

## SMBL Guidelines for Hot Weather

SMBL is aware of the difficulty of settling “one size fits all” guidelines for cancellation of play in extreme temperatures. Sports Medicine Australia makes the point that for normally healthy, active, people dangers from heat illness are likely to arise from high intensity exercise such as endurance running. Most community sport does not reach this level for periods long enough to cause serious harm (ref:SMA). Baseball is usually safe at higher temperatures because of the lower intensity of the play and frequent breaks. Our other problem in making an overall decision is that there is a significant variation between provision of shade and ambient temperatures across grounds in the SMBL area.

**NOTE SMBL rule 7.16 High Temperature Rule:** A five minute break may be call at the first break in play after a team has been in the field for 30 minutes **if** the ambient temperature at the ground is 38 or above (32+ Wet Bub Temperature). See also separate personal guidelines for individuals.

### Factors for teams and individuals to consider

Decisions about suitability to play should consider temperature along with other factors below. Where teams agree, SMBL will always allow transfer to a time which is mostly outside the hottest part of the day (ie 11 to 3pm).

Ambient temperature is the most easily understood

Ambient temperature	Relative humidity	Risk of Heat Illness
36 and above	Where it exceeds 30%	High to Extreme

Further guidance might be gained from what is known as the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) index. The WBGT is useful when humidity is high. Many Hills grounds have this available.

WBGT	Risk of thermal injury
30 and above	High to Extreme

### **Duration and intensity**

- The greater the duration and intensity of the exercise, the greater the risk of heat related symptoms;
- Reducing playing time and extending rest periods with opportunities to rehydrate during the event would help safeguard the health of participants. **NOTE:** SMBL rule (Jan. 2018) At the first break in play after a team has been in the field for 30 minutes, there will be a five-minute break for players to rehydrate and rotate players if required. Five minutes rest can cause a significant reduction in core temperatures (SMA).

### **Personal consideration**

A number of physical/physiological characteristics of the player will influence the capacity of individuals to tolerate exercise in the heat, including body size and endurance fitness.

- Overweight and unconditioned athletes, umpires, officials and volunteers will generally also be more susceptible to heat stress.
- Female participants may suffer more during exercise in the heat because of their greater percentage of body fat.
- Veteran participants may also cope less well with exercise in the heat.
- Illnesses such as asthma, diabetes, pregnancy, heart conditions and epilepsy as well as illnesses such as a virus, flu or gastro or who are feeling unwell are at a higher risk of heat illness if exercising in moderate to hot weather.
- Participants or officials who may be affected by drugs or alcohol may be at an extreme risk of heat illness if exercising in moderate to hot weather.

**Dehydration:** Players should replace fluid loss due to perspiration and respiration. Excessive dehydration may lead to heat exhaustion and heat stroke. SMA 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 rehydrated, but not over-hydrated.
  - Even a small degree of dehydration will cause a decrease in performance.
  - Take care not to over-hydrate. Drinking too much fluid can lead to a dangerous condition known as hyponatraemia (low blood sodium). Aim to drink enough to replace lost fluids, **but not more than that.**
- Overweight and unconditioned athletes, umpires, officials and volunteers will generally be susceptible to heat stress. • Refer to SMA’s free DRINK UP brochure available from [www.sma.org.au/information](http://www.sma.org.au/information),

**Following are guidelines for what to look for and how to treat severe dehydration.**

**Heat exhaustion** If people feel unwell during a game they should immediately cease activity and rest. They would benefit from a shaded area with some passing breeze or a fan if necessary and extra hydration. Misting or spraying with water can also help.

- Each team should provide ice and extra water for wetting face, clothes and hair and consider a fan to enhance air movement.

**Heat stroke** The 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.
  - This 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; • soak with water; • fan; • ice placed in groin and armpits is also helpful.
- The aim is to reduce body temperature as quickly as possible. Important: heat exhaustion/stroke can still occur even in the presence of good hydration.
- Any indication of this condition should be immediately referred for medical assessment.