

Hamilton North FC

Weather Policy

Inclement weather can unfortunately interrupt play. This policy describes when games will be suspended, cancelled, and rescheduled as well as who is responsible to make those decisions.

When we don't play

Soccer is a sport that is played rain or shine. However there are a few situations where we do not play. Besides the listed exceptions below, games will be played.

1. Severe Storms
2. Fields are unplayable due to inclement weather (saturated from rain or snow)
3. Raining when it is below 35 degrees.
4. Heat index over 105 degrees.

Clearing the fields due to Weather

If a severe storm approaches the playing area, the safety of the players is the number one priority of coaches and referees, and may require that the game be suspended while shelter is sought. In the event the game is suspended, ALL participants (players, coaches, referees, and spectators) MUST clear the field immediately and move into their cars or other permanent shelter until it is safe to return to the field.

Lightning procedures

1. If lightning is within five miles, with or without hearing thunder, the game(s) or practice(s) should be suspended and shelter sought. A rough guideline is to **measure the time between the lightning flash and hearing the corresponding thunder. If it is 30 seconds or less, seek shelter.** It may not be possible to determine which lightning strike generated which roll of thunder. A simple rule: **If you can see it or hear it, clear it!**
2. At the point that lightning is seen or thunder heard, a 30 minute timer will be set. Once the 30 minutes expire and the area deems safe, play may resume.
3. If lightning or thunder is present during the 30 minute interval, a new 30 minutes will be set. Play can only resume when there has been 30 minutes without lightning or thunder.
4. Hamilton North FC recommends that participants seek immediate shelter in their automobiles or a designated severe weather shelter, if there is one nearby. Smaller, open structures, tents, trees, isolated areas, etc, should be avoided. Cars, with windows rolled up or buses, can provide good shelter. Avoid contact with metal or other conducting materials to the outside surfaces. Do not stay in open, unprotected areas.
5. For recreation games, U6, U8, U10 commissioners will decide the plan of action and report to the coaches to relay to their player's responsible parties.
6. Communication of fields being closed will be via email, posting on the website of the field status, as well as the coach of the team affected.

Game Day Decisions

Games that need to be postponed due to poor weather conditions are decided by referees, coaches, and/or club administrators depending on the particular situation.

Games in Progress

Games that are in progress will be decided by referees with the help of coaches and other game officials. Ultimately, the center referee will make the decision. Depending on the particular situation (weather radar, severity of storm, time left in game, time of day, score) the referee may choose to either postpone the game or cancel it. Decisions are to be made by the center referee in order to ensure players and spectators are safe.

If it is bad weather conditions are expected, game officials and coaches should discuss before the game starts what the procedures will be in case inclement weather occurs.

Prior to Game Start

In some cases the fields are not safe to play on or are in such poor condition due to the weather, that players should not be on the field. In these cases, a club administrator of the hosting field may choose to close the fields. At this point, the league may cancel the game or try to find an alternate field that is open.

Field status for HNFC fields are listed on the www.hamiltonnorthfc.com website and is intended to be updated by 3pm each day. If the date/time has not been updated, then the status of the fields have not changed. If weather conditions change after 3PM, an email and/or SMS text message will also be sent to HNFC members letting them know the status of the fields. The HNFC Field Commissioner will determine if the fields are safe for playing and foot traffic for spectators, strollers and wheelchairs are acceptable around the fields.

Travel and Rec Plus Procedures

The same procedures listed above apply to travel and rec plus leagues with the following modifications:

1. If fields are closed by the club, it will be reported to the league commissioners who will in turn contact the referees.
2. The league will first look for an alternative location to play the game on that same day. If there are no other options, the league will attempt to reschedule the game.
3. An email will be sent to all members of fields closed and games cancelled if deemed so.
4. If fields are OPEN two hours before game time and rain is present or coming, it is up to the center referee of that particular game to cancel or suspend the game. No coach can cancel a game. Players, coaches, and spectators will have to wait for the referee to make the final decision as to play, suspend, or cancel the game.

Weather:

Severe Storms

Severe storms can produce high winds, heavy rain, hail, lightning, thunder and/or tornados. High winds can create problems by dust and debris being in the air or blowing over objects. Heavy rain can create hazardous field conditions or lead to flash flooding. Hail can cause injury. Lightning and thunder is discussed separately below. Tornados are obvious dangers of any severe storm. Use common sense and seek shelter as appropriate.

Lightning is the second leading cause of storm-related deaths (flooding is first). Lightning can strike up to 10 miles outside of a thunderstorm, literally a bolt from the blue. The danger from lightning can persist for 20-30 minutes or more after a thunderstorm has passed. The National Weather Service does not issue watches or warnings for lightning by itself. However, the National Weather Service does advise that if you see a lightning bolt and hear the thunder in 30 seconds or less, you seek shelter and wait 30 minutes before resuming outdoor activity. If a person can hear thunder, or see lightning, the danger already is present. A clear, sunny sky overhead with storm clouds nearby can still be dangerous.

Hot Weather

Heat is a problem when it prevents the body from cooling itself. The hotter the body gets, the more likely it is to increase fatigue levels, develop cramps and increase the possibility of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. The hotter and more humid the weather, the faster these problems can develop. Temperatures as low as 65 degrees, with a relative humidity of 100%, can be serious.

1. A heat index chart should be given to every coach and referee (www.nws.noaa.gov)
2. Games need to be adjusted as the heat index rises:
 - a. Mandatory water breaks
 - b. Go to quarters
 - c. Shorten the games
3. Provide training to coaches to teach the signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Club administrators and tournament officials are responsible for monitoring the heat index (by weather radio, online or the Weather Channel) and keeping the participating teams and game officials informed of the heat index. Coaches are encouraged to also monitor the conditions. The following are recommended when there is a possibility of dangerous high heat index:

Heat Index	Recommendations
Up to 89°	Normal Play

90° - 99°	Mandatory two-minute water breaks per half with running time. Each half shortened by five minutes.
100° - 105°	Mandatory two-minute water breaks per half with running time. Each half shortened by ten minutes.
105°+	Suspend Play

For further information, please check the NOAA website for additional information in regards to how temperature and humidity combine to make it feel hotter.

Special Heat Rules for Soccer

If the heat index exceeds 95 degrees, the practice or game is immediately suspended. If the National Weather Service issues a heat index warning that will exceed 95 degrees then Coaches and Parents and/or legal guardians should also listen for heat warnings and take appropriate action.

Cold Weather

For fall play, cold becomes a factor. Players should be allowed to dress in appropriate clothing. Field conditions will be affected by freezing rain, sleet and snow. The ground may become frozen and be unsafe for play. Temperature means either ambient (still air) or wind chill index. Check weather radio frequently for temperature and weather conditions.

Cold Index	Recommendations
46° and higher	No Change
45° and lower	<p>Allowable Additional Clothing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Layered beneath uniform (for example) 2. - <i>long sleeves</i> 3. - <i>long Pants</i> 4. - <i>additional socks</i> 5. Gloves or mittens 6. Stocking caps without straps 7. Sweat pants or shirts [Hamilton North FC Rule 7.4.1.e] 8. <i>In the case of extremely cold weather, may be worn underneath the uniform, provided the entire team uses the same color sweats</i> 9. Jackets 10. <i>may be worn under the uniform so that referees can see the player's number in the event of a card being issued.</i> <p>Clothing <u>NOT</u> Allowed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hooded sweatshirts 2. - <i>hoods and strings present possibility of being grabbed</i>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Ear muffs (headbands OK) 4. <i>plastic or metal part crossing top of head presents potential hazard</i> 5. Scarves 6. <i>Isadora Duncan Syndrome</i>
40° and lower	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shorten games 2. 5 min/half
35° and lower	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Suspend games

1. Players on sidelines should remain dressed (if in warm-ups) until they enter the game.
2. Players coming off the field should towel off (if sweaty) and get dressed quickly.
3. No one should sit or lie directly on the ground. The heat is lost faster to ground than to air. Blankets and chairs are recommended.
4. Keep hydrated. Avoid caffeine and soda.
5. Keep an eye on field conditions (wet, icy, etc.). Cold wet conditions can quickly change field from safe footing to slippery.
6. Keep an eye on the goalie—usually the player who gets coldest first, as not running or moving like a field player.
7. Referees and coaches should discuss weather and fields pre-game.
8. Safety and health of the players come first.

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