

Forestville Hockey Club

Hot Weather Policy

Hot weather training restrictions

Coaches, managers and players of the Forestville Hockey Club **must** modify trainings in accordance with the following guidelines:

Ambient temperature	Relative humidity	Risk of thermal injury	Modifying action for training
21 - 25°C	< 60%	Low - moderate	Increase vigilance. Caution over-motivation.
26 – 30°C	< 50%	Moderate	Moderate early pre-season training intensity. Reduce intensity and duration of play/training. Take more breaks.
31 – 35°C	< 30%	High – very high	Greatly reduce intensity. Limit duration to less than 60 minutes per session. Frequent breaks.
36°C and above	< 25%	Extreme	Either postpone session to a cooler part of the day or cancel session.

Negative effects of exercise in hot weather conditions

All players, coaches and managers should be aware of the signs of heat illness and dehydration. All coaches/managers should encourage the implementation of the following management techniques.

Heat illness

At any time, high intensity exercise in a hot environment, with the associated elevation of body temperature, can lead to heat illness. Heat illness in sport presents as **heat exhaustion** or the more severe **heat stroke**. Both can occur even in the presence of good hydration.

To avoid **heat exhaustion**, if people feel unwell during exercise they should:

- **Immediately cease activity;**
- **Rest** – preferably in a shaded area with some passing breeze (i.e. fan); and
- Increase **hydration** (misting or spraying with water can also help).

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;**
- **soak with water;**
- **fan; and**
- **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

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 500mls (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; and
- After exercise athletes replenish fluid deficits to ensure that they are fully rehydrated, but not over-hydrated.

The greater the intensity of the exercise, the greater the risk of heat-related symptoms; e.g. distance running is more of a problem than stop-start team events.

Preventative Measures

All players, coaches and managers should be aware and educated on the following preventative measures:

Clothing

Type of clothing is vital in minimising health risks associated with exercise in heat. Fabrics that minimise heat storage and enhance sweat evaporation should be selected.

Light-weight, light-coloured, loose-fitting clothes, made of natural fibres or composite fabrics with high wicking (absorption) properties, that provide for adequate ventilation are recommended as the most appropriate clothing in the heat. This clothing should complement the existing practices in Australia that protect the skin against permanent damage from the sun.

Activity modification

Reducing playing time and extending rest periods with opportunities to rehydrate during the event would help safeguard the health of participants.

Provision of water

Provision of extra water for wetting face, clothes and hair is also important.

Factors affecting individual reactions to heat

All players, coaches and managers should be aware of the following factors affecting individual reactions to heat:

Ability

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

Young children

Children are especially at risk in the heat. Prior to puberty, the sweating mechanism, essential for effective cooling, is poorly developed. The ratio between weight and surface area in the child is also such that the body absorbs heat rapidly in hot conditions.

In practical terms, child athletes must be protected from over-exertion in hot climates, especially with intense or endurance exercise.

NB: Children tend to have a more “common sense” approach to heat illness than adults and ‘listen to their bodies’ more, usually slowing down or stop playing if they feel distressed in the heat. On no account should children be forced to continue sport or exercise if they appear distressed or complain about feeling unwell.

Medical Conditions

Examples of illnesses that will put the participant or official at a high risk of heat illness include asthma, diabetes, pregnancy, heart conditions and epilepsy. Some medications and conditions may need special allowances. Participants and officials who present with an illness such as a virus, flu or gastro or who are feeling unwell are at an extreme risk of heat illness if exercising in moderate to hot weather.