



South Australian Sports Institute

HEAT POLICY FOR SASI ATHLETES

Introduction

High intensity exercise in a hot environment, with the associated elevation of body temperature can lead to heat illness. Heat illness in sports presents as **Heat Exhaustion**- sometimes called Heat Syncope (fainting) - or the more severe **Heat Stroke**.

Heat Exhaustion is typically characterised by rapid pulse, dizziness / fainting, headache, nausea / vomiting, muscle cramps.

Heat Stroke presents with similar symptoms to Heat Exhaustion along with mental confusion, disorientation, collapse / loss of consciousness. Heat Stroke can rapidly progress to a potentially fatal situation. It is caused by a significant rise in the body core temperature (usually above 41°C).

In either situation, First Aid should consist of:

- Immediately ceasing exercise
- Lying the athlete down in a cool, shady environment
- Removing excess clothing from athlete
- Spraying the athlete with water and fanning (e.g. use towel to fan)
- Applying ice packs to the athlete's groins, armpits, neck
- Providing the athlete with a drink (only if fully conscious)

If the athlete does not recover rapidly, or is unconscious, seek immediate medical attention.

Prevention

Prevention of heat illness relies on maintaining the balance between the factors that increase the heat load on the athlete and factors that allow heat loss from the body.



Continuous endurance activities generate a greater heat load than intermittent efforts. For example, distance running is potentially more of a problem than stop-start team sports.

Hot, high humidity conditions (when it is difficult to evaporate sweat) are more dangerous than dry conditions.

If an athlete is dehydrated they are less able to produce sweat for body cooling and are therefore at higher risk.

Heat Stroke can occur in a well-hydrated athlete if the Heat Load is excessive.

Heat acclimatised, fit, healthy, well-hydrated athletes cope better with exercise in hot conditions. Unacclimatised, unfit, poorly hydrated athletes and athletes who have had a recent illness (e.g. virus, respiratory infection or "gastro") are particularly at risk when exercising in the heat.

SASI Policy

When the temperature is above **36°C** with high humidity (>**30%**), or the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) is >**28°C**, SASI Coaches must identify at-risk athletes and exclude them from vigorous training or competition.

For current Adelaide environmental and WBGT information visit -

www.bom.gov.au/products/IDS65004.shtml

For all other athletes, when these conditions prevail, SASI training sessions must be modified as follows:

- Avoid periods of long continuous activity
- Enforce rest periods every 15 minutes (ideally in the shade)
- Include regular consumption of fluids (every 10 – 15 minutes)
- Where possible consider rescheduling training to a cooler part of the day
- Where possible consider changing training to cooler venue.

It should be noted that the temperature, humidity and WBGT values mentioned above are only guidelines. Coaches are able to modify training at lesser environmental values if they consider it appropriate.

In more extreme conditions training and competition may have to be cancelled even for “non-risk” athletes.

Any athlete showing signs of distress when exercising under hot conditions must stop activity and the first-aid principles listed in the introduction should be applied.

In support of this policy SASI Program Management will provide Staff with an email alert when Adelaide’s environmental conditions are predicted to reach the “at-risk” range.

For further information about guidelines for exercising in hot conditions visit the following website:

<http://www.smasa.asn.au/Portals/3/Brochures/HOT%20WEATHER%20GUIDELINES%202016.pdf>