

Football Practice Regulations

Definitions

- a. **Full Contact** – Contact which meets the parameters described in Live Action or Thud definitions below.
- b. **Live Action** – Contact at game speed where players execute full tackles at a competitive pace, taking players to the ground.
- c. **Thud** – Drills run at or up to full speed until contact which is above the waist. The tempo is competitive with no pre-determined winner, and the players are not tackling to the ground.
- d. **Practice** – The period of time a participant engages in a coach supervised, physical activity. Warm-up, stretching, and cool down activities are included as part of the 3-hour practice time. *All conditioning and weight room activities are considered part of practice regardless of the temperature of the location where these activities take place unless adequate rest and recovery occurs between the weight training/conditioning session and the subsequent practice. Schools should always consult a certified athletic trainer or other appropriate health care professional to help determine what would be considered adequate rest and recovery based on the rigor of the weight training and conditioning session and the physical condition of the athletes involved.*
- e. **Walk Through**- A teaching opportunity with the athletes not wearing protective equipment. It does not include any weight training, conditioning or other physically demanding activities.

Best Practices

- When possible, a certified athletic trainer should be present for practices and games.
- An Emergency Action Plan (EAP) should be developed and rehearsed. A customized emergency action plan can be developed at the following link: <http://www.anyonecansavealife.org/>
- Follow the TSSAA Heat Policy at all times. A cold water immersion tub or other method for rapid, onsite cooling should be available for all warm weather practices.

2019 Pre-Season Regulations

NFHS Weeks 1 and 2 (July 7th – July 20th)

- Single Practice Days Only (7 v 7 school vs school competition is not considered a practice)
- If a school chooses to practice, helmets are the only piece of equipment that may be worn.

NFHS Week 3 (July 21st – July 27th)

- Single Practice Days Only (7 v 7 school vs school competition is not considered a practice)
- Day 1: Helmets Only
- Day 2: Helmets Only
- Day 3: Helmets and Shoulder Pads Only (No pants or tights below the knee)
- Day 4: Helmets and Shoulder Pads Only (No pants or tights below the knee)
- Day 5: Helmets and Shoulder Pads Only (No pants or tights below the knee)

NFHS Week 4-6 (July 29th - August 17th)

- Full padded practices may begin for individuals who have participated in 2 days of helmets only and 3 days of helmets and shoulder pads.
- Practice time shall not exceed 3 hours in a single practice.
- Double practice days may begin, but shall not occur on consecutive days.
- If there are multiple practices on a single day, only one session per day should include full contact. The total practice time may not exceed 5 hours, with practices separated by at least three hours of rest in a cool environment. On single-practice days, 1 walk-through is permitted, separated from the practice by at least 3 hours of continuous rest. On double-practice days, walk-throughs are not permitted unless the time of the walk-through is counted towards the total practice time.
- If weather postpones a practice the practice may resume after conditions are deemed safe and the remainder of the allotted practice time may be completed.

Regular Season and Post Season Regulations

NFHS Week 7 and following (August 19th- End of Season)

- Full Contact shall be allowed no more than 3 practices per week.
- Full Contact in practice shall not last more than 30 minutes per day per group.
- Full Contact in practice shall not be permitted on 3 consecutive days .
- No player shall be permitted to participate in more than 8 quarters in one week, on the offensive or defensive side of the ball. Participation on special teams does not count toward the 8 quarter limitation. One quarter shall not be longer than 12 minutes for the purposes of this policy.

Fundamentals of Heat Acclimatization for Athletes

1. The majority of heat related deaths occur during the first few days of practice.
2. Athletes are 4 times more likely to suffer a heat related illness when practicing longer than 3 continuous hours.
3. Physical exertion and training activities should begin slowly and continue progressively. An athlete cannot be considered “conditioned” in a period of only 2 to 3 weeks.
4. Develop an Emergency Action Plan with clearly defined, written and practiced protocols. This should be in place before any emergency happens. A customized emergency action plan, can be developed at the following link: <http://www.anyonecansavealife.org/>
5. Keep each athlete’s individual level of conditioning and medical status in mind and adjust activity accordingly. These factors directly affect exertional heat illness risk.
6. Athletes must begin practices and training activities adequately hydrated.
7. Recognize early signs of distress and developing exertional heat illness, and promptly stop activity for affected players and treat accordingly. Do not delay first aid! Early signs may include:
 - Deterioration in Performance/showing signs of struggling
 - Pale or bright red flushing of the skin
 - Dizziness
 - Headache
8. Recognize more serious signs of exertional heat-related distress. Immediately stop activity and seek medical attention by activating the Emergency Medical System. Begin on-site rapid cooling immediately.
 - Severe fatigue
 - Stumbling
 - Vomiting
 - Collapse
 - Obvious behavioral changes and/or central nervous system problems such as confusion, loss of consciousness, seizures
9. With an increase in heat and humidity, especially if the heat and humidity level is a significant change from the previous few days:
 - Decrease intensity of the activity
 - Increase frequency/duration of rest breaks
 - Reduce uniform/equipment
 - Continue to closely monitor players in these changing conditions

Questions and Answers

Question:

School A offers weight lifting and conditioning during the school day. The weight training and conditioning period is 1 hour long. If School A's football players are participating in weight lifting and conditioning during the school day, does this count as part of their 3 hour practice total that they are permitted in the preseason?

Answer:

Weight Training and Conditioning must be considered as part of practice unless adequate rest and recovery occurs between the weight training/conditioning session and the subsequent practice.

Question:

What is considered adequate rest and recovery?

Answer:

A number of factors influence this. How strenuous was the first activity? Did it take place in an air conditioned environment? Have the students had the opportunity to rehydrate and refuel? Schools should always consult a certified athletic trainer or other appropriate health care professional to help determine what is considered adequate rest and recovery based on the rigor of the weight training and conditioning session and the physical condition of the athletes involved.

Question:

School A has freshman football scheduled during 1st block of the school day. Can these students practice on the field during the school day and then again after the school day concludes with the rest of the team?

Answer:

This would not be permissible on consecutive days during the preseason since multiple practices on consecutive days are no longer permitted. School A should consider practices which do not involve physical activity in the morning until the regular season starts as an alternative. This would be permissible during the regular season.

Question:

Our school participates in a 7 v 7 passing league during a time when the new regulations say single practice days only. Can we practice at 9 o'clock in the morning and then play a 7 v 7 game at 3 PM?

Answer:

This would be permissible. 7 v 7 school vs. school competition is not considered practice for the purposes of this policy. Schools with this schedule should always make sure athletes are getting adequate rest and recovery between a practice session and a 7 v 7 competition.