

FAW HOT WEATHER GUIDANCE

Guidance for managing football activity in hot weather





PURPOSE OF HOT WEATHER PROTOCOLS

Health and Safety Focus

Hot weather protocols prioritise protecting players, officials, and spectators from heat-related illnesses during elevated temperatures.

Proactive Risk Reduction

Protocols include scheduled cooling breaks and clear temperature thresholds to reduce heat stress proactively in matches.

Awareness and Response

FAW encourages coaches and officials to recognise early heat distress signs and respond promptly to ensure safety.

Ensuring Safe Play

Protocols support safe, continuous play with informed decisions on match modifications or postponements under extreme heat.





UNDERSTANDING THE KEY HEAT-RELATED RISKS

Heat Cramps Warning

Heat cramps are early signs of heat stress caused by fluid and electrolyte loss during heavy sweating.

Heat Exhaustion Symptoms

Heat exhaustion includes dizziness, nausea, headache, weakness, rapid pulse, and heavy sweating in athletes.

Heatstroke Emergency

Heatstroke occurs when body temperature exceeds 40°C causing confusion and loss of consciousness, needing urgent care.

Performance Impairment Risks

High body temperatures impair decision-making, reaction time, and endurance, increasing injury risk in players.



TEMPERATURE THRESHOLD CATEGORIES





TEMPERATURE THRESHOLDS

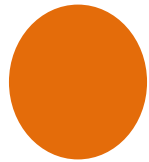
Who this is for

Club secretaries, coaches and matchday volunteers managing fixtures during hot weather.



≥30°C → High-Risk Zone

(Stop junior activity; adult activity only continues with strict controls)



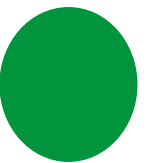
27–29°C → Elevated-Risk Zone

(Mandatory cooling breaks, reduced intensity, shade, monitoring)



24–26°C → Moderate-Risk Zone

(hydration focus, reduced load)



<24°C → Low-Risk Zone

(standard precautions)

Pre-match checklist

- Check Met Office alerts and local forecast.
- Confirm constant fresh water supply.
- Set up shade (gazebo, stands) and sunscreen station.
- Brief coaches/refs on cooling breaks and emergency actions.
- Communicate hydration reminders to teams and parents.

On the day

- Shorten warm-ups; increase rest intervals.
- Enforce cooling breaks; use rolling subs if allowed.
- Act early on signs of heat stress; remove affected players and begin cooling.
- Consider time-shifting kick-off (morning/evening).

IF IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT
PLAYER WELFARE OVERRIDES COMPETITION CONSIDERATIONS



LOW-RISK ZONE: BELOW 24°C

Minimal Heat-Related Risk

Below 24°C, football activities pose minimal heat illness risk, allowing normal play with basic precautions.

Precautionary Measures

Hydration reminders, appropriate clothing, and sun protection are essential even in low-risk temperature zones.

Attention to Junior Players

Junior players may face thermoregulation challenges in sunny or warm microclimates; shade and hydration help mitigate risks.

Consistent Safety Culture

Maintaining safe routines across all temperature conditions fosters a proactive safety culture in football clubs.





MODERATE-RISK ZONE: 24–26°C

Hydration and Sun Safety

Enhanced hydration and sunscreen application are essential during 24–26°C to prevent heat-related issues.

Workload and Break Management

Regular water breaks and workload adjustments help accommodate individual fitness and reduce heat strain risks.

Environmental Considerations

Artificial turf and enclosed venues can increase heat exposure, requiring extra vigilance from matchday staff.

Player Safety Awareness

Monitoring players for overheating signs is critical, especially for those recently ill or with heavy apparel.





ELEVATED RISK ZONE: 27–29°C

Mandatory Cooling Breaks

Cooling breaks in each half allow consistent rehydration and prevent dangerous heat buildup in players.

Warm-up and Substitution Adjustments

Shortened warm-ups and rolling substitutions reduce heat exposure and lower risk of heat stress.

Junior Football Safeguards

Junior matches require shorter playtime, longer rests, and immediate shaded area access to protect children.

Hydration and Protective Gear

Continuous access to water and light, breathable clothing supports player safety and cooling





HIGH-RISK ZONE: 30°C AND ABOVE

FACTOR	RISK LEVEL	REQUIRED ACTION
Temperature $\geq 30^{\circ}\text{C}$	High	Cancel or reschedule activity
Junior participation (U6-U17)	High sensitivity	No vigorous activity permitted
Adult participation	High risk	Only proceed with strict controls
Cooling breaks	Mandatory	Each Half

ENVIRONMENTAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL RISK MODIFIERS





IMPACT OF SUN EXPOSURE

TIME OF DAY	SUN INTENSITY	RECOMMENDED ACTION
11:00–15:00	High	Avoid scheduling junior fixtures
Morning/Evening	Moderate	Preferred scheduling window
Cloudy	Lower	Standard precautions



EFFECTS OF HUMIDITY

Humidity Limits Cooling

High humidity slows sweat evaporation, reducing the body's ability to cool effectively and increasing heat stress risks.

Heat-Related Symptoms

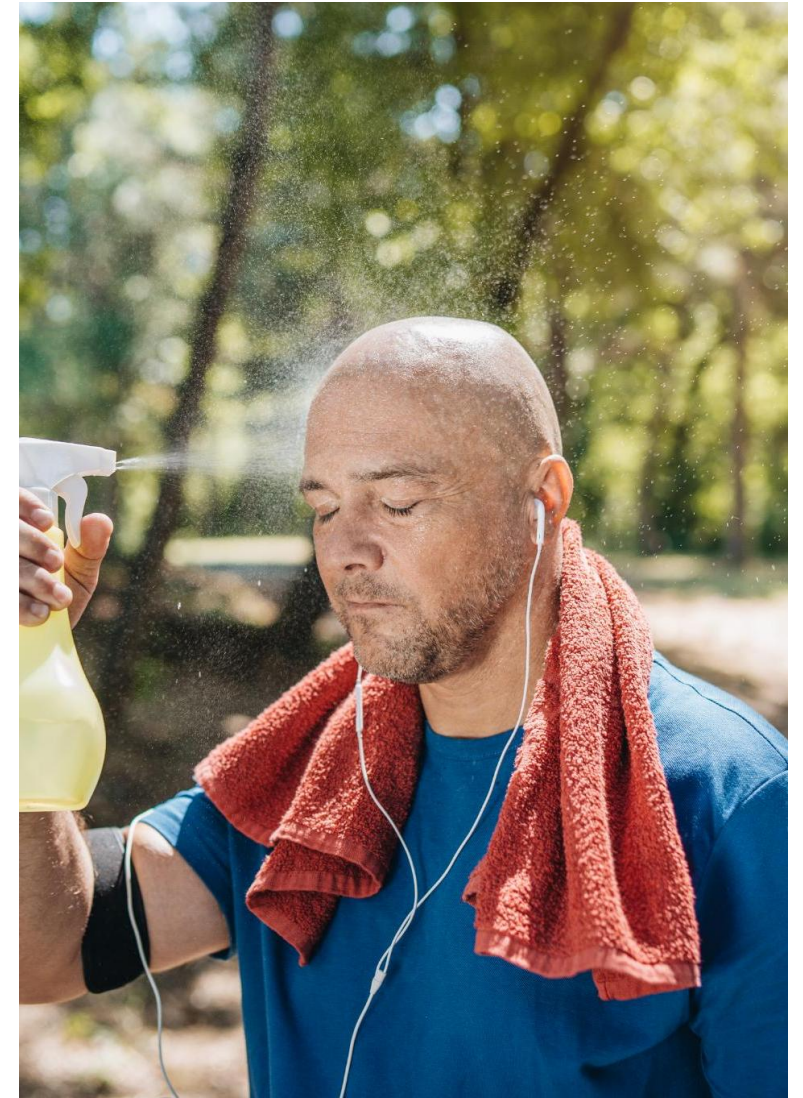
In humid conditions, heat symptoms like dizziness, headache, fatigue, and nausea develop faster even at moderate temperatures.

Coaching Adaptations

Coaches should reduce drill intensity, extend rest, increase hydration, and provide shade during high humidity to protect players.

Player Welfare Considerations

Humidity does not change formal temperature zones but is a key risk factor necessitating extra caution and monitoring.





VULNERABLE GROUPS

Heat Vulnerability Factors

Children and adults with medical or age-related conditions are more susceptible to heat stress due to physiological differences and medication effects.

Risk Groups in Football

Players fasting for religious reasons or returning from illness require special consideration to reduce heat-related risks during play.

Protective Measures

Coaches should adjust playtime, increase breaks, provide shade, and maintain communication to protect vulnerable players.

Enhanced Monitoring

Using heat spotters and checklists ensures proactive monitoring to safeguard all players from heat stress.





VULNERABLE GROUPS

- Not all vulnerabilities are immediately visible or disclosed. Monitoring should remain dynamic and based on observation, rather than strictly adhering to guidance thresholds alone.
- Professional judgement and active supervision remain essential, particularly in circumstances where a child may have an undisclosed medical condition or other vulnerability. For example, children experiencing neglect or inconsistent care (e.g. inadequate nutrition or hydration at home) may struggle more significantly in heat, even if there is no known medical condition.
- The CPSU highlights that examples of neglect can include repeatedly failing to ensure children are safe, including exposing children to undue heat or extreme weather without ensuring adequate hydration or protection.

Resource: [Child abuse in sports settings](#)



MATCH DAY

DECISION MAKING FRAMEWORK





OPERATIONAL THRESHOLD ACTIONS

High-Risk Temperature Actions

At **30°C** and above, junior football ceases and adult matches postpone unless heat mitigation is ensured to prevent heat illness.

Elevated-Risk Measures

Between **27–29°C**, activities continue with cooling breaks, shade, hydration, and close monitoring by staff for safety.

Moderate-Risk Precautions

From **24–26°C**, normal activities proceed with emphasis on hydration, sun protection, and ongoing monitoring for welfare.

Low-Risk Conditions

Temperatures below **24°C** allow normal football operations without additional heat-related precautions.





STEPS IN DECISION MAKING WORKFLOW

Temperature Assessment

Check forecast and actual pitch-side temperature upon arrival for accurate heat management.

Temperature Categorisation

Categorise temperature into ambient zones to determine appropriate safety measures.

Safety Measures Application

Apply required actions like cooling breaks or fixture cancellations based on temperature zones.

Risk Evaluation and Communication

Assess risk modifiers and communicate decisions to officials, coaches, players, and parents.



CLUB LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION





RESPONSIBILITIES OF CLUBS AND COACHES

Heat-Risk Assessment

Clubs should complete formal heat-risk assessments before the season to identify hazards and plan mitigation strategies.

Temperature Monitoring

Designated individuals should monitor temperatures on matchdays to ensure safety measures are enforced promptly.

Facility Preparedness

Facilities need accessible drinking water, shaded areas, and emergency equipment to protect participants from heat.

Communication and Support

Clubs should rehearse communication templates and monitor vulnerable individuals for tailored heat-related support.



SUMMARY & SAFETY CULTURE





EMBEDDING HEAT SAFETY ACROSS THE FAW

Reinforcing Heat Safety Framework

Consistent application of ambient temperature guidelines across all FAW levels strengthens heat safety culture.

Role of Coaches and Referees

Coaches and referees should model best practices by strictly applying heat safety rules despite competitive pressures.

Normalising Heat Safety Behaviours

Planned cooling breaks, hydration, sunscreen use, and monitoring vulnerable players encourage a sustainable safety mindset.

Enhancing Stakeholder Acceptance

Consistent messages reduce confusion and reinforce player welfare as FAW's top priority in heat management.

