

## **Heat Index Guidelines for Youth Outdoor Sports**

Olathe Parks & Recreation has implemented the following guidelines to deal with extreme heat at all youth baseball/softball games and practices. It is designed to provide participants with a standard for safe play in situations of extreme heat.

The two values that the OPRD will take into account when modifying or canceling games/practices are air temperature and relative humidity. The combination of these two elements reflects the heat index. We will rely on the heat index reading that is updated hourly by the National Weather Service at the Olathe Executive Airport.

The OPRD has defined five heat index zones. These zones are based on recommended guidelines published by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) for participation in sports activities during periods of extreme heat. Because the heat index does not take into account wind and direct sunlight, two degrees will be added to the stated heat index on sunny and still days. Likewise, two degrees will be subtracted on cloudy and windy days.

### ***White Zone***

Heat index of 65-80 degrees. In this range, the participant is in very little danger from heat and no special measures will be taken by the OPRD.

### ***Yellow Zone***

Heat index of 81-98 degrees. In this range, coaches will be encouraged to take extra steps to protect their players by making sure they keep them hydrated and by encouraging frequent substitution during games and practices.

### ***Orange Zone***

Heat index of 99-105 degrees. In this range, the OPRD will implement the following at games: all measures taken in the Yellow Zone; catchers will be allowed to catch only three innings in succession. If it is a practice day, coaches are instructed to keep players well hydrated and to take frequent breaks.

### ***Red Zone***

Heat index ranging of 106 to 115 degrees. In this range, the OPRD will implement the following for games: all measures taken in the Yellow and Orange Zones; the length of games will be modified according to the schedule below.

- Baseball and softball grades K-2 – games will be reduced by 15 minutes
- Baseball grades 3-6 – games will be reduced by 20 minutes
- Soccer grades K-2 games will be reduced by 15 minutes
- Flag Football K-6 games will be reduced by 15 minutes

If it is a practice day, coaches are instructed to reduce the time of practice, take

frequent breaks and keep players well hydrated by having them drink water.

**Black Zone**

Heat index above 115. In this range, the OPRD will cancel all games and practices ***until the heat index returns to 115 or below***. Notification will be given through the web site and rainout line.

**Note** - During the course of the day, the heat index will rise and fall depending upon the time of day, amount of wind, cloud cover, etc. The above program modifications could also change throughout the course of the day, especially on a weekend. For example, a 1pm game on Saturday could be played under the Orange Zone guidelines and a 4pm game could be played under Red Zone guidelines. Coaches and parents will be informed of the appropriate zone of at the game fields.

These heat guidelines will be in effect for fall sports as well. Other outdoor activities such as tennis lessons, soccer camp, etc., will be modified by the instructor on site.

The above are merely guidelines and it is the responsibility of parents to make the ultimate decision as to the participation of their child in OPRD events when heat may be a factor, taking into consideration the age and physical condition of their child. Parents also have the ultimate responsibility to inform their child about the dangers of heat and need for protection, including sunscreen and proper hydration.