

# THE 16-DAY ACCLIMATIZATION PERIOD

## Background Information:

- Exertional heat stroke is currently among the top three reasons athletes die during sport and in the summer months it is the number one reason.
- Sports medicine researchers and advocates indicate that periods of rest and a progressive system of early practices can reduce the instances of exertional heat stroke in athletes.
- Humans who have adapted to hot climates begin sweating earlier and more profusely, controlling their body temperature more efficiently.
- The goal of the acclimatization period is to increase exercise heat tolerance and enhance the ability to exercise safely and effectively in warm and hot conditions.
- This period should begin on the first day of practice or conditioning.

## Summary of the 16-Day Acclimatization Period:

### Days 1-5

1. Days 1 through 5 of the acclimatization period consist of the first 5 days of formal practice. During this time, athletes are not allowed to participate in more than 1 practice per day.
2. If a practice is interrupted by inclement weather or heat restrictions, the practice may recommence once conditions are deemed safe. Total practice time should not exceed 3 hours in any 1 day.
3. A 1-hour maximum walk-through is permitted during Days 1-5 of the acclimatization period. A 1-hour recovery period is required between the practice and walk-through (or vice-versa).
4. During Days 1-2 of the acclimatization period in sports requiring helmets or shoulder pads, a helmet is the only protective equipment permitted (goalies, as in the case of field hockey and related sports, may not wear full protective gear or perform activities that would require protective equipment. During Days 3-5, only helmets and shoulder pads may be worn. Beginning on Day 6, all protective equipment may be worn and full contact may begin.
  - a. Football Only: On Days 3-5 contact with blocking sleds and tackling dummies may be initiated.
  - b. Full-Contact Sports: 100% live contact drills may begin no earlier than Day 6.

### Days 6-16:

1. Beginning no earlier than Day 6 and continuing through Day 14, double-practice days must be followed by a single-practice day. On single-practice days, 1 walk-through is permitted, separated from the practice by at least 1 hour continuous rest. When a double practice day is followed by a rest day, another double-practice day is permitted after the rest day.
2. On a double-practice day neither practice may exceed 3 hours in duration nor may student-athletes participate in more than 5 total hours of practice. Warm-up, stretching, cool-down, walk-through, conditioning, and weight-room activities must be included as part of the total practice time. The 2 practices must be separated by at least 3 continuous hours in a cool environment.
3. Because the risk of exertional heat illnesses during the preseason heat-acclimatization period is high, it is recommended that an athletic trainer be on site before, during and after all practices. This is not required.

Day	Level of Contact	Heat Acclimatization Practice Plan	Sports Equipment/Helmets/Pads
1	Air	One Practice per day (3 hours Total) 1 hour walkthrough after 1 hour of rest	helmet only spandex girdle or pants without pads allowed
2	Air	One Practice per day (3 hours Total) 1 hour walkthrough after 1 hour of rest	helmet only spandex girdle or pants without pads allowed
3	Air/Bag/Control	One Practice per day (3 hours Total) 1 hour walkthrough after 1 hour of rest	helmet shoulder pads blocking sleds tackling dummies only spandex girdle or pants without pads allowed
4	Air/Bag/Control	One Practice per day (3 hours Total) 1 hour walkthrough after 1 hour of rest	helmet shoulder pads blocking sleds tackling dummies only spandex girdle or pants without pads allowed
5	Air/Bag/Control	One Practice per day (3 hours Total) 1 hour walkthrough after 1 hour of rest	helmet shoulder pads blocking sleds tackling dummies only spandex girdle or pants without pads allowed
6-16	Air/Bag/Control Thud/Live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternate double practice days with a single practice day or a rest day.</li> <li>• Single Day - 1 walk through is permitted, separated from the practice by at least 1 hour continuous rest. When a double practice day is followed by a rest day, another double-practice day is permitted after the rest day.</li> <li>• Double Day - 3 hour max per practice. 5 hour max total with 3 hour minimum rest between the 2 single practice day - 3 hour max; Warm-up, stretching, cool-down, walk-through, conditioning, and weight-room activities must be included as part of the total practice time.</li> <li>• 1 hour walkthrough after 1 hour rest</li> </ul>	<p>all equipment full contact</p> <p>spandex girdle allowed WITH Football pants, kneepads included.</p>

### Special Notes:

- During the preseason heat acclimatization period, if practice occurs on six consecutive days, participants should have one day of complete rest (no conditioning, walk-throughs, practices, etc.) Therefore, 16 days are needed to complete the 14-practice requirement.
- On-site Athletic Trainer for the heat acclimatization period (days 1-16) if possible, but not required.
- In football the preseason scrimmage is a practice and the time spent for this scrimmage counts towards the total hours of practice in a day.
- Football will have a 5 day acclimatization period before full contact with pads during the summer.
- Days 1-5: Spandex Girdle may be worn but not covered with football pants.

## Section 1: School Essential By-Laws:

### 1.7 (new) Heat Acclimatization

1.7.1 **Heat Acclimatization Period:** For the health and safety of participants, member schools shall follow the Heat Acclimatization Schedule as described below and as summarized in Diagram 1.7 (1) and (2) for all fall sports. The Heat Acclimatization Schedule sets forth a progressive system of early practices along with periods of rest. The goal of the Heat Acclimatization Period is to increase exercise heat tolerance and enhance the ability to exercise safely and effectively in warm and hot conditions. This period shall begin on the first day of practice or conditioning.

1.7.2 **Heat Acclimatization Definitions:** Some definitions of terms used in the Heat Acclimatization system can be found in other sections of the MSHSAA Handbook, and are listed below:

- a. A “day” is defined as a calendar day (12:00 a.m. through 11:59 p.m.).
- b. **Recovery Period:** A recovery period is defined as the time between the end of one practice or walk-through and the beginning of the next practice or walk-through. During this time, students should rest in a cool environment, with no sport -related or conditioning-related activity permitted (e.g., speed or agility drills, strength training, conditioning, or walk-through). Treatment with the athletic trainer is permissible.
- c. **Fall Sports:**
  1. **Definition of Practice:** See By-Law 3.16.1
  2. **Definition of Conditioning Practice:** See By-Law 3.16.2
  3. **Definition of Walk-Through:** See By-Law 3.16.3

### 1.7.3 **Limits and Requirements within Heat Acclimatization Period:**

- a. **First Five Days:** Only one practice may be held on each of the first five days of the Heat Acclimatization Period. Further, one walk-through may be held after a rest period of one or more hours.
- b. **Practice Duration:** Each individual practice shall last no more than three hours. Warm-up, stretching, and cool-down activities are included as part of the three-hour practice time. Regardless of ambient temperature conditions, all conditioning and weight-room activities must be considered part of practice. Note: Days on which athletes do not practice due to a scheduled rest day, injury, or illness do not count toward the heat-acclimatization period, nor do they count as a “conditioning practice.”
- c. **Walk-Through Limits:** A walk-through is not part of the **three-hour** practice period, can last no more than **one hour** per day, and does not include conditioning or weight-room activities.
- d. **Double Practice Days:** Two double practice days may not be held back-to-back; a double practice day must alternate with a single practice day or a rest day. On a double practice day, a single practice may not exceed three hours, and total hours of practice may not exceed five hours. A minimum of one hour of rest must be provided between the two practices.
- e. **Required Rest Day:** If practice occurs on six consecutive days, participants shall have one day of complete rest (no conditioning, no practice, and no walk-throughs). Therefore, sixteen dates are required to complete the fourteen-day Heat Acclimatization Period.

## Section 3: Athletic Activity By-Laws:

3.16.1 **Practice:** Any attempt of a coach at a given school to provide instruction in any phase of a game or athletic activity to any team or part of a team at that school or to have any team or part of a team engage in drills under the supervision of a coach, or from directions provided by the coach, involving what has already been taught. Try-outs, so-called “skull sessions,” “chalk talks,” “walk-throughs,” etc., are considered practices but do not qualify as “conditioning practices” (See 3.16.2). General Informational Meetings, where no attempt is made to teach any phase of a game or activity, are permitted before the first allowable practice date of the specific sport season. Except as provided for in By-Laws 3.5.3, 3.10.3, 1.4.1, and 1.4.2 a junior high or high school student shall be permitted to participate in school practices only with teams of the school where he/she is properly enrolled.

3.16.2 **Conditioning Practice:** Any attempt by the coach to engage the student in specific physical activity, drills, and/or instruction involving physical activity designed to elevate the student’s level of physical condition for a specific sport. (See also By-Law 3.9, Conditioning Requirements)

3.16.3 **Walk-through:** A walk-through is defined as a teaching opportunity with the athletes not wearing protective equipment (e.g., helmets, shoulder pads, catcher’s gear, shin guards) or using other sport-related equipment (e.g., footballs, blocking sleds, pitching machines, soccer balls).