

# FITZGERALD HIGH SCHOOL

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## 2.67 GHSA Practice Policy for Heat and Humidity:

- a) Schools must follow the statewide policy for conducting practices and voluntary conditioning workouts (this policy is year-round, including during the summer) in all sports during times of extremely high heat and/or humidity that will be signed by each head coach at the beginning of each season and distributed to all players and their parents or guardians. The policy shall follow modified guidelines of the American College of Sports Medicine in regard to:
  - 1) The scheduling of practices at various heat/humidity levels.
  - 2) The ratio of workout time to time allotted for rest and hydration at various heat/humidity levels.
  - 3) The heat/humidity levels that will result in practice being terminated.
- b) A scientifically-approved instrument that measures the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature must be utilized at each practice to ensure that the written policy is being followed properly. WBGT readings should be taken every hour, beginning 30 minutes before the beginning of practice.

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## WBGT ACTIVITY GUIDELINES AND REST BREAK GUIDELINES

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<b>Under 82.0</b>	Normal Activities - Provide at least three separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 3 minutes each during the workout.
<b>82.0 - 86.9</b>	Use discretion for intense or prolonged exercise; watch at-risk players carefully. Provide at least three separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 4 minutes each.
<b>87.0 - 89.9</b>	Maximum practice time is 2 hours. <b>For Football:</b> players are restricted to helmet, shoulder pads, and shorts during practice, and all protective equipment must be removed during conditioning activities. If the WBGT rises to this level <i>during</i> practice, players may continue to work out wearing football pants without changing to shorts. <b>For All Sports:</b> Provide at least four separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 4 minutes each.
<b>90.0 - 92.0</b>	Maximum practice time is 1 hour. <b>For Football:</b> no protective equipment may be worn during practice, and there may be no conditioning activities. <b>For All Sports:</b> There must be 20 minutes of rest breaks distributed throughout the hour of practice.
<b>Over 92.0</b>	No outdoor workouts. Delay practice until a cooler WBGT level is reached.

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- c) Practices are defined as: the period of time that a participant engages in a coach-supervised, school approved sport or conditioning-related activity. Practices are timed from the time the players report to the practice or workout area until players leave that area. If a practice is interrupted for a weather-related reason, the “clock” on that practice will stop and will begin again when the practice resumes.
- d) Conditioning activities include such things as weight training, wind-sprints, timed runs for distance, etc., and may be a part of the practice time or included in “voluntary workouts.”
- e) A walk-through is not a part of the practice time regulation, and may last no longer than one hour. This activity may not include conditioning activities or contact drills. No protective equipment may be worn during a walk-through, and no full-speed drills may be held.
- f) Rest breaks may not be combined with any other type of activity and players must be given unlimited access to hydration. These breaks must be held in a “cool zone” where players are out of direct sunlight.

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## GUIDELINES FOR HYDRATION AND REST BREAKS:

1. Rest time should involve both unlimited hydration intake (water or electrolyte drinks) and rest without any activity involved.
2. For football, helmets should be removed during rest time.
3. The site of the rest time should be a “cooling zone” and not in direct sunlight.
4. When the WBGT reading is over 86:
  - a) Ice towels and spray bottles filled with ice water should be available at the “cooling zone” to aid the cooling process.
  - b) Cold immersion tubs must be available for practices for the benefit of any player showing early signs of heat illness.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR INSTITUTIONAL HEAT POLICY

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The GHSA Executive Committee specified that each head coach must publish a document outlining the GHSA Heat Policy and then sign that document before distributing it to parents and guardians of all players at the beginning of each season. It is important that coaches go over this information with their players in addition to sending the signed policy statement home to the parents/guardians. There will be no standardized document created by the GHSA, because many schools intend to add other information for distribution at the same time.

The following information MUST be included to accurately describe the GHSA Institutional Heat Policy:

1. **FOR ALL SPORTS:** The information found under the title of “Practice Policy for Heat and Humidity” that is found on both the GHSA Home Page (upper left margin) and on the Sports Medicine Page.
2. **FOR FOOTBALL:** Information found under the title of “Football Preseason Practice Regulations” and this is found on the Football page

The information that is specified above may not be modified in any way; however, additional information about school procedures may be added.

## GHSA HEAT POLICY – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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### WHEN DOES THE HEAT POLICY STOP?

Some aspects of the heat policy are always in effect regardless of the sport. The limitations in By-law 2.67 (Institutional Heat Policy) are in effect anytime the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) reading registers in an elevated level. The limitation on activities that are on the published chart must be followed.

### WHAT IS THE WBGT?

The Wet Bulb Globe Temperature reading is a composite temperature used to estimate the effect of air temperature, humidity, and solar radiation on the human body. The reading is expressed in degrees, but should not be equated with degrees of air temperature. For example: A WBGT reading of 92 is somewhat comparable to a Heat Index reading of 104-105 degrees. A Heat index reading merely reflects the combination of heat and humidity as “how hot it feels” on a person who is normally dressed and not involved in strenuous activity. Therefore, the Heat Index has little relevance to a football practice setting.

### HOW FREQUENTLY SHOULD WBGT READINGS BE TAKEN IN PRACTICE?

Obviously, the reading should be taken just before the scheduled starting time for the practice to determine what levels of activity are permissible – or if the practice will need to be postponed until the WBGT reading gets to an acceptable level. The frequency of readings during the practice will likely depend on when the practice is scheduled. An early practice with temperatures increasing during the practice time may require several readings being taken. A late afternoon or evening practice with temperatures decreasing during the practice time should not require as many readings. The important thing is that the risks to the players are being monitored appropriately.

### WHY DOES THE HEAT POLICY APPLY TO PRACTICES AND NOT TO GAMES?

The researchers who conducted the 3-year study on heat illness agreed with the GHSA administrators that there are enough built-in opportunities for players to get rest and hydration breaks during the course of a game. Everyone on the team is not participating intensely at one time. Officials and coaches are available to monitor 22 players in a game setting, while coaches may have 100 or more players to monitor during a practice setting. It is important to remember that scrimmages are practices and they do fall under the heat policy guidelines. These interscholastic contests often occur early in the acclimatization process and extra attention needs to be given to player well-being.

### WHAT CONSTITUTES A “CONDITIONING ACTIVITY”?

Conditioning activities involve weight-training, distance running, “gassers”, “running the stadium”, and other such things. Whether these activities are done before or after a practice, they are considered to be a part of the practice and must be figured into the time restrictions. The heat policy should be in effect for “voluntary conditioning” programs since statistics at both high school and collegiate levels indicate that a large percentage of serious heat illness episodes occur during these activities.

### WHAT ARE “WALK-THROUGHS”, WHEN MAY THEY BE HELD?

Walk-throughs are not considered a part of a practice since they have so many limitations placed on them. A walk-through session may last no longer than one hour. During a walk-through period, players may not wear protective equipment so no contact drills may be held. No conditioning activities may be held during a walkthrough period. A walk-through may not be held on a day when there are two practices being held. These sessions are designed to work on offensive and defensive schemes and techniques without being involved in contact work.