



HEAT and HYDRATION POLICY

Ridgewood Little Athletics Centre takes the welfare of our athletes very seriously and has established the following guidelines in relation to Heat and Hydration and safety of our athletes.

Although all care is taken by the Committee, Officials and Helpers, it is always the responsibility of the Athlete, or their Parent/Guardians in the case of younger children, to decide when participation in an event or competition is safe for that particular athlete. The following guidelines should assist in the process.

It is recommended that if a large increase in temperature is likely to occur, parents and officials should take extra care to ensure athletes are sufficiently hydrated and shade provided. It is recommended that extra care be taken of athletes who are greater at risk, like unfit or overweight, are exercising in high temperatures.

Education

All parents should educate their children on the importance of sun safety and how to be sun smart. A copy of this policy should be provided to each athlete and parent by the Clubs.

Attire

All athletes should be wearing sun safe attire at competition days and whilst exposed to the sun. Hats should be worn at all times except when competing. A site official may allow the wearing of hats during throwing events only during days of excessive heat.

All Committee members, Officials, Volunteers and Parents should be setting a sun smart example and should be wearing appropriate clothing, hats and sunglasses.

Sunscreen

Sunscreen should be used by all Athletes. Sunscreen should be provided by all clubs and located under the club tents, and by the Centre and located in a central position around the competition area. Sunscreen must be of high quality and meet Australian standards.

Shade

Shade tents should be provided at all Field events, Marshalling, Finish areas as well as other areas where athletes or officials will be waiting for long periods of time unprotected from the sun.

Each Club should provide adequate shade for Athletes when not competing at events.

Public Announcements

The event announcer should make regular public announcements to remind those at the event to keep drinking water, apply sunscreen and remain in the shade where possible.

Fluids

It is recommended that each athlete, official and helper take enough water with them when competing or officiating at an event. It is recommended to drink at least 7-8ml of fluid per Kg of body mass to reduce the risk of heat illness (about 500mls for 65kg person)

Water stations should be provided by all clubs and located under the club tent. Water should be cooler than ambient temperature.

Water, sports drinks and fruit juices should be made available at the centre canteen.

Where possible, additional water should be made available to allow participants to douse themselves and thereby assisting the cooling process (eg) spray bottles, hoses, buckets etc.

Postponement/Cancellation

It is recommended extreme caution is used where ambient temperatures exceed 40C for an extended period of time (more than 1 hour)

It is recommended the centre has a thermometer to measure the ambient temperature in a central position around the competition area. It should be in a well-ventilated area and not in direct sunlight.

Once the ambient temperature reaches 40C the time must be documented. If the ambient temperature remains above 40C for more than 1 hour then all events should be postponed until the ambient temperature falls below 40C, or all events cancelled for the remainder of the competition day if this is unlikely to occur.

The Arena Manager will make the final decision in regard to postponement or cancellation of any events.

The Arena Manager may also cancel or postpone any event if in his/her opinion poses a risk to the health or safety of athletes regardless of the temperature.

Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion

- High heart rate
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Loss of endurance/skill
- Confusion
- Nausea
- Pale Colour
- Athletes pass little urine, which is highly concentrated
- Cramps may be associated with dehydration
- The rectal temperature may be up to 40C and the athlete may collapse on stopping activity

If an Athlete exhibits signs of heat stress or heat exhaustion they should stop, drink more fluids and cool down. Remove the athletes from the field, lay them down in a cool place and give plenty of cool water. If an athlete is confused or unable to drink water – seek medical help immediately.

Heat Stroke

Severe dehydration may lead to heat stroke, which is potentially fatal and must be treated immediately by a medical practitioner. Athletes who keep participating when suffering from heat exhaustion may experience heat stroke. Heat stroke can still occur even if the athlete has been drinking plenty of fluid. It is important to cool the athlete as quickly as possible/

Heat Stroke symptoms include:

- Dry skin
- Confusion
- Collapsing

If an athlete is showing any symptoms of heat stroke take the following action:

- Call a Doctor or Ambulance immediately
- Remove from the field and lay the victim down in a cool place
- Give cool water to drink if conscious
- Cool the athlete by putting in a cool bath, shower, or under hose, applying wrapping ice packs to the groin and armpits or use wet towels
- Maximise airflow over the athlete through the use of a fan or fan them with towels