk of injury during transitional periods. Also, introduce new conditioning activities gradually, especially during the early stages of a conditioning period.
- B. Exercise and conditioning activities should be consistent with daily training and are not permitted to be used as punishment or put the student athlete's physical, social, or psychological health at risk.
- C. Requires appropriate supervision by administratively approved certified staff member (i.e. Coach certified in CPR/first aid with education on the prevention of sport injury, or an athletic trainer on-site)
- D. All participants are required to have an up-to-date physical on file while involved in organized strength and conditioning sessions.