



# OAKDALE PHOENIX NETBALL CLUB TRIALS EXTREME HEAT POLICY

## Introduction

Oakdale Phoenix Netball Club has a responsibility to protect the wellbeing of all individuals, including participants and officials throughout the trials process. Modification or cancellation of trials may be appropriate in situations of extreme heat. As a Club, we understand the importance of physical activity for good health but it is just as important that, when there extreme levels of heat, the risk of harm is minimised. In developing this Policy research has included:

- Sports Medicine Australia Hot Weather Guidelines
- Adelaide Indoor Sports centre Heat Policy

## Background Information

Sporting organisations need to be aware of the difficulty of settling “one size fits all” guidelines in this area. For normally healthy active people, the only dangers from heat illness are likely to arise from high intensity exercise. Most community sport does not reach this level for periods long enough to cause serious harm. However, 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**.

## Definitions

### Heat exhaustion

- Characterised by a high heart rate, dizziness, headache, loss of endurance/skill/confusion and nausea.
- The skin may still be cool/sweating, but there will be signs of developing vasoconstriction (eg, pale colour).
- The rectal temperature may be up to 40°C and the athlete may collapse on stopping activity.  
Note: Rectal temperature should only be measured by a doctor or nurse.

To avoid heat exhaustion, if people feel unwell during exercise they should immediately cease activity and rest. Further benefit comes if the rest is in a shaded area with some passing breeze (from a fan if necessary) and the person takes extra hydration. Misting or spraying with water can also help.

### Heat stroke

- Characteristics are similar to heat exhaustion but with a dry skin, confusion and collapse.
- Heat stroke may arise in an athlete who has not been identified as suffering from heat exhaustion and has persisted in further activity.
- Core temperature measured in the rectum is the only reliable diagnosis of a collapsed athlete to determine heat stroke.

This 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;
- 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. Important: heat exhaustion/stroke can still occur even in the presence of good hydration.

### 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, OPNC recommends that:

- athletes drink approximately 500 mls (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.
- after exercise replenish your fluid deficit to ensure that you are fully rehydrated, but not over-hydrated.
- refer to <http://www.smartplay.com.au> .

Points to consider:

- Even a small degree of dehydration will cause a decrease in performance.
- Participants are advised to take care not to over-hydrate. Drinking too much fluid can lead to a dangerous condition known as hyponatraemia (low blood sodium). Aim to drink enough to replace lost fluids, but not more than that.

## Factors to consider before cancelling or modifying a trial

When making a decision to cancel or modify a trial, Oakdale Phoenix Netball Club will take into consideration the following factors, for not only players, but also umpires, officials and volunteers. The following tables provide estimates of risk related to the weather and also guidelines to managing activity in order to minimise heat stress. (Taken from SMA Guidelines):

### Environmental Factors:

#### 1. Temperature - BOM

Ambient temperature is the most easily understood guide available, and is most useful on hot, dry days

Ambient temperature	Relative humidity	Risk of Heat Illness	<del>Possible m</del> Management for sustained physical activity. <a href="#">The Club and it's officials will ensure appropriate risk management is undertaken for all activities.</a>
15 - 20		Low	Heat illness can occur in distance running. Caution over-motivation.
21 - 25	Exceeds 70%	Low - moderate	Increase vigilance. Caution over-motivation.
26 – 30	Exceeds 60%	Moderate	Moderate early pre-season training. Reduce intensity and duration of play/training. Take more breaks
31 – 35	Exceeds 50%	High – very high	Uncomfortable for most people. Limit intensity, take more breaks. Limit duration to less than 60 minutes per session.
36 and above	Exceeds 30%	Extreme	Very stressful for most people. Postpone to a cooler conditions (or cooler part of the day) or cancellation.

N.B. It is important to watch for unusual “heatwave” conditions or variations from the average temperature for the time of year. This is one situation where there may be a greater danger of heat illness.

#### 2. Duration and intensity of an event

- The combination of extreme environmental conditions and sustained vigorous exercise is particularly hazardous for the athlete. The greater the intensity of the exercise, the greater the risk of heat related symptoms
- Player and official rotation may also be considered
- Reducing playing time and extending rest periods with opportunities to rehydrate during the event would help safeguard the health of participants.
- Provision of extra water will be considered
- A fan to enhance air movement would be beneficial

#### 3. Conduct of competition and training (hydration and interchange opportunities)

- OPNC may consider dividing trials into shorter playing periods to allow for extra breaks.
- OPNC may consider alternative trial times and venues during hot weather.
- Where possible, selectors will provide every player with five minutes rest to help reduce core temperatures.

#### 4. Time of Day

- The hottest part of the day (usually 11 am-3 pm) will be avoided.

#### 5. Local Environment

- If trials are outdoors it must be remembered that radiant heat from surfaces such as black asphalt or concrete can exacerbate hot conditions.
- An effectively air-conditioned indoor venue would be preferable.
- A hot indoor venue or an outside venue without shade cannot be considered an acceptable environment.
- Airflow should be considered, including fans in change rooms or appropriately placed.

### **Personal Factors**

#### Age and gender of participant

- **Female participants** may suffer more during exercise in the heat because of their greater percentage of body fat.
- **Young 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.
- Although children can acclimatise to exercise in the heat, they take longer to do so than adults.
- Coaches should be aware of this and limit training for non-acclimatised children during exposure to hot environments.

NB: Children tend to have a more “common sense” approach to heat illness than adults. They “listen to their bodies” more and will usually slow 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.***

#### Predisposed medical conditions

- It is important to know if athletes, umpires, officials or volunteers have a medical condition or are taking medication that may predispose them to heat illness.
- 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.
- Participants or officials who may be affected by drugs or alcohol may be at an extreme risk of heat illness if exercising in moderate to hot weather.

#### Other factors to consider

- OPNC will take preventative measures to minimise heat injuries, including the provision of shade, hats, appropriate sunscreen, spray bottles and drinking water.
- In situations where heat problems may be expected, an experienced medical practitioner will be present.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

[sma.org.au/resources-advice/policies-guidelines/hot-weather](http://sma.org.au/resources-advice/policies-guidelines/hot-weather)

[www.aisc.com.au](http://www.aisc.com.au)