

Pre-season Practice Guidelines for Fall Sports

Intent: To provide pre-season acclimatization guidelines prior to the fall season for student athletes with the purpose of minimizing injury and enhancing the player's health, performance, and well-being.

Core Principles:

1. *Acclimatization Period:* It is recommended that the first three days of Board of Education approved practice will consist of no more than three (3) hours of practice time. For football, helmets may be worn on the first two days and shoulder pads may be added on the third day.
2. *Scrimmages:* A student/athlete shall not be permitted to participate in a scrimmage until he/she has completed six (6) days of practice for all fall sports.
3. *Rest Period:* It is recommended that teams may not practice for more than six (6) consecutive days. One 24 hour rest period must be included within a seven (7) day period.
4. *3 – 5 Practice Rule:* It is recommended the maximum allotted time per day for practice is 5 hours. A 5 hour practice day may not be followed by a practice day greater than 3 hours; therefore, practice days may follow a 3-5-3-5 format. "Walk-throughs" are permitted on any practice day.
5. *Recovery Period:* It is recommended that a minimum of a two (2) hour recovery period should be provided after any session of greater than 2 hours in length and a one (1) hour recovery period should be provided before a walk-through.
6. *Practice Prior to Approved Date:* In football, it is recommended that schools should not allow the use of full equipment for school sponsored practices prior to the NJSIAA official start of practice date. Reminder: The wearing of equipment and/or exercise during hot weather increases the risk of heat injury or illness.

Definitions:

Practice – the time a player engages in physical activity. It is recommended that any practice session be no greater than three (3) hours in length. Warm-up, stretching, conditioning, weight training and 'cool-down' periods are all considered practice. **Note:** Practice sessions may be divided while adhering to the time restrictions as described above in #4.

Example: 3 Hour Day: one 3 hr practice, or two 1-1/2 hr practices

5 Hour Day: one 3 hr practice and one 2 hr practice or

one 2-1/2 hr practice and one 2-1/2 hr practice

Walk-through – No protective equipment or strenuous activity permitted. Only balls and field markers (cones) may be used.

www.zunis.org: Visit this web site for further information on heat injury/illness as it pertains to the adjustment of practice times.