

GISA POLICY FOR MITIGATING HEAT RELATED INJURIES DURING ATHLETIC PRACTICE

All Georgia Independent School Association Interscholastic Member Schools ("Member School(s)") are required to comply with the following policy effective August 1, 2012. This policy applies to all practices and conditioning in all sports, but does not apply to games. This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees after the conclusion of the 2012 calendar year, at which time comments and suggestions for the improvement of the policy will be solicited from all Member Schools, coaches, trainers, and officials, and appropriate modifications made.

I. Definitions.

A. "Practice" means the period of time that a student engages in coach-supervised, school-approved preparation for sport whether indoors or outdoors, including Acclimatization Activities, conditioning, weight training, distance running, and scrimmages, but not including a Walk Through.

B. "Walk Through" means the period of time, not exceeding one hour per day, that a student engages in coach-supervised, school-approved sessions, whether indoors or outdoors, to work on formations, schemes, and techniques without physical contact. No protective equipment is worn during a Walk Through. No conditioning activities are held during a Walk Through. A Walk Through may not be held on a day when two practices are being held.

C. "Acclimatization Activities" mean outdoor conditioning, distance running, and exercises five consecutive weekdays in shorts and helmets before the first football practice in full pads.

D. "WBGT" stands for the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature reading, which is a composite temperature used to estimate the effect of air temperature, humidity, and solar radiation on the human body, expressed in degrees. It is not equated with the "Heat Index."

II. Policy.

A. All Member Schools shall utilize at each Practice a scientifically approved instrument that measures WBGT.

B. At the following WBGT readings the corresponding activity, hydration, and rest break guidelines apply:

Under 82.0 Normal activities. Provide at least three separate rest breaks each hour of a minimum duration of 3 minutes each during Practice.

82.0 – 86.9 Use discretion for intense or prolonged exercise. Watch at-risk students carefully. Provide at least three separate rest breaks each hour of a minimum of four minutes duration each during Practice.

87.0 – 89.9 Maximum outdoor Practice time is two hours. For football, students are restricted to helmet, shoulder pads, and shorts during Practice. All protective equipment must be removed for conditioning activities. For all sports, provide at least four separate rest breaks each hour of a minimum of four minutes each during Practice.

90.0 – 92.0 Maximum outdoor Practice time is one hour. No protective equipment may be worn during outdoor Practice and there may be no outdoor conditioning activities. There must be twenty minutes of rest breaks provided during the hour of outdoor Practice.

Over 92 No outdoor activities or exercise. Delay outdoor Practice until a lower WBGT reading occurs.

C. The following guidelines apply to hydration and rest breaks:

1. Rest time should involve both unlimited hydration (water or electrolyte drinks) and rest without any activity involved.
2. For football, helmets should be removed during rest time.
3. The site of the rest time should be a cooling zone not in direct sunlight, such as indoors, under a tent, or under a shade tree.
4. When the WBGT is over 86, ice towels and spray bottles filled with ice water should be available in the cooling zone and cold immersion tubs shall be available for a student showing signs of heat illness. A cold immersion tub may be anything, including a shower or wading pool that can be adapted to immerse a student in cold water and ice which is available within two minutes travel from an outdoor Practice facility.

D. The following guidelines apply to Practice:

1. All Member Schools must hold Acclimatization Activities.
2. No two-a-day Practices may exceed four hours for both sessions; no single Practice during two-a-days may exceed two hours. A three hour rest period must be observed between the two sessions.
3. No single Practice may last more than three hours.
4. Restrictions based on outdoor WBGT readings do not apply to indoor Practice where indoor air temperature is 85 degrees or less.

III. Penalties.

A. Member Schools violating this policy shall be fined a minimum of \$500.00 and a maximum of \$1,000.00 for the first offense. A Member School may be removed from membership for repeat violations.

Approved by the Board of Trustees this 17th day of May, 2012.