

## Early Season Climate Acclimatization

During the NFHS, I was able to attend a workshop on early season acclimatization for our student athletes. With many of our practices beginning in the middle of August, prevention of heat related illnesses should be addressed by all athletic administrators, coaches, athletic trainers, players, and parents. Heat related illnesses can be prevented if coaches and players take the necessary steps to provide a safe and productive practice situation. Below are some concepts that should be taken into account during early season practice sessions.

- **Safety and Performance go hand in hand** – If student athletes are put into a safe environment during practice and competitions, their performance will be greater than students that are in unsafe environments. Too many coaches feel that performance has to be sacrificed in order to be safe, this is not true.
- **Too much too fast** – Coaches feel that they have to condition their athletes to peak endurance the first couple of days of practice. A players conditioning CANNOT be rushed by the coach. This type of mentality is where the students are most susceptible to heat related illnesses. Please do not over condition your athletes the first week of practice.
- **Body temperature** – A player's body temperature actually increases after the workout stops. Please monitor athletes especially following a workout. Proper cool downs are vital to avoid heat related illnesses.
- **Proper Hydration** – Encourage all athletes to be properly hydrated before practice begins. Recommend to athletes to avoid soda and other caffeinated drinks before and after practice. Ensure that adequate watering stations are available during the entire practice. It is highly suggested that water soaked towels and a cooling station be available in case of a heat related illness.

**NYSPHSAA Heat Index Procedures:** A reminder that the Heat Index Procedures that have been adopted by the Executive Committee can be found at [www.nysphsaa.org](http://www.nysphsaa.org). Below are the recommendations and requirements based on the Feels Like temperature according to WeatherBug.

	Feels Like Temp (Heat Index) under 79 degrees	Full activity. No restrictions
R E C O M M E N D E D	Heat Index Caution: Feels Like Temp (Heat Index) 80 degrees to 85 degrees	Provide ample water and multiple water breaks. Monitor athletes for heat illness. Consider reducing the amount of time for the practice session.
	Heat Index Watch: Feels Like Temp (Heat Index) 86 degrees to 90 degrees	Provide ample water and multiple water breaks. Monitor athletes for heat illness. Consider postponing practice to a time when Feels Like temp is lower. Consider reducing the amount of time for the practice session. 1 hour of recovery time for every hour of practice (ex. 2hr practice = 2hr recovery time).
	Heat Index Warning: Feels Like Temp (Heat Index) 91 degrees to 95 degrees	Provide ample water and water breaks every 15 minutes. Monitor athletes for heat illness. Consider postponing practice to a time when Feels Like temp is much lower. Consider reducing the amount of time for the practice session. 1 hour of recovery time for every hour of practice (ex. 2hr practice = 2hr recovery time). Light weight and loose fitting clothes should be worn. For Practices, only Football Helmets should be worn. No other protective equipment should be worn.
REQUIRED	Heat Index Alert: Feels Like Temp (Heat Index) 96 degrees or greater	No outside activity, practice or contest, should be held. Inside activity should only be held if air conditioned.