

AHSAA HEAT ACCLIMATIZATION PROTOCOL

1. Days 1 through 4 of the heat-acclimatization period consist of the first 4 days of formal practice. During this time, athletes may not participate in more than 1 practice per day.
2. A 1-hour maximum walk-through is permitted during days 1–4 of the heat-acclimatization period. However, a 3-hour recovery period should be inserted between the practice and walk-through (or vice versa).
3. 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.
During days 3–4, only helmets and shoulder pads should be worn. Beginning on day 5, all protective equipment may be worn and full contact may begin.
 - A. Football only: On days 3–4, contact with blocking sleds and tackling dummies may be initiated.
 - B. Full-contact sports: 100% live contact drills should begin no earlier than day 5.
4. Beginning no earlier than day 5 and continuing through day 13, 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.
5. On a double-practice day, neither practice should exceed 3 hours in duration, and student-athletes should not participate in more than 5 total hours of practice. Warm-up, stretching, cool-down, walkthrough, 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.

There should always be unlimited access to water or other cool fluids and all breaks should be in the shade or other cool environment. Fans or other air-movement devices should be utilized to increase evaporation during breaks whenever possible. The number of breaks should be modified based on the Heat Index protocol set forth by the AHSAA.

If any athlete is suspected of having a heat related illness, immediate cooling is recommended by the use of cold water immersion tubs, or iced towels placed across the entire body and then changed out every 2-3 minutes until shivering occurs or medical help arrives. This **“Cool First, Transport Second”** policy has been proven to save lives and should be utilized at all times. Delay in cooling can only worsen the eventual outcome.

Any athlete that is considered a “high-risk” for heat illness, should be monitored carefully and adjustments to practice schedules should be performed. These athletes include:

1. Athletes with previous heat illness or heat stroke as identified on their pre-participation physical exam.
2. Athletes with a history of sickle cell trait as identified on their pre-participation physical exam.
3. Overweight athletes
4. Athletes on certain medications:
 - a. ADHD medications
 - b. Certain acne medications such as Accutane®
 - c. Energy drinks and nutritional supplements used for energy boost
 - d. Certain antidepressant medications
5. Athletes that are sick or have a fever
6. Dehydration due to inadequate intake or excessive loss from illness such as gastrointestinal distress
7. Athletes who have not acclimated to the heat due to work, travel or relocation from a more temperate environment.