SPRING-FORD SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Cold Weather Guidelines

Exercising in cold weather and weather with low wind chills poses a risk to student athletes. Cold weather is defined as any temperature that can negatively affect the body's regulatory system. A lower wind chill can increase the rate at which certain cold weather dangers, such as frostbite and hypothermia can develop. There are precautions that we can take to avoid them when outside in extreme weather, such as wearing proper clothing and using appropriate equipment. You can also check yourself regularly for wet or cold areas on your body while outside in extreme weather, or use the buddy system to look for signs of danger and rewarm body parts as needed. Here are some of the conditions that can lead to hypothermia:

ºCold temperatures ºImproper dress/equipment ºWetness
ºPoor food intake ºProlonged exposure ºExposed skin

The severity of hypothermia can vary, depending on how low the core body temperature gets. There are specific signs and symptoms to look for. The condition worsens as the core body temperature lowers:

Mild Hypothermia (core body temperature ranges from 99-95degrees):
· Involuntary shivering
· Inability to perform complex motor functions (such as skiing)
Moderate Hypothermia (core body temperature ranges from 95-90 degrees):
· Slurred speech
· Violent shivering
· Dazed consciousness
· Irrational behavior (for example, the person may begin undressing and is unaware of being cold)
· Loss of fine motor coordination

Severe Hypothermia (core body temperature ranges from 90-75 degrees):
· Pupils are dilated
· Skin is pale
· Pulse rate decreases
· Muscle rigidity develops
· Shivering occurs in waves, it is violent and then pauses; the pauses eventually grow longer and longer until shivering ceases
· Person falls to the ground and cannot walk; may curl into a fetal position to conserve heat
· Person loses consciousness, heartbeat and respiration are erratic
· Cardiac and respiratory failure, then death.

Cold Weather Guidelines

In cold weather temperatures proper layered clothing should be worn.
These include:
· Several layers around the core of the body, especially for those individuals that are not very active.
· Long pants designed to insulate. Cotton sweatpants are excellent.
    On very cold days a nylon shell or wind pant can be worn on top of them for additional wind break.
· Long sleeve shirt/sweatshirt/coat designed to insulate and break the wind.
· Gloves
· Ear protection/Hat or helmet.
· Face protection.
· Wicking socks that do not hold moisture inside. Wool is excellent. Cotton absorbs and holds in moisture.

Clothing should be ***layered*** to allow adjustments as activity level may increase and decrease within a practice which may elevate or drop body temperature. The first layer of clothing should wick sweat and moisture away from the body.
The top layers should act as insulators to trap heat and block wind.
The following temperature guidelines have been established for interscholastic teams during cold weather. Cold weather is defined as any temperature that can negatively affect the body's regulatory system. These do not have to be freezing temperatures! The following guidelines have been established Spring-Ford practices:

Outside participation limited to 45 minutes:

When temperature or wind chill (which is lower than actual temperature) reaches **25° F**.

Termination of outside participation:

When temperature or wind chill (which is lower than actual temperature) reaches **15° F**.
In addition to the above guidelines, it is recommended that additional directives are given to student athletes:
· Cold exposure/activity requires more energy from a body. Additional calorie intake maybe required.
· Cold exposure/activity requires similar hydration to room temperature, however, the thirst reflex is not activated. Conscious efforts before and after practice to hydrate should be initiated.
· **Never train alone.** A simple ankle sprain in cold weather may become life threatening!
· **Student athletes should be instructed on signs of cold stress** (wind chill, frostbite and hypothermia). Fatigue, confusion, slurred speech, red or painful extremities, swollen extremities, blurred vision, red watery eyes, dizziness, headache, numbness, tingling of skin and extremities, shivering, uncontrollable shivering etc. are a few warning signs of cold stress.