

FAQ's on IHSA Pre-Season Football Acclimatization Period

GENERAL

Q: Where can I find the daily schedule, including practice types, practice lengths and allowable equipment for the new acclimatization policy?

A: The daily schedule can be found by clicking [here](#)

Q: Who will enforce this policy?

A: IHSA member schools are self-governing and it is up to each school to make sure the policy is being properly implemented. It is highly recommended that the football staff and school administrators use the IHSA's acclimatization calendar (which includes date, practice types, practice lengths and allowable equipment) and confirm their schedule fits the requirements of the policy. If any school is unsure if their practice plan meets the requirements of the policy, they should send their practice plan to the IHSA for review.

Q: What if I believe a school is not abiding by the policy?

A: Contact the IHSA office.

Q: Does the acclimatization plan govern the regular-season?

A: The acclimatization period governs the initial 14 consecutive days of preseason practice for all football-playing student-athletes. After its completion, coaches are free to set their own daily practice schedules.

Q: Does the acclimatization plan govern varsity football only?

A: No. The acclimatization period governs all levels of football at IHSA member schools.

Q: What if a school is unable to hold the maximum hours of allowable practice time during the acclimatization period due to weather, school start date or other factors?

A: There are no issues with this, as the practice limitations are maximums for each day.

Q: Are the acclimatization rules applicable for schools with cooled indoor facilities?

A: There are no exceptions to these rules. Given the array of facilities and resources across the state, the committees felt a singular policy was the best measure for safety and fairness. More importantly, experts agree that it is vital for the players to be exposed to the outdoor heat so that they can properly acclimate to the conditions they will face in games.

Q: Are there any instances or circumstances where a student-athlete could be exempt from or not required to complete the heat acclimatization plan in its entirety?

A: No. All student-athletes should follow the 14 day heat acclimatization plan regardless of their conditioning program or status leading up to their first practice.

Q: If a player is injured or joins the team late and misses the first practice, are they automatically ineligible for the first game?

A: The policy allows for 12 days of practices within 14 dates (two Sunday rest days with no practices), thus a student-athlete must begin practicing by Friday (day 3 of the policy) to be eligible to play in the first contest.

Q: If a student-athlete participates in two fall sports, including football, i.e. a soccer player who kicks for the football team, do they have to complete the acclimatization plan?

A: Yes.

Q: Are there any other good resources on heat management and acclimatization available to coaches?

A: Yes. The IHSA has produced a heat acclimatization brochure, which can be viewed by clicking [here](#) and has been sent to all member schools. In addition, the NFHS offers two free online courses on [Heat Illness](#) and [Sports Nutrition](#) that are great resources for coaches, student-athletes and parents alike.

WEIGHT-LIFTING

Q: Can weight-lifting be conducted during the rest period following a practice?

A: No. Given that the exertion from weight-lifting raises the core temperature of the body, weight-lifting cannot be part of the rest period and any team weight-lifting done during the acclimatization period would count against the allotted practice time on that day.

Q: If a student-athlete has a weight-lifting class or weight-lifting as a part of a gym class during the school day, does that count against practice time or do they need to rest for a certain period of time before starting practice?

A: No. However, schools should educate their football players and Physical Education teachers on the IHSA policy and medical research behind it so they can adjust appropriately if necessary.

Q: On a three-hour practice day, a team holds its padded practice from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. The team then has a two-hour rest period from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., which includes film study and lunch. The team then conducts its walk-through from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. That evening, the school makes a weight-lifting and conditioning session available for athletes participating in winter and spring sports. Can football team members who also participate in winter or spring sports attend the conditioning/weight-lifting activities in the evening?

A: The acclimatization period does not limit athletes from participating in other activities outside of football, such as weight-lifting and conditioning. However, coaches should stress the importance of waiting two hours after the conclusion of any football activity (practice or walk-through) before participating in other activities, as well as the dangers of over-exertion during the time when the student-athletes' bodies are acclimatizing to the heat, equipment and contact of football.

WEATHER

Q: A team is conducting its three-hour padded practice from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. At 10:00 a.m., lightening forces the team to go indoors for a half hour. When they return to the field at 10:30 a.m., how much practice time do they have remaining?

A: A half hour.

Q: A team is conducting its three-hour padded practice from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. At 3:00 p.m., lightening forces them to go indoors. The coach decides to end the padded practice session for the day and the team has its rest period, watching film for two hours. The coach then takes the team outside for a one-hour walk-through. Is this legal?

A: Yes, the practice time allotments are maximums and do not have to be used in full. As long as the team conducts the two-hour rest period in between, they can hold a walk-through after a padded practice or vice versa.

Q: A team has a three-hour padded practice scheduled from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., but severe weather in the morning forces the coach to reschedule the practice from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Is this legal?

A: Yes, the team has an allotted amount of practice time during each day of the acclimatization period and can use it whenever it wishes.

Q: On Day 9 (a five-hour practice day) of the acclimatization period, a school holds two two-hour practices with a two-hour rest period in between the practices. On Day 10, a three-hour practice day by rule, no practices are held due to severe weather. When the team resumes practice the next day, should they base their schedule off of Day 10 (three-hour) or Day 11 (five-hour).

A: Teams cannot have five hours of practice on back-to-back days. Given that there was a day with no practice in between, they could conduct five hours of practice when they resume practice on Day 11.

WALK-THROUGHS & REST PERIOD

Q: What is allowable during the one-hour walk-through?

A: A walk-through cannot include any equipment, including a football or anything that is used to simulate a football (i.e. taped up towel), any pads, helmets, sleds, bags being held, etc. Conditioning cannot be a part of a walk-through. Coaches can walk players through blitzing schemes, blocking assignments, pass routes, etc.

Q: Can a team do anything football related during the two-hour rest period?

A: Yes. While the student-athletes cannot engage in any physical activities during the two-hour rest period, players can watch film, be engaged in playbook study, chalk talks and other learning activities.

Q: Can the walk-through be done prior to a padded practice?

A: The walk-through can occur before or after a padded practice, provided a two hour rest period is provided between the walk-through and practice, regardless of which order they occur.

Q: On a three-hour practice day, can a team practice in full pads for two hours, hold an hour walk-through, take a two hour break and then hold one more hour of practice with full pads?

A: No, the walkthrough and practice are separate entities and cannot be intermixed from a time perspective.

Q: A team's schedule for the day is a padded practice from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m., rest period from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and a walk-through from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. Midway through the morning practice, the coach decides to cancel the afternoon walk-through and conduct it during the final hour of practice, from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Is this legal?

A: There is nothing that would prevent a coach from restricting the use of equipment or contact during their padded practice, which would be the final hour of practice in this instance.

Q: On a five-hour practice day, can a team conduct a walk-through?

A: The walk-through is a separate entity from the practice and is not offered on the five-hour practice days. A coach can restrict the use of equipment and/or contact during their padded practice time, thus providing an environment similar to a walk-through, but which occurs during and counts against the allotted padded practice time for that day.

PRACTICE PLANS

Q: Can a three-hour practice day be split into multiple sessions, for example, two one and a half hour practices?

A: Yes, however, a team would have to have two hours of rest in between the two practice sessions.

Q: If a school is in session, can a team conduct its one-hour walk-through session prior to the start of school and then conduct a padded practice afterward?

A: Yes. The only requirement of the walk-through is that it be followed by a two-hour rest period before starting a padded practice. The school day would count as the rest period and the team would be set to have a padded practice after school.