

WSA SOCCER

HOT WEATHER SAFETY POLICY

First Draft for Director Review

Outdoor Training & Competition | U4–U19

PURPOSE

Present a practical first look at a revised WSA hot-weather policy built around on-site Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT), age-specific safeguards, and separate Training Day and Game Day protocols.

KEY PROPOSAL

90°F WBGT = outdoor training stops for U12 & younger. Above 92°F WBGT = all outdoor WSA activity stops. U9–U19 game-day activity at 90–92°F may continue only under an Enhanced Heat Protocol.

1. Executive Summary

This draft proposes a revised WSA Soccer Hot Weather Safety Policy for U4–U19 outdoor activities. WBGT becomes the primary environmental measure. Training Day and Game Day procedures differ because WSA's ability to control and mitigate risk is materially different in those environments.

- Use on-site WBGT rather than ordinary air temperature or a weather-app “Feels Like” reading as the primary decision tool.
- Create five heat levels: Green, Yellow, Orange, Red and Black.
- Use more conservative training restrictions for younger athletes.
- Use a separate Game Day protocol only when enhanced medical coverage and centralized heat-mitigation measures are available.
- Monitor conditions before and during activity.
- Treat the chart as the maximum permissible activity; WSA may always choose a more conservative response.

2. Medical & Sports-Science Foundation

The framework is informed by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA), and Korey Stringer Institute (KSI). AAP's climatic heat-stress policy was reaffirmed in March 2025 and supports environmental monitoring, hydration, acclimatization, workload modification, recovery, treatment capability, and cancellation/rescheduling when conditions become unsafe.

IMPORTANT DISTINCTION

AAP, ACSM and NATA do not prescribe separate numeric WBGT cancellation thresholds for every soccer age group. The age-specific limits in this draft are proposed WSA operational safeguards and should receive medical/athletic-training review before final adoption.

3. Why Training Day and Game Day Protocols Differ

Heat is not less dangerous during competition. The proposed distinction is based on the risk-control environment. WSA can normally provide more centralized supervision, medical coverage and mandatory mitigation measures on game days than on training nights.

Factor	Training Day	Game Day
Medical coverage	Athletic trainer typically not on site	Athletic trainer/designated provider normally on site
Scale	Many teams and fields simultaneously	Known schedule; fewer simultaneous fields
Enforcement	Independent team sessions	Centralized event oversight
Recovery	Exposure may be continuous	Halftime, substitutions and hydration breaks
Resources	Harder to deploy uniformly	Water, shade, cooling and emergency resources centralized
Logistics	Training more readily moved/shortened	League play may involve substantial travel and commitments

Travel, expense and competitive significance never override athlete safety. They may support delay, relocation or modification rather than immediate cancellation when enhanced controls make continued competition permissible.

4. WBGT Monitoring Procedure

- About 30 minutes before activity: place the WBGT meter outdoors in conditions representative of athlete exposure.
- About 15 minutes before activity: record the official facility WBGT, determine the WSA level and communicate restrictions.
- During elevated heat: recheck approximately every 30 minutes.
- If conditions enter a more restrictive category, implement the new restrictions promptly.
- Coaches may make activity more restrictive; they may not make it less restrictive.

5. Proposed WSA Heat Safety Matrix

WBGT	LEVEL	TRAINING U4–U8	TRAINING U9–U12	TRAINING U13–U19	GAME DAY
<82°F	GREEN	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal
82–86.9°F	YELLOW	60 min max Break / 15 min	Break / 20 min	3+ breaks/hr	Play Enhanced hydration
87–89.9°F	ORANGE	45 min max No conditioning	60 min max 4 breaks/hr	90 min max 4 breaks/hr	Play Mandatory hydration
90–92°F	RED	STOP	STOP	60 min max 20 min rest/hr No conditioning	U4–U8 STOP U9–U19 Enhanced Protocol
>92°F	BLACK	STOP	STOP	STOP	STOP

SIMPLE CLUB RULE

90°F WBGT = U12 & younger stop outdoor training. Above 92°F WBGT = everyone stops outdoor activity.

6. Enhanced Heat Protocol — Game Day

For U9–U19 competition at 90.0–92.0°F WBGT, play may proceed only when WSA can provide all applicable enhanced controls. If those controls are unavailable, the more conservative Training Day standard should apply.

- Athletic trainer or designated qualified medical coverage on site.
- Mandatory hydration breaks coordinated with officials.
- Shade/cooling areas and immediate water access.
- Emergency cooling capability and an active Emergency Action Plan.
- Reduced unnecessary pregame warm-up exposure.
- Continued WBGT monitoring approximately every 30 minutes.
- Authority for medical/event leadership to delay, suspend or terminate play.

7. Training Day Detail

GREEN | Below 82°F

All ages: normal training; water readily available; normal monitoring.

YELLOW | 82.0–86.9°F

U4–U8: 60-minute maximum; water/rest every 15 minutes; ~4-minute breaks. U9–U12: water/rest every 20 minutes; ~4-minute breaks. U13–U19: minimum 3 hydration/rest breaks per hour.

ORANGE | 87.0–89.9°F

U4–U8: 45-minute maximum; break every 15 minutes; no fitness conditioning. U9–U12: 60-minute maximum; minimum 4 breaks/hour. U13–U19: 90-minute maximum; minimum 4 breaks/hour; reduce conditioning volume.

RED | 90.0–92.0°F

U4–U8 and U9–U12: NO OUTDOOR TRAINING. U13–U19: maximum 60 minutes; minimum 20 total minutes recovery/hour; no conditioning; immediate water access; shade/cooling strongly recommended.

BLACK | Above 92°F

ALL AGES: NO OUTDOOR TRAINING. Move indoors, delay, reschedule or cancel.

8. Game Day Detail

GREEN | Below 82°F

All ages: normal competition; water readily available.

YELLOW | 82.0–86.9°F

Competition permitted with enhanced hydration awareness; shade encouraged; medical/event staff monitor conditions.

ORANGE | 87.0–89.9°F

Competition permitted with mandatory hydration breaks, immediate water access, shade when practical, reduced unnecessary warm-up exposure and continued WBGT monitoring.

RED | 90.0–92.0°F

U4–U8: NO OUTDOOR COMPETITION. U9–U19: competition may proceed only under the Enhanced Heat Protocol. WSA leadership/medical personnel retain authority to delay or suspend play.

BLACK | Above 92°F

ALL AGES: NO OUTDOOR COMPETITION. Delay, relocate, reschedule, suspend or cancel.

9. Supporting Safety Standards

Heat acclimatization

Athletes should be progressively introduced to the environment, intensity, duration and volume of activity over approximately 10–14 days. Extra caution applies after vacation, illness/injury, indoor training or arrival from a cooler climate.

Hydration

Water must be readily available. Required breaks are minimums, not limits, and athletes should never be denied reasonable access to fluids.

Individual risk

Environmental thresholds do not guarantee individual safety. Illness, dehydration, poor acclimatization, inadequate recovery, medications, clothing/equipment and other factors can increase risk.

Artificial turf

On-site WBGT should be measured in conditions representative of athlete exposure. Air temperature alone should not determine safety on artificial surfaces.

Suspected exertional heat stroke

Altered mental status or collapse during strenuous activity in heat is a medical emergency. Stop activity, activate the Emergency Action Plan/EMS, and initiate rapid cooling according to established medical protocols and trained-provider direction.

10. Decision Authority

- Designated WSA leadership, facility/event leadership and qualified medical personnel may implement or increase restrictions.
- A coach may always make conditions more restrictive.
- A coach may never make conditions less restrictive than the applicable WSA level.
- The presence of an allowable WBGT reading does not require WSA to play or train.
- WSA may modify, delay, relocate, suspend or cancel whenever athlete safety warrants.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

THE CHART DOES NOT REQUIRE US TO PLAY. It establishes the maximum permissible activity under measured conditions. When conditions or athlete response warrant, WSA will choose the more conservative action.

11. Advanced Heat Protocol Exception - U15-U19 National Program

WSA may establish an Advanced Heat Protocol Exception for appropriately heat-acclimatized U15-U19 National Program athletes. The purpose is not to treat elite or college-bound athletes as inherently more heat tolerant. Rather, it recognizes documented heat acclimatization, older athlete status, and an enhanced risk-control environment when medical supervision, cooling, hydration, environmental monitoring, and work-to-rest controls are available.

Eligibility for the exception

- Athlete is U15-U19 and participating in the WSA National Program.
- Athlete has completed at least 14 days of progressive outdoor heat acclimatization in comparable summer conditions; six weeks of consistent Oklahoma summer training would ordinarily exceed this acclimatization period.
- Athlete is currently training consistently and has not had a significant interruption in heat exposure.
- Athlete is healthy that day, adequately hydrated, appropriately recovered, and has no individual circumstance requiring a more conservative restriction.
- Roster status alone does not qualify an athlete for the exception.

Conditions above the standard 92°F WBGT stop threshold

The standard WSA policy remains STOP above 92°F WBGT. Participation above that threshold for a qualifying U15-U19 National Program athlete would be permitted only under a separately approved Advanced Heat Protocol. The upper WBGT limit and work-to-rest ratio are intentionally left TBD in this Director draft pending review and approval by WSA's designated medical/athletic-training provider.

- On-site athletic trainer or other designated qualified medical provider.
- On-site WBGT measurement in conditions representative of athlete exposure, with readings repeated approximately every 20-30 minutes.
- Defined and medically approved work-to-rest ratio and maximum exposure duration.
- Mandatory shaded or cooled recovery periods and unrestricted hydration.
- No supplemental fitness conditioning.
- Immediate emergency cooling capability, including cold-water immersion when indicated by the Emergency Action Plan and medical protocol.
- Individual athlete screening and immediate removal for heat-illness symptoms, unusual behavior, loss of coordination, or abnormal performance deterioration.
- Medical/event leadership has unconditional authority to reduce, delay, suspend, or terminate activity.

Important: National Program status, competitive level, college-bound status, travel expense, or importance of a match shall never by themselves justify participation above the standard WSA heat threshold. Eligibility must be based on acclimatization and the required safety controls.

12. Director Discussion Before Adoption

- Confirm the proposed 90°F WBGT training stop for U12 & younger.
- Confirm the proposed 90°F WBGT game stop for U4–U8.
- Define credentials for “designated qualified medical coverage” on Red-level game days.
- Confirm WBGT equipment, placement, reading frequency, communication chain and recordkeeping.
- Ask WSA's medical/athletic-training partner to review the thresholds and emergency cooling language for Oklahoma conditions.
- Determine whether tournament/multi-game days require additional recovery standards.
- After approval, create a simplified website chart, coach field card and facility communication protocol.
- Determine whether WSA wishes to authorize an Advanced Heat Protocol Exception for qualified U15-U19 National Program athletes and ask the medical/athletic-training partner to establish the upper WBGT limit and work-to-rest requirements.

13. Reference Foundation

Source	Relevant Guidance	Website
American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)	Climatic Heat Stress and Exercising Children and Adolescents. Pediatrics 128(3): e741–e747. Reaffirmed March 2025.	publications.aap.org
American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM)	Exertional Heat Illness during Training and Competition; updated with an Expert Consensus Statement (2023).	acsm.org
National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA)	Position Statement: Exertional Heat Illnesses (2015; replaces 2002 statement).	nata.org
Korey Stringer Institute (University of Connecticut)	WBGT monitoring and regional heat-safety guidance.	koreystringer.institute.uconn.edu