

FOOTBALL PRE-SEASON HEAT-ACCLIMATIZATION GUIDELINES

Practice or competition in hot and/or humid environmental conditions poses special problems for student-athletes. Heat illness is a primary concern in these conditions. Having a scripted practice plan with breaks from activity as well as scheduled hydration and cooling off periods will be of great assistance in preparing student-athletes for the football season.

Core Principles:

- 1. Acclimatization Period:** All schools sponsoring high school football are recommended to institute the heat acclimatization program on Monday or Tuesday (August 7 or 8, 2017) for 5 consecutive days prior to the Monday starting date (August 14, 2017) for the 2017 football season. If a school opts to institute heat acclimatization during this period, the intent is to have all members of the team be present and participate in all 5 consecutive days of the heat acclimatization period, but minimally, a player must be present for 3 consecutive days of these first 5 days of heat acclimatization to satisfy the requirement. A school must have 5 consecutive days of heat acclimatization prior to their first contact drills and contact drills may not be initiated before Monday, August 14, 2017 (the first legal practice date of fall sports).
 - The practices for this week are limited to a 5-3-5-3-5 hours of practice daily for the 5 days of heat acclimatization. Practice sessions may be no longer than 3 hours in length and teams must have 2 hours of rest (recovery period) between sessions. Days 1,3 and 5 are limited to 5 hours per day and Days 2 and 4 are limited to 3 hours per day.
 - Helmets and shoulder pads with shorts are permitted the first 5 days of heat acclimatization. Full gear and contact may not be worn until Monday, August 14th after the completion of the five consecutive day heat acclimatization period.
 - If a school starts heat acclimatization on Monday, August 7th, if they choose, they may practice on Saturday, August 12th, but there may be no contact on this day the same as the previous 5 days of heat acclimatization since it is prior to the first contact day of Monday, August 14th. If a school starts heat acclimatization on Tuesday, August 8th, then Saturday August 12th is their 5th consecutive day of heat acclimatization and no contact is permitted.
 - If a school starts heat acclimatization on the first practice day, Monday, August 14th, they must have 5 consecutive days of heat acclimatization with helmets, shoulder pads, shorts, prior to their first legal practice with contact. If starting on August 14th, a school must have 5 heat acclimatization days, plus the 5 regular practice days (where contact and full gear is permitted) before their first scrimmage. If they are scheduled to play on the first play date of the fall season, this schedule may limit them to only 1 scrimmage. Schools are advised to be cautious in scheduling a second scrimmage if starting heat acclimatization on August 14th.
 - The only exception to the first legal play date for football is those schools who are playing Week Zero by trading a scrimmage for their first regularly scheduled contest. That varsity team may play the optional weekend of August 25 & 26 with junior varsity competition to follow.
- 2. Scrimmages:** A team shall not participate in a scrimmage prior to the first available scrimmage date as provided in Article XVI: Season and Out-of-Season Rules and Regulations of the PIAA By-Laws.
- 3. Participation Limitation:** No Team, no individual member or members of such Team, and no individual representing any PIAA member school, may Practice or participate in an Inter-School Practice, Scrimmage, Contest, and/or Open Gym on more than six days in any Calendar Week during the Regular Season.
- 4. Out-of-Season Activities:** General conditioning provides only partial heat acclimatization. Therefore, student-athletes should be exposed gradually to hot and/or humid environmental conditions to provide better heat acclimatization. Each exposure also should involve a gradual increase in the amount of exercise that is undertaken over a period of days to weeks until the exercise intensity and duration is comparable to that likely to occur in competition. If conditions are extreme, training or competition should be held during a cooler time of the day.
 - When protective gear and clothing is authorized by the school Principal outside of the defined season, frequent rest periods should be scheduled so that the gear and clothing can be loosened to allow evaporation of sweat and other forms of heat loss. During the acclimatization process, it may be advisable to use a minimum of protective gear and clothing and to Practice in T-shirts, shorts, socks and shoes. Excessive tape and outer clothing that restrict sweat evaporation should be avoided. Rubberized suits should never be used.

Maximum Practice Time: The maximum allotted time per day for practice is 5 hours and teams must have 2 hours of rest between sessions.

Minimum Practice Time: The minimum practice time for the first five days is 3 hours per day.

Practice: The time a player engages in physical activity. It is defined that any practice session be no greater than three (3) hours in length. Warm-up, stretching, conditioning, weight training and 'cool-down' periods are all considered practice.

Recovery Period: A minimum of a two (2) hour recovery period must be provided after any session.

Walk-through: No protective equipment or strenuous activity permitted. Only balls and field markers (cones) may be used.

Prevention of Heat Illness from the Sport Medicine Guidelines of the PIAA Handbook should be observed. These include regular measurements of environmental conditions. See Sports Medicine Guidelines for more detail or consult with your athletic trainer and/or team physician.

PIAA FOOTBALL HEAT ACCLIMATIZATION FAQ'S

What date must the Heat Acclimatization start?

- Monday, August 7, 2017 or Tuesday, August 8, 2017

How long must the Heat Acclimatization be run?

- Five (5) consecutive days
 - If starting Monday, August 7, 2017 then up to and including Friday, August 11, 2017
 - If starting Tuesday, August 8, 2017 then up to and including Saturday, August 12, 2017.

What are the daily minimum and maximum times permitted for each session of the Heat Acclimatization Period?

- The minimum amount of time for practice each day during the Heat Acclimatization Period is three (3) total hours.
- The maximum amount of time for practice on Days #1, #3, and #5 is five (5) total hours.
- The maximum amount of time for practice on Days #2 and #4 is three (3) total hours.
- If you plan on using the five (5) total hours allotted for Days #1, #3, and #5, then you must have a two (2) hour rest period after three (3) hours of practice prior to practicing the additional two (2) hours.

The following is a sample illustration of a Heat Acclimatization Plan that meets the above provisions:

DAY	AM SESSION	BREAK	PM SESSION
1	8:00 AM – 11:00 AM	11:00 AM – 1:00 PM	1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
2	8:00 AM – 11:00 AM	N/A	N/A
3	8:00 AM – 11:00 AM	11:00 AM – 1:00 PM	1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
4	8:00 AM – 11:00 AM	N/A	N/A
5	8:00 AM – 11:00 AM	11:00 AM – 1:00 PM	1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Who must participate in the Heat Acclimatization Period?

- All students in 9th through 12th grade who may be rostered on the Junior Varsity or Varsity Team.
- Jr. High rostered players may not participate and Jr. High Teams must adhere to the required first (3) three days of mandatory practice being non-contact and may only use helmet, shoulder pads, and football shoes for these first three (3) days.

What is the minimal amount of days a “team” must participate in the Heat Acclimatization Period?

- The team as a whole must participate in a minimum of five (5) consecutive days of Heat Acclimatization.

What if a player or players miss a day of the Heat Acclimatization Period due to illness or other excused absence?

- All players are expected to participate in all five (5) days of the Heat Acclimatization Period, however players must participate in a minimum of three (3) consecutive days to be considered as successfully completing the Heat Acclimatization Period.

What equipment may players wear during the Heat Acclimatization Period?

- Players may wear their helmet and shoulder pads during the Heat Acclimatization Period. Full gear may not be worn until the first official day of Fall Sports (Monday, August 14, 2017).

May our team “scrimmage” another team during the Heat Acclimatization Period?

- No, teams may NOT “scrimmage”, conduct “inter-school practices”, etc. during the Heat Acclimatization Period.

**Special thanks to Jason Zimmerman and the District XI Committee for the development of the FAQ's.*