

Table Tennis South Australia Inc.



Hot Weather Policy

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The health and well-being of all those involved in playing, coaching, officiating or administrating table tennis is a priority issue for Table Tennis SA Inc. (TTSA).

TTSA acknowledges that Heat Stress injury can occur but is preventable. TTSA will promote and encourage appropriate modified behaviour and in extreme situations will cancel events where it feels safety of participants is at serious risk.

1.2 Scope

This policy impacts all table tennis activity conducted by TTSA and Affiliates where activity is undertaken in an environment where the temperature is 36°C or higher or where the published forecast temperature at 7am on the day of the event is 36°C or higher. While not exhaustive, the scope of this policy includes;

- TTSA hosted national and major events,
- TTSA and Affiliate tournaments (sanctioned, open / closed and internal),
- TTSA and Affiliate competitions,
- TTSA and Affiliate coaching and training sessions, and
- Other scheduled or coordinated TTSA or Affiliate table tennis activity.

2. General Policy

Where the environment is 36 degree celcius (36°C) or greater in a non-air conditioned location used for table tennis activity, or such circumstances exist in an air conditioned environment for whatever reasons. If the above is triggered, the following shall occur:

- Cancel or reschedule the tournament, competition or other table tennis activity if the forecast temperature on the morning of the activity is advertised to be 36°C or higher.
- For the purpose of assessing the forecast temperature, the SA Bureau of Meteorology shall be the reference source in respect to the suburb / town location at which the table tennis activity is to be held.
- Cancel or reschedule tournaments, competitions and other table tennis activities if the temperature at the venue reaches or exceeds 36°C during the course of the activity for a 30 minute continuous period. In respect to tournaments, the Referee, or in the absence of a Referee, the Tournament Organiser shall be responsible for determining and implementing this requirement.
- TTSA and Affiliates will strategically place the "Beat the Heat" fact sheets and TTSA's Hot Weather Policy within table tennis venues.
- Table Tennis SA will ensure the Hot Weather Policy is available on the TTSA website and distributed to Affiliates and any update is circulated and published to the web in a timely manner.
- Organisers will ensure entry forms associated with sanctioned tournament are appropriately endorsed identifying the event is subject to the TTSA Hot Weather Policy and Guidelines and a copy can be obtained from the website.

2.1 Policy Application

2.1.1 TTSA hosted national and major events

Unless in contradiction of any TTA policy governing table tennis activity during hot weather, this policy will apply to any national event staged in South Australia. Similarly, this policy will apply to major events (eg Master's Games) unless in contradiction to the governing bodies policies.

2.1.2 TTSA and Affiliate tournaments (sanctioned, open / closed and internal)

Organisers should ensure athletes are made aware one way or another that a tournament will not be conducted where 1.3.1 applies at the geographical location at which the event is to be held. Similarly tournament organisers have a responsibility to monitor the temperature during the course of the activity in line with 1.3.2.

2.1.3 TTSA and Affiliate competitions

This policy shall apply to both TTSA and Affiliate conducted competitions in respect to cancelling, postponing or suspending play in line with 1.3.1.

It is recognised that competitions are generally staged in the evening when the temperature may have dropped compared to the forecast maximum temperature for the day. This variance needs to be managed as part of the rules of the competition, recognising however that 1.3.2 will automatically apply when appropriate.

2.1.4 TTSA and Affiliate coaching and training sessions

Coaches and organisers need to manage (re-schedule or cancel) coaching and training sessions in line with the requirements of this policy. Management shall be in a manner as agreed and communicated with the participants.

2.1.5 Other scheduled or coordinated table tennis activity

Where a scheduled or coordinated table tennis activity consists of a physical component, either the activity shall be postponed or cancelled or the nature of the activity shall be modified to remove the physical component. It is not intended that this policy impacts social events and similar (eg club barbecue).

2.2 Exclusions and Liability

This policy does not apply to sanctioned tournaments, competitions, coaching, training or other table tennis activity that is held within air conditioned venues and the environment is less than 36°C during the period of the activity.

Organisers of competitions in air conditioned venues are to make participants aware of the risks of playing in extreme temperatures and should draw participants attention to the TTSA Hot Weather Policy and Guidelines and ways in which to manage heat.

If a TTSA or Affiliate event is cancelled or rescheduled as a consequence of the application of this policy, TTSA, its Board, Members and servants will not be held liable for any associated impact and expense.

3. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every three (3) years.

Appendix A – Hot Weather Guidelines

Introduction

Vigorous exercise, such as table tennis, places some people at risk of heat illness, especially in hot weather. If untreated, heat illness can lead to the more serious and potentially life-threatening condition of heat stroke. By understanding the causes of heat illness health professionals, coaches, athletes and anyone involved in sport or physical activity can help prevent heat illness by using the advice provided in the Guidelines to minimise the risks promoted by Sports Medicine Australia.

Most of the advice involves simple rules of common sense. Listen to your body and stop or slow down if you feel unwell. This is particularly important for children. Make sure that you have access to cool drinking water, and take particular care in the hottest parts of the day or year.

Advice to tournament organisers

During summer months when staging tournaments, develop entry forms, event management and timings in a way which is not taxing but considerate of player health and well being. This may include not having round robin groups and additional events and providing relaxed timings and catering for 5 minute breaks.

Encourage athletes to take the maximum 1-minute rest period permitted between games.

Where athletes compete in 2 consecutive matches, introduce a rest period of up to 5 minutes between matches.

Prior to the commencement of play for the day, reinforce measures athletes should take to minimize the impact of heat exhaustion.

Advice to athletes

Drink sufficient water in the hours prior to playing sport and hydrate regularly during the course of the activity.

Maintain a good level of personal fitness in summer months.

In accordance with the rules of table tennis, make full use of the minute break between games of table tennis and the time-out rule. In accordance with this policy, seek to have a 5 minute break when required to play consecutive table tennis matches.

Advice to coaches

In addition to complying with this policy, when coordinating coaching and training sessions and alternative fitness activities, coaches should be familiar with individual player health data which may impact activity during hot weather.

During the summer months it is recommended coaches ensure alternative activities are planned should heat necessitate cancelling / postponing scheduled activity.

Other considerations

Athletes 15 years or younger and table tennis participants over 65 years should make themselves aware of the increased risks and in turn take extra precaution when playing table tennis in higher temperatures.

References

Sport Medicine Australia's fact sheet "Beat the Heat".