

NORTH GEORGIA YOUTH FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

HEAT INDEX INFORMATION/ PRACTICE GUIDELINES

July 16th, 2009

TO: Member Recreational Youth Associations/Agencies.

FROM: Colton S. Green; CPRP, League Secretary

RE: Heat Index Alert

Attached is information that has been discussed by Colton Green and Brad Ballard, NGYFA League President, regarding potential heat related issues during the upcoming NGYFA 2009 season. The following information is officially being proposed for acceptance by the NGYFA Board in response to concerns surrounding practice conditions during the pre and early season periods.

This training tool kit was developed by GSBA (Georgia School Board Association) Risk Control Advocates, Brad Thompson and Conni Whitten.

These materials emphasize player safety; however please remember that some coaches and volunteers are also subject to heat-related incidents.

Please utilize this information as needed and feel free to call me if you have any questions.

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Director

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NORTH GEORGIA YOUTH FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Jefferson, Ga.

Safety and Risk Management Heat Related Guidelines

Our heat guidelines are designed to protect players from incurring heat related illnesses or problems. This is a guide for personnel to use and refer to when making decisions or modifying and/or suspending outdoor activities.

The best defense against heat-related conditions is PREVENTION. On an annual basis the NGYFA Board will attempt to maintain up to date knowledge of precautions to take to ensure player safety during high heat. Coach focus should be on “constant surveillance” of players during high heat to ensure player health. Should symptoms arise, they will be addressed immediately by using Quick Care guidelines and Basic First Aid as needed.

The following guidelines are to be used as appropriate to ensure player safety during high heat. Implementation may vary depending on the activity.

QUICK CARE GUIDELINES FOR COACHES:

- Reduce the intensity and duration of physical activity initially and gradually increase exposure to allow players to grow accustomed to heat levels.
- Fully hydrate players prior to strenuous physical activity. Avoid caffeine, alcohol and high sugar, carbonated drinks.
- Constantly provide cold water and schedule frequent rest periods where players are encouraged to drink 2-3 glasses of water.
- Plan strenuous outdoor activity for early morning or late in the day.
- Be aware of player’s chronic health issues and medications of students.
- Heighten surveillance of players with special needs.
- Be aware of players with certain conditions that are at a greater risk to heat stress. Included in these (but not limited to) are: cystic fibrosis, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, obesity, diabetes, chronic heart failure, caloric malnutrition, anorexia nervosa, sweating insufficiency syndrome.
- Check to see if a player’s medication has specific precautions regarding heat, sunlight, etc.
- Use a “buddy system” where players are educated regarding symptoms and monitor each other.
- Implement extra precautions when playing on concrete or asphalt.
- Provide water on long, non-air conditioned bus trips or encourage students to bring their own.

- Decrease the intensity of activities that last 30 minutes or more whenever relative humidity and air temperature (HEAT INDEX) are above critical levels (HI of 90 or above). The higher the humidity, the more dangerous high air temperature is because of decreased evaporation of body sweat. Note that full sun exposure can increase the Heat Index by as much as 15 degrees F.
- Check the Heat Index at <http://www.wunderground.com/cgi-bin/findweather/getForecast?query=30549> or an approved measuring device.
 - o The link above is pre-set for Jefferson, Ga. (30549). Please copy/paste the link and then type in the zip code for the location of YOUR practices.
 - o The Heat Index is located mid-way down the page on the left under the box of "Current Conditions". Those current conditions will give you the most up-to-date reading of Heat Index information.

PLAYER GUIDELINES

- Inform your coach/instructor of any medications recently taken.
- Wear lightweight, loose, cool, reflective clothing.
- Wear hats or sun visors when participating in direct sun.
- Wear sun glasses or protective eyewear.
- Avoid caffeine and high-sugar, carbonated drinks.
- Bring water to drink throughout activity.
- Inform coach/instructor if recently ill.
- Avoid eating heavy, protein-rich foods prior to exercise.

BASIC FIRST AID GUIDELINES

- Remove from the heat to a cool shaded area.
- Provide cold water/electrolyte drinks to replenish body fluids.
- Remove excessive clothing (shoulder pads, shoes, long socks, etc.)
- Place ice packs or ice towels on the following areas to cool the student's body core temperature
 - o Neck
 - o Arm Pits
 - o Sides
 - o Abdomen
 - o Groin
- In case of heat exhaustion, submerge the player in an ice bath until EMS arrives.
- Call 911 anytime during heightened heat exhaustion.

THERE ARE FOUR MAIN HEAT-RELATED REACTIONS TO EXCESS HEAT:

- Heat syncope- fainting or near fainting due to overheating; pale, cool, moist skin.
- Heat cramps- muscle cramps occurring during intense, prolonged activity in heat.
- Heat exhaustion- body temperature of 103-105; paleness, dizziness, disorientation, nausea, cramps.
- Heat stroke- body temperature of 106-108; disorientation, seizures, hot and dry skin, coma.

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES (TO INCLUDE RECESS)

At 3:00pm each day in July, August and continuing into the warmer days of September, a designated person will determine the heat index. The heat index combines air temperature and relative humidity to determine an apparent temperature- how hot it actually feels. Check Heat Index at <http://www.wunderground.com/cgi-bin/findweather/getForecast?query=30549> (with your zip code replacing the 30549 preset for Jefferson, Ga) or an approved measuring device. Administrators, coaches and trainers will then make a decision using Student Athlete Guidelines below on whether to make modifications for all athletic practices to be held that afternoon. Coaches will then make the necessary modifications and notify the administrators and students.

If the heat index is 80-89, players should be watched closely for any heat distress and frequent water breaks should be taken.

If the heat index is 90-94, 10 minute rest breaks should be taken every hour and water breaks every 10 minutes. Players should be under careful supervision. The athletic activity must be kept to 100 minutes or less.

If the heat index is 95-99, the athletic activity should be modified. For example, football practices in shorts, shoulder pads and helmets only. Frequent water every 10 minutes and rest breaks must be held. Players should be able to get water at any time and should be under extreme supervisions from teachers, coaches and trainers. The athletic activity must be kept to 90 minutes or less.

If the heat index is 100-104, further modifications must be made, such as football practice in shorts, t-shirts and helmets only. Water breaks should be taken every 10 minutes and students should be allowed to get water at any time. Frequent rest breaks must be taken and students should be monitored at all times for heat distress. The athletic activity must be kept to 90 minutes or less.

If the heat index is 105 or greater, then the athletic activity will be suspended, postponed until later in the evening, or held indoors at the administrator's/coach's discretion, with suggestions made by the athletic trainer. Athletic activities could also be rescheduled to when heat index has reached an acceptable level. When an event is "BLACK FLAGGED" (which means the heat index is at 105 level or higher that day), no outdoor practice may begin until the Athletic Director communicates to the head coach that the conditions are acceptable, the heat index is below 105. Practice may be postponed to a later time in the same day if the heat index lowers. All appropriate guidelines should be followed based on the reading at the time.

It is the responsibility of all administrators and coaches to provide ample supplies of water and appropriate care to our players. It is recommended that all guidelines be followed in such a way that the safety and best interests of our players be made our number one priority. It is also recommended that coaches constantly teach our players

about proper hydration throughout each day. It is important that student-athletes be allowed to carry water with them during the day and hydrate themselves, especially on days of practices and games, while the weather has the possibility of reaching critical levels in relation to the heat and humidity.