**MHSAA Provides Heat Management Reminders in Advance of 2024 Fall Practices**

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A stretch of hot and humid days downstate to finish July provided another reminder of why acclimatization to weather conditions is essential as teams at Michigan High School Athletic Association schools prepare for their first fall practices this month.

Each year, the MHSAA provides information to its member schools to help them prepare for hot weather practice and game conditions during the late summer and early fall. Practices for all Fall 2024 sports – cross country, football, Lower Peninsula girls golf, boys soccer, Lower Peninsula girls swimming & diving, Lower Peninsula boys and Upper Peninsula girls tennis, and volleyball – may begin Monday, Aug. 12.

The “[Health & Safety](https://www.mhsaa.com/about/looking-general-resources/health-safety/heat-hydration-resources)” page of the MHSAA Website has links to several information sources, including the MHSAA preseason publication [*Heat Ways*](https://www.mhsaa.com/sites/default/files/Health%20Safety/heatways.pdf?time=1722355603293), which is available for download and includes valuable information on heat management in addition to requirements and resources regarding head injuries, sudden cardiac arrest and emergency action plans. Emergency action plans specific to sport and venue are a new requirement for schools beginning this fall season.

The first days of formal practices in hot weather should be more for heat acclimatization than the conditioning of athletes, and practices in such conditions need planning to become longer and more strenuous over a gradual progression of time. Schools also must consider moving practices to different locations or different times of day, or change practice plans to include different activities depending on the conditions. Furthermore, football practice rules allow for only helmets to be worn during the first two days, only shoulder pads to be added on the third and fourth days, and full pads to not be worn until the fifth day of team practice.

The MHSAA advises student-athletes to make sure to hydrate all day long – beginning before practice, continuing during and also after practice is done. Water and properly-formulated sports drinks are the best choices for hydration.

A number of member schools follow the MHSAA’s Model Policy for Managing Heat & Humidity, which while not mandated for member schools was adopted as a rule for MHSAA postseason competition in 2013. The plan directs schools to begin monitoring the heat index at the activity site once the air temperature reaches 80 degrees, and provides recommendations when the heat index reaches certain points, including ceasing activities when it rises above 104 degrees. (When the temperature is below 80 degrees, there is no combination of heat and humidity that will result in a need to curtail activity.) The model heat & humidity policy is outlined in a number of places on the MHSAA Website, including as part of *Heat Ways*.