

# FOOTBALL HEAT ACCLIMATIZATION

## PRACTICE REGULATIONS

Rationale for adopting these regulations:

- Exertional heat stroke is the leading cause of preventable death in high school athletics.
- The majority of heat-related deaths happen during the first few days of practice, usually prompted by doing too much, too soon, and in some cases with too much protective gear on too early in the season (wearing helmet, shoulder pads, pants, and other protective gear). Players must be allowed the time to adapt safely to the environment, intensity, duration, and uniform/equipment.
- Proper heat acclimatization is essential to minimize the risk of exertional heat illness.

Intent:

- The intent of these regulations is to minimize the risk of exertional heat stroke among football players in grades 9-12 at IHSAA member schools.

Acclimatization Period:

- The acclimatization period is defined as the first fourteen (14) allowable practice days a school is permitted.

Practice:

- A practice is defined as a period of time when coach-athlete contact occurs.
- A practice cannot exceed four (4) hours in length, with no more than three (3) hours of physical activity. Warm up, stretching, speed & agility drills, strength training, and cool down are all considered part of physical activity.
  - Optional weight room activities that are available to all students are NOT considered part of a practice.
- There shall be no more than one (1) practice per day.
- On the first two (2) days of practice only helmets and mouth guards may be worn and no activities that require protective equipment shall be done.
- During days three – five (3-5), helmets, mouth guards, and shoulder pads may be worn and contact with blocking sleds, tackling dummies, and technique drills for blocking and tackling may begin (**NO full contact**).

- Beginning on day six (6), all protective equipment may be worn and full contact drills may begin.
- Sundays during the fourteen (14) day acclimatization period shall be days of complete rest (no stretching, conditioning, speed & agility drills, strength training, etc.).

Hydration:

- There should be unrestricted access to water at all times during practice.

Sanctions:

- Schools failing to follow these practice regulations are subject to one, or all, of the following sanctions:
  - a) The head football coach shall be ineligible to coach in all IHSAA post-season football games for that school year;
  - b) The school's football program shall be placed on probation for the next season, at a minimum;
  - c) Other sanctions as determined by the Board of Control.

## **IHSAA Football Heat Acclimatization Interpretations**

### Scrimmages-

1. An intersquad scrimmage after 10 practices may only involve one other school. I realize the information in the IHSAA Handbook says up to 4 teams, but that also says the scrimmage cannot take place until after the first game. Your scrimmage may only take place between your school and one other school.
2. One football team scrimmage is allowed. This is not one per level, but one per team. Multiple levels of a scrimmage may occur on the same time. Example: A school may bring their freshmen, sophomore, and varsity squads to another school for a scrimmage on the same day. A Friday varsity scrimmage and a Saturday junior varsity scrimmage is not permitted.
3. The two coaches will dictate the format of the scrimmage.
4. An intrasquad scrimmage may take place anytime after 5 practices. You can always scrimmage against your own team and it does not have to be after 10 practices.
5. Scrimmages are to take place at one of the two school's facilities, unless authorized by the IHSAA.
6. An admission charge of money for the scrimmage shall not occur.

### Practices-

1. The key for the practice is three hours of physical activity. Your team can practice from 8:00 AM until 9:30 AM, take a 30 minute break in a cool environment to hydrate and then practice again from 10:00 AM until 11:30 AM.
  - 1a. Coach wants his 9<sup>th</sup> graders to have practice beginning at 7:00 AM and go until 10:30 AM with a 30 minute break. Coach is bringing his 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders in at 8:00 AM and work with them until 11:30 AM with a 30 minute break. Perfectly allowable for this type of practice arrangement, providing no individual player has more than 3 hours of physical activity.
2. Stretching, warm-up, conditioning, cool-down, football only weight-lifting all fall under the definition of physical activity and are part of the three hours of physical activity.

3. If the weight room is open for all students, not just football players, weight lifting is not considered part of the three hours of physical activity.
4. If taking a break, students are not allowed to leave campus. They must stay under the supervision of your coaching staff. It is expected that this break take place in a cooler environment than the practice facility and any protective equipment is removed. (Ex. Under the shade of trees, in an air-conditioned classroom, a classroom with fans blowing, etc.) This break could include classroom discussion of football including “chalk talk”, film-breakdown, or other team-oriented discussion.
5. Similar to the 10 day rule enacted previously, this is a team rule and the IHSAA has provided each school with the opportunity for 10 days of practice prior to the intersquad scrimmage. A school can determine due to weather conditions or policies not to practice on a certain day and still be able to have their scrimmage after the 10<sup>th</sup> day of practice, whether 10 days of practice were held or not.