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## **PIAA Preseason Heat-Acclimatization Guidelines**

### **Common Question & Answers Regarding**

#### **1. How many days must the heat acclimatization program be enforced?**

Three days. The first three days of football practice starting with the first day of fall practice. A school may choose the option of starting the previous week. If this option is chosen, these days are to be three (3) consecutive days and it is not to start earlier than Wednesday the previous week – August 7th. Helmets and shoulder pads with shorts the first 2 days and full gear on third day. No contact on third day (it's prior to start date).

#### **2. What is the rationale for not starting heat acclimatization earlier in the week and giving players 4 days of rest before the official start of practice?**

The rationale for this is if there is more than 48 hours between the conclusion of the heat acclimatization program and first day of practice, the program will not have its intended affect medically. Therefore, these practices are limited to five hours per day with no contact on the third day since it is prior to the start of the stipulated fall season.

#### **3. What are the maximum and minimum time periods for heat acclimatization?**

These sessions are limited to 5 hours of practice daily for the 3 days of heat acclimatization. Practice sessions may be no longer than 3 hours in length and teams must have 2 hours of rest between sessions. The minimum amount of time for heat acclimatization is 3 hours per day.

#### **4. Who is responsible for the development and enforcement of this program?**

The head football coach, in consultation with the school's medical staff (team physician/athletic training staff), is to develop their own three (3) day program. It is to be submitted, in writing, to the school's principal for their approval and supervision. The enforcement of this will be a team effort between all parties, however, the principal of the school, as with all PIAA governance, is responsible for the adherence and enforcement of PIAA rules and regulations.

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**5. Do all players have to go through the heat acclimatization?**

Yes all players have to go through this process before they represent their school by playing in a scrimmage or a contest. This is to be monitored by each school.

**6. Is this heat acclimatization program only for football?**

Yes it is for football only. The amount of protective equipment that must be worn by players does not allow for the body to cool off through perspiration in a normal fashion. Other sports do not have these requirements and coupled with the fact that 52 football players, 41 in high school, have died since 1995 to heat related causes has raised the awareness nationally to provide for a pre-season football acclimatization program.

**7. Is the 2-hour rest period between sessions just for the three day acclimatization period or is it required for every session during two-a-days?**

Specifically for the heat acclimatization policy. I believe it is a good yardstick for use during other two-a-day sessions but that would be up to each individual school to decide.

**8. Is it required for all participants to have their PIAA CIPPE form completed if the acclimatization guidelines are started the week prior to the first official starting date?**

Yes; CIPPE must be completed before the participation in the heat acclimatization guidelines if started the week prior to the first official practice date.

**9. Are freshman football players and middle school football players required to complete the 3 day heat acclimatization guideline when they start practice?**

No; Junior high already has a 3 day no contact rule for the first three days of their practices. However all freshman who practice with the high school football team must complete the 3 day heat acclimatization guidelines.



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**10. If the acclimatization guidelines are started the week prior to the first official starting day and includes Sunday does the PIAA policy about giving athletes a day off after a period of 6 consecutive days come into play?**

Yes it does. If they include Sunday in the 3 day acclimatization guidelines started the week prior to the first official starting date, they must have one day off during the next week if they are going to scrimmage on the first Saturday.

**11. During the 2 hour recovery period what team activities are permitted? (Meetings etc.)**

No activity. 2 hours of uninterrupted recovery.

**12. What is the first official date a scrimmage with another school can be held?**

Saturday August 17<sup>th</sup>.

**13. If the acclimatization guidelines are started on the first official practice day, what "contact" is allowed when full pads are utilized the third day?**

A regular practice session with contact as determined by the coach and principal.

**14. If an athlete begins the acclimatization guidelines and sustains an injury or illness and cannot complete the process do they need to start over from day one once they return?**

Yes; 3 consecutive days when they return. I will ask the BOD to establish a deadline (Labor Day) for the pre-season heat acclimatization program to be completed. Once deadline is established by the BOD, then each individual school has the ability to use its sound judgment on how many days of practice are needed before contact.



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**15. In the event that inclement weather causes an acclimatization session to be canceled does the process have to be started over to complete three consecutive days?**

Yes; the heat acclimatization guidelines must be completed during three consecutive days.

**16. If an athlete transfers in from a state that does not require heat acclimatization after pre-season practices are completed, do they need to complete the acclimatization guidelines before full practice can take place?**

See previous answer regarding injury and illness. Each individual school should make that determination on a case by case basis.

**17. If the heat acclimatization guidelines are started the week prior to the first official starting date are full pads mandatory on the third day?**

Full pads are not mandatory but it is highly recommended to have that practice in full gear for the acclimatization benefits.

**18. Do you feel that the heat acclimatization guidelines should become an addition to the PIAA CIPPE form similar to the sudden cardiac arrest and concussion guidelines?**

No we do not.

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