

EXTREME WEATHER POLICY



INTRODUCTION

This Policy relates to tennis tournaments, competitions and events conducted by or on behalf of Tennis Australia, Member Associations, affiliated organisations, member affiliated organisations, regional associations and affiliated clubs (referred herein as Australian Tennis Organisations or ATOs).

The policy is designed to protect competitive tennis players from injury and illness that may result by playing tennis in extreme weather conditions. The policy recognises that all players can be at risk although children can be at greater risk in some instances especially heat stress.

Extreme weather [heat, lightning, wind and as a by-product smoke] can pose a health risk. Although the risk of heatstroke in tennis is low, playing in hot and humid conditions in particular can impair the body's ability to lose heat. Children normally self-regulate their exercise intensity in hot conditions so the greatest risk is when they are required to continue playing when their brain is telling them to stop. Older players in particular those with specific illnesses i.e. diabetes, heart disease may also be at increased risk. Finally wheelchair players often have impaired temperature regulation and specific provisions will apply to this group.

Competition/Tournament and event organisers have a duty of care to players, officials and other tennis participants, which may include regularly monitoring environmental and playing conditions and to take action to minimise the risk of heat stress or threat of illness or injury to players, officials and other tennis participants.

Extreme weather may be defined as including weather that threatens the immediate or long-term safety of individuals, as a result of rain, lightening, wind, heat or other unusual or unpredictable weather conditions.

In extreme weather conditions officials and administrators in charge of tennis events may decide to modify the schedule of relevant tennis events to protect players, officials and other tennis participants from exposure to the elements or physical stress. There are also a number of other pro-active and preventative measures that can be taken which are mentioned later in this document.

Policy Aims

- To protect the health, safety and wellbeing of all who participate in the activities of ATOs;
- To ensure that venues are a safe place to play, spectate and officiate as far as is reasonably practicable; and
- Provide guidance to Tournament, Event and Competition organisers regarding the effective management of extreme weather conditions.

Scope

This policy applies to all Australian Tennis Organisations (ATO) as defined.

Definitions

"Australian Tennis Organisation" (ATO) refers to Tennis Australia, Member Associations, Affiliated Organisations, Member Affiliated Organisations, Regional Associations and Affiliated Clubs, as further defined in the Tennis Australia Member Protection By-Law.

"Tennis Australia" (TA) refers to Tennis Australia Limited, which is the governing body for tennis in Australia

"Weekly Competition" refers to organised tennis competition which occurs over a series of weeks on a regular basis

"Tournament" refers to a sanctioned championship, tournament, team event or challenge match.

"Official" has the meaning given in the Tennis Australia Member Protection By-Law, and includes a Referee, Assistant Referee, Court Supervisor, Chair Umpire, Linesperson, Junior Coordinator or other Club/Association Official.

"Event" refers to a specific Tennis event, which may be held on 1 day or over a number of days i.e. Hot Shot programs.

"BOM" is the Bureau of Meteorology in the relevant State or Territory.

POLICY

Officials and administrators responsible for conducting and managing tennis events must closely and regularly monitor BOM weather forecasts and seek to comply with the following extreme weather guidelines when conducting or managing extreme weather at Tournaments, Events and Competitions [including Weekly Competitions].

1. EXTREME HEAT

The management of extreme heat at Tournaments, Events and Competitions [including Weekly Competitions] is vital to the health, safety and welfare of players. Appendix 1 (page 5) outlines the requirements and procedures for the effective management of these events by Officials and Administrators responsible for conducting and managing tennis events.

2. WET WEATHER

- a) Relevant Officials (or team captains) responsible for conducting and managing tennis events must assess the situation ensuring the safety of players and officials.
- b) If it is raining, play may be discontinued for a period of time and conditions reassessed to determine whether play should continue
- c) Relevant officials (or team captains) responsible for conducting and managing tennis events must take the necessary steps to ensure that the court surface and surrounds are safe for play. It is essential that the relevant people inspect each match court [including lines and surrounds] to determine its suitability for play before any matches or activities are commenced or resumed.

3. LIGHTNING

- a) When thunderstorms threaten, the relevant Officials responsible for conducting and managing tennis events must assess the situation ensuring the safety of players, officials and spectators. Generally speaking when an individual can see lightning and/or hear thunder he/she is already at risk.
- b) Relevant Officials responsible for conducting and managing tennis events must ensure that all players, officials and spectators where possible are inside a safe shelter during a thunderstorm.¹

4. HIGH WINDS

High winds have the potential to create dangerous conditions for players, spectators and officials. Where these winds create unreasonable risks within the court enclosure or on-site play may need to be suspended by relevant Officials responsible for conducting and managing tennis events. This may include on court furniture or fixtures disturbed, fences damaged, items being blown onto court or players health threatened by the force of the wind.

5. SMOKE

Smoke is a by-product of a number of other extreme conditions including weather and can create a possible risk for people with certain conditions i.e. asthma, heart conditions. Relevant Officials responsible for managing and conducting tennis events, tournaments and competitions must be aware of these extreme conditions and take necessary steps to suspend play in the case of a significant potential risk.

¹ Lightening Facts

- All thunderstorms produce lightning and are dangerous
- Any time thunder is heard, the thunderstorm is close enough to pose an immediate lightning threat to your location
- When thunderstorms are in the area but not overhead, the lightning threat can still exist even if it is sunny overhead, not raining, or when clear sky is visible

The 30 – 30 rule lightening

By the time the flash-to-bang count approaches 30 seconds – all individuals should already be inside a safe shelter.

Wait at least 30 minutes after the last sound (thunder) or observation of lightning and ensure conditions are completely safe before leaving shelter to resume activities. Each time lightning is observed or thunder is heard the 30 minutes clock should be re-started.

POLICY ACTIVATION

Once this Policy is invoked under paragraphs 1 to 6 above, the conditions must be re-evaluated by Relevant Officials responsible for conducting and managing tennis events every 30 minutes, and :-

- a) Where play is suspended, Tournament Directors must ensure that players involved in suspended matches or in the next round of scheduled matches do not leave the venue without permission of the Tournament Director.
- b) Adequate shaded areas should be provided at all venues.
- c) Provide adequate shelter in case of rain and thunderstorms.
- d) Cool and fresh drinking water should be made available at all venues.
- e) If possible showers should be made available at venues.
- f) Ice should be made available at all venues for heat stress emergencies.
- g) Tournaments, competitions and events should have access to a person with a current Level II First Aid Certificate and suitable first aid facilities.

GENERAL

Where weather or other conditions threaten the immediate safety of the players, spectators, officials or any other persons on the tournament/competition or event site, the Relevant Officials responsible for conducting and managing tennis events may suspend or postpone the match(es) until such time that in his/her opinion the threat to safety is no longer evident.

- a) When play is suspended, players may consult with support personnel i.e. physiotherapist.
- b) Considerations, which must be taken into account when determining the level of risk for an average person involved in continuous strenuous activity in high temperatures, are listed below. Individual persons will be affected differently by the environmental conditions depending on their:
 - i. Fitness level
 - ii. Athletic ability
 - iii. Age
 - iv. Gender
 - v. Any predisposed medical conditions; and
 - vi. Level of acclimatisation

PREVENTION OF HEAT STRESS

Relevant Officials responsible for conducting and managing tennis events must observe the following guidelines.

Players will often find playing in hot conditions uncomfortable/unpleasant but most will recover if allowed to lie down in a cool environment with their legs elevated to restore optimal blood flow to the heart and brain.

Tournaments/Competitions and Events should aim to avoid the hottest part of the day (usually 12 to 5 pm). Scheduling events outside this time should be a consideration throughout any summer competition, tournament training or event regardless of the specific temperature.

'BEAT THE HEAT' USING THE FOLLOWING MEASURES

WHAT TO WEAR

- Wear light and loose fitting clothing – light in both colour and weight
- Wear a hat, cap or visor – a broad brimmed hat is preferred
- Wear a 30+ sunscreen to prevent skin damage and skin cancer
- Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes

DRINKING GUIDELINES

- Ensure all players have free unrestricted access to cool drinking water
- Allow the individual to determine how much and how often they drink and ensure young players are encouraged to drink.
- If playing for more than one hour, a sports drink with around 6% concentration may be used to provide carbohydrates and energy.

SYMPTOMS ASSOCIATED WITH EXERCISE IN THE HEAT

- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Headache
- Confusion
- Light-headedness

If these symptoms present, take the individual out of the heat and lie them down with their legs elevated. (Seek medical treatment if symptoms do not improve within 5-10 minutes).

APPENDIX 1 - SCHEDULE OF REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXTREME HEAT

1. TOURNAMENT PLAY

The following outlines the minimum requirements, which will determine the activation of this policy in relation to extreme heat at tournaments. It also takes into account the varying climate impacts across Australia.

- a. For Players competing in 16 and under tournaments -
 - i. Where the WBGT is 30 C or greater -
 - I. Reduction of scoring formats to either a match tie break (10 point) at one set all or an 8 game pro set (standard tie break at 8 games all). "No-Ad" scoring may also be utilised. This may be introduced for the entire tournament as approved by the relevant MA, or determined on a daily basis by the Tournament Director and Referee.
 - II. At certain tournaments as approved by the Sanctioning body a 10 minute break between the second and third sets, in a best of three sets match may be provided as an alternative to format reductions.
 - ii. All play must be suspended (on completion of the current game) and no further matches are to commence if;
 - I. The WBGT is 34 C or greater or
 - II. The Ambient Temperature is 36 C or greater
- b. For players competing in tournaments for players over the age of 16 the following applies
 - i. Where the WBGT is 30 C or greater -
 - I. Reduction of scoring formats to either a match tie break (10 point) at one set all or an 8 game pro set (standard tie break at 8 games all). "No-Ad" scoring may also be utilised. This may be introduced for the entire tournament as approved by the relevant MA, or determined on a daily basis by the Tournament Director and Referee.
 - II. Alternatively, a 10 minute break between the second and third sets, in a best of three sets match must be provided.
 - ii. All play must be suspended (on completion of the current game) and no further matches are to commence if;
 - I. The WBGT is 34 C or greater or
 - II. The Ambient Temperature is 38 C or greater
- c. For players competing in Seniors tournaments in the over 60[Super Senior] categories
 - i. Where the WBGT is 30 C or greater –
 - I. Reduction of scoring formats to either a match tie break (10 point) at one set all or an 8 game pro set [standard tie break at 8 games all]. "No-Ad" scoring may also be utilised. This may be introduced for the entire tournament as approved by the relevant ATO, or determined on a daily basis.
 - II. Alternatively, a 10 minute break between the second and third sets, in a best of three sets match must be provided.
 - ii. All play must be suspended (on completion of the current game) and no further matches are to commence if;
 - I. The WBGT is 34 C or greater or
 - II. The Ambient Temperature is 36 C or greater

- d. For players competing in Wheelchair tournaments –
 - i. Where the WBGT is 28 C or greater—
 - I. Reduction of scoring formats to either a match tie break [10 point] at one set all or an 8 game pro set [standard tie break at 8 games all]. “No-Ad” scoring may also be utilised. This may be introduced for the entire tournament as approved by the relevant ATO, or determined on a daily basis.
 - II. Alternatively a 15 minute break between the second and third sets, in a best of three sets match must be provided.
 - ii. All play must be suspended [on completion of the current game] and no further matches are to commence if;
 - I. The WBGT is 33 C or greater or
 - II. The Ambient Temperature is 35 C or greater

2. COMPETITION PLAY or EVENTS

a. **Junior Competition or Events involving players under 16 years of age.**

The competition/event provider will ensure that all Clubs are aware of this policy and via their by-laws enable consistent application of the following procedure-

- i. Where the forecasted temperature determined 1 hour prior to the scheduled start of play for the relevant Association area [or specific geographical location] is a WBGT (as determined via the BOM website) of 34 C or greater or an Ambient Temperature (as determined via the BOM website) of 36 C or greater, play for the day will be cancelled and communicated as broadly as possible to all clubs and participants.
- ii. Where, during the competition/event the WBGT is identified as 34 C or greater or the Ambient Temperature 36 C or greater play must be suspended (on completion of the current game). If these conditions continue for 60 minutes play will be cancelled. This decision will be determined by the relevant Official using the information sources mentioned above.
- iii. Note: the competition/event provider may choose to use an alternative consistent information provider i.e. local media.

b. **Open Competition or Events**

The competition provider will ensure that all Clubs are aware of this policy and via their by-laws enable consistent application of the following procedure –

- i. Where the forecasted temperature determined 1 hour prior to the scheduled start of play for the relevant Association area [or specific geographical location] is a WBGT (as determined via the BOM website) of 34 C or greater or an Ambient Temperature (as determined via the BOM website) of 38 C or greater, play for the day will be cancelled and communicated as broadly as possible to clubs and participants.
- ii. Where, during the competition/event the WBGT is identified as 34 C or greater or the Ambient Temperature 38 C or greater play must be suspended (on completion of the current game). If these conditions continue for 60 minutes play will be cancelled. This decision will be determined by a relevant Club Official or by the team captains.

NOTE: the competition/event provider may choose to use an alternative consistent information provider i.e. local media.

BOM

ATO's should use the information available from the BOM Website or other consistent sources to determine either the Ambient Temperature or WBGT. The BOM produces ambient and WBGT readings for many locations in Australia. For WBGT measurements please use the Thermal Comfort Observations which are available on the website for all States/Territories utilising the "shade" measurement.

REQUIREMENTS OF TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS

Extreme Heat

- a) Relevant Officials must have access to accurate information via the appropriate BOM website to determine which action to take during the event.
- b) Once the Extreme Heat Policy is invoked, the Relevant Officials responsible for conducting and managing tennis events must ensure that the minimum rest time between matches is one hour. Where a player's first match lasted in excess of 1.5 hours, the minimum break between matches must be extended to 1.5 hours.
- c) Promote awareness of the seriousness of heat stress and the steps that can be taken to reduce the danger by displaying recommendations included in this policy.