

Heat Stress and Athletic Participation

Hot Weather Tips

Coaches and Parent(s):

The following guidelines have been discussed and developed in anticipation of extreme heat and high humidity during the summer months and early fall season. Last year, Aliso had several days of unusually high humidity and temperatures above 100°F. During these days and without proper gradual acclimatization to hot weather, heat stroke is a viable risk for all students.

Through the use of a Wet Bulb Globe Temperature measuring device (WBGT) we now have the ability to measure air temperature, relative humidity, radiant heat and air movement. These readings will allow us to make informed judgments towards practice and game guidelines. Below are the recommended guidelines established by the US Marine Corps in 1998:

- WBGT 90°F and above = Black Flag – All outdoor training requiring exercise stops.
- WBGT 88-89.9°F = Red Flag – Shorter practice sessions, more frequent water and rest breaks
- WBGT 85-87.9°F = Yellow Flag – Caution, observe players carefully
- WBGT 75-84.9°F = Green Flag – Safe but always observe athletes

Along with the above standards, physical conditioning and gradual acclimatization to heat is important. It is necessary for an athlete to exercise in the heat if he/she is to become acclimatized to it. It is suggested that a graduated physical conditioning program be used and that 80% acclimatization can be expected to occur after the first 7-10 days. Final stages of acclimatization to heat are marked by increased sweating and reduced salt concentration in the sweat. During these early days of conditioning or practice please talk with your athletes regularly about proper hydration and recovery activities.

General guidelines: Know both the temperature and humidity. The greater the humidity the more difficult it is for the body to cool itself. Test the air prior to practice or game using a WBGT index monitor. If a WBGT reading of 90°F or higher occurs, outdoor activity must be canceled. At such time you as a coach will have the decision to cancel practice for that day or re-schedule for later in the day/evening when conditions change, normally after 7:00PM.

If extreme conditions are expected throughout the day, practice times of 5:00AM or 7:00PM are not unrealistic. Players would be expected and required to attend and parents should be made aware of these possibilities during early season meetings or mailings home.