



Fall Sport Heat Acclimatization Policy

1. The NCISAA has adopted the following heat acclimatization policy for Secondary School Athletics. This policy is based on the recommendations from the National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA) and an Inter-Association Task Force comprised of the American College of Sports Medicine, Gatorade Sports Science Institute, National Strength and Conditioning Association, United States Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine, American Orthopedic Society for Sports Medicine, American Medical Society for Sports Medicine and American Academy of Pediatrics.
2. Heat acclimatization is an athlete's gradual exposure to the intensity and duration of physical activity in the environment in which they are practicing and competing. Proper heat acclimatization is essential for minimizing the risk of exertional heat illness during the preseason practice period. The goal of the acclimatization period is to enhance exercise heat tolerance and the ability to exercise safely and effectively in warm environments. This policy should be followed for all preseason conditioning, training, and practice activities, whether these activities are conducted indoors or outdoors. The heat acclimatization period is defined as the initial 14 days of preseason practice. This period begins on the first day of official team practice for the season.
3. **General Guidelines:**
 - a. Single Practice Days:
 - i. The first 5 days of formal practice
 - b. Double Practice Days:
 - i. Begin no earlier than practice day 6
 - ii. Must be followed by a single practice day or rest day
 - iii. When a double-practice day is followed by a rest day, another double-practice day is permitted after the rest day
 - iv. Double practices must be separated by three hours of continuous rest
 - c. If a practice is interrupted by inclement weather or heat restrictions, the practice should recommence once conditions are deemed safe, but total practice time should not exceed its limitations.
 - d. If practice occurs on 6 consecutive days, student athletes should have 1 day of complete rest (no conditioning, practices, walk-throughs, etc.).
4. **Equipment Restrictions:**
 - a. Football
 - i. Practice days 1 and 2 – helmets only, shorts/t-shirts.
 - ii. Practice days 3 through 5 – helmets and shoulder pads only, contact with blocking sleds and tackling dummies may be initiated.
 - iii. Beginning practice day 6 – full protective equipment and full contact may begin.
 - b. Field Hockey
 - i. Practice days 1 and 2 – Goalies in helmet and goalie kickers, athletes may wear shin guards, goggles and mouth pieces.
 - ii. Practice days 3 through 5 – Goalies in helmet, chest protection and goalie kickers.
 - iii. Beginning practice day 6 – full protective equipment may be worn.
 - c. Soccer
 - i. Shin guards and goalie gloves can be worn beginning day 1.

- d. Volleyball
 - i. Knee pads may be worn beginning day 1.
- 5. **Practice Days 1-5:**
 - a. School teams shall conduct all practices within the general guidelines above as well as the following guidelines for practice days 1-5.
 - b. School teams are limited to one practice per day not to exceed three hours in length.
 - c. A practice includes warm-up, stretching, cool-down and any other conditioning or weight room activities.
 - d. Classroom activities ie team meetings and film sessions, are not considered part of a practice and may be held in addition to a team practice.
 - e. In addition, a 1-hour maximum walk-through is also permitted during days 1-5 of the heat acclimatization period. A 3 hour recovery period should be inserted between the practice and walk through.
- 6. **Practice Days 6-14:**
 - a. School teams shall conduct all practices within the general guidelines above as well as the following guidelines for practice days 6-14.
 - b. Total practice time per day should be limited to five hours with no single session longer than three hours in duration.
 - c. School teams may participate in full contact practices with all protective equipment worn.
- 7. The heat acclimatization period is designed for students on an individual basis. Days in which athletes do not practice due to a scheduled rest day, injury, illness or other reasons do not count towards the heat-acclimatization period. For example, an athlete who sits out the third and fourth day of practices will resume practice as if on day three.
- 8. Scrimmages during the heat acclimatization period are considered 1 practice. For football only, scrimmages may not begin until day 9 after 3 days in full pads