



Werribee Centrals FNC in conjunction with AFL AND SMA Policy for Football in Extreme Conditions

Guidelines for Prevention of Heat Injury

Heat stress and injury can lead to impaired player performance, physical distress e.g. dizziness, headaches collapse and illness. In its extreme form heat stress can be life threatening.

Members officials players and parents, spectators and administrators and all people reasonably connected to the Football Body must comply with the WCFNC Heat Policy, have a duty of care to ensure all possible precautions are taken to reduce or abolish the risk of heat stress related injury.

Preventing heat stress and injury, maintains optimum performance and improves recovery.

To prevent heat stress, an awareness of potential circumstances that can expose players, and an appreciation of broad variations of responses is important, therefore careful planning and preparation and communication is required from coaching staff in-conjunction with training/medical team.

It is recommended that a review of weather conditions from the Bureau of Meteorology prior to commencement of training be conducted. NB> Potential thunderstorm activity should also be taken into account.

Lightning

4.1 AS1768-2007

The Football Body should comply with AS1768-2007, entitled The Lightning Protection Standard, published on 10 January 2007 (Lightning Standard). While the Lightning Standard will not necessarily prevent damage or personal injury due to lightning, it will reduce the probability of such damage or injury occurring.

Coaching & Assistance Staff should have the capacity to modify reduce or cancel activities that may unfavourably expose players to the risk of heat stress.

In the event any player is showing signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke the senior most trainer at the session/game has the power to remove the player from that training session/game until he/she is satisfied of their recovery.

Signs of Heat exhaustion

- Characterised by a high heart rate, dizziness, headache, loss of endurance/skill/confusion and nausea.
- The skin may still be cool/sweating, but there will be signs of developing vasoconstriction (eg, palecolour).

Signs of Heat stroke

- Characteristics are similar to heat exhaustion but with a dry skin, confusion and collapse.
- Heat stroke may arise in an athlete who has not been identified as suffering from heat exhaustion and has persisted in further activity.

Heat stroke is a potentially fatal condition and must be treated immediately. It should be assumed that any collapsed athlete is at danger of heat stroke. The best first aid measures are "Strip/Soak/Fan":

- strip off any excess clothing
- fan
- soak with water
- 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.

Dehydration:

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Dehydration is fluid loss which occurs during exercise, mainly due to perspiration and respiration. It makes an athlete more susceptible to fatigue and muscle cramps. Inadequate fluid replacement before, during and after exercise will lead to excessive dehydration and may lead to heat exhaustion and heat stroke. To avoid dehydration, Sports Medicine Australia recommends that:

- athletes drink approximately 500 mls (2 glasses) in the 2 hours prior to exercise;
- during exercise longer than 60 minutes, 2-3 cups (500-700ml) of cool water or sports drink are sufficient for most sports.
- after exercise replenish your fluid deficit to ensure that you are fully re- hydrated, but not overhydrated.

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

PLAYERS:

Players have a responsibility to ensure that the impact of environmental factors such as extreme heat is not exacerbated by their own conduct. Accordingly, the following general guidelines should be followed.

- Should ensure adequate fluid intake prior and during training/game (500-700mls per quarter e.g.)
- Notify training and coaching staff when effected by heat or when performance is noticeably effected.
- Do not play/ train in heat with an infective illness.
- Apply sunscreen 30+ in sunny conditions.
- Use water and electrolyte drinks

WCFNC:

- Provide adequate fluids in appropriate bottles
- Co-ordinate training times outside of extreme conditions if possible
- Increase the number of water carriers to run fluids
- Increase the drink intervals to enable rehydration and assessment of players conditions
- Use cooling aids such as ice baths to help reduce core temperatures.