



FOOTBALL FEDERATION SA INC. (FFSA) HOT WEATHER POLICY

1. Rationale

- 1.1 The Football Federation South Australia Inc. (FFSA) and its registered clubs and members have a responsibility to ensure the health and wellbeing of staff, volunteers, players, officials and spectators. In fulfilling this responsibility, all members have a duty to provide and maintain an environment that is safe and without risks to health.
- 1.2 The FFSA Hot Weather Policy will assist volunteers, players, officials and spectators to undertake necessary action in cases of extreme hot weather. This is to prevent injury, and possible death, from heat illness by recognising and managing potentially dangerous heat situations.

2. Risks Associated with Hot Weather

- 2.1 The FFSA recognises that the risk of an elevated body temperature from high intensity sport in a hot environment is significant, and can lead to heat illness presented as heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Symptoms can be worse if fluid replacement during exercise is inadequate which leads to fluid loss and dehydration.
- 2.3 Sports Medicine Australia characterises heat exhaustion by a high heart rate, dizziness, headache, loss of endurance and skill, nausea, clammy and pale skin, and collapse.
- 2.4 Heat stroke is similar to heat exhaustion but with a dry skin, confusion, collapse and possible coma. It may arise in a player who is suffering from heat exhaustion and has persisted in exercise. This is a potentially fatal condition and must be treated immediately.

3. Factors Affecting Participants in Hot Weather

- 3.1 The FFSA recognizes that there are a number of factors that may affect participants during days of extreme heat, including humidity, duration/intensity, timing (between 11am and 3pm) hydration, fitness level, age and gender.
- 3.2 Women, children and the elderly may suffer more in the heat during exercise. This may be due to a greater percentage of body fat in women, and poorly developed sweating mechanism in children.

4. Competitions in Hot Weather

- 4.1 Clubs shall check the temperature forecast 2 days prior to every competition, as published by the Australian Bureau of Meteorology. Information is to be obtained from www.bom.gov.au at 9.00am. If the temperature in Adelaide, Elizabeth, Noarlunga or if located in a regional area, the regional forecast, is forecasted to be 33 degrees Celsius or greater for junior competitions or 36 degrees or greater for senior competitions, the competition shall be rescheduled.
- 4.2 A junior player is classified as any player that participates in the Junior Age Competitions.

4.3 The rescheduled competition shall be played and completed by 11am or commenced after 5pm on the scheduled day if the weather is 33 degrees Celsius or greater for junior age competitions or 36 degrees or greater for senior competitions, as approved by the FFSA Competition Administrator. If the competition cannot be rescheduled within these times the competition or training session shall be postponed.

5. Training in Hot Weather

5.1 If the temperature is scheduled to be 33 degrees Celsius or greater for junior age or 36 degrees or greater for seniors at 9.00am on the day, all outdoor training sessions are to be undertaken and completed by 11.00am or after 5.00pm. Training sessions that are conducted in an air conditioned venue may continue.

5.2 If the temperature is scheduled to be 36 degrees or greater all outdoor activities are to be postponed for all junior aged teams. Training sessions that are conducted in an air conditioned venue may continue.

6. Club Requirements during Hot Weather

6.1 Clubs shall encourage all players and officials to drink fluids prior to and during all competitions and training sessions to avoid dehydration, and for rehydration following competitions and training sessions.

6.2 In all competitions and training sessions, clubs and officials shall ensure that there is an adequate supply of water for drinking and refreshment and the appropriate drinks breaks are taken as necessary during these competitions or training sessions.

6.3 In all competitions and training sessions, clubs shall ensure that water bottles are accessible to players. Water bottles shall not be permitted to be thrown onto the field of play, players may be handed a water bottle from the side of the field.

6.4 Club officials may approach match officials prior to the start of any competition to schedule a hydration break during the competition. If the two teams are in agreement, a short hydration break shall be implemented with timing at the sole discretion of the match official.

6.5 Clubs shall provide a shaded area for players and officials during breaks at all competitions and training sessions.

7. First Aid Treatment

7.1 As per the FFSA Competition Rules, any club registered with the FFSA must have adequate first aid facilities for players, officials and the general public during competitions and training sessions.

7.2 Players and officials with any symptoms of heat illness shall immediately cease exercising. They shall have immediate first aid treatment including Strip/Soak/Fan.

- strip off any excess clothing;
- soak with water;
- fan;
- ice placed in groin and armpits is also helpful.

The aim is to reduce body temperature as quickly as possible. The athlete should immediately be referred for treatment by a medical professional.

Important: heat exhaustion/stroke can still occur even in the presence of good hydration.

8. Additional Resources

- 8.1 Additional information can be obtained from Sports Medicine Australia (www.sma.org.au)