



Table Tennis NT

HEAT POLICY

Purpose

The Northern Territory has a semi-tropical climate in the north and an arid climate in the south. In the summer months northern temperatures can reach 36°-37° in the shade and 40°plus in Central Australia. In the Top End, high summer temperatures are combined with high humidity which reduces the effectiveness of sweating, the body's natural cooling mechanism.

Strenuous exercise can be dangerous in such conditions, especially for people who are not fully acclimatized or for people who are not fully fit.

The groups most at risk of heat stress are young children; the elderly; those with alcohol, weight, or health problems; and people on medications which have a drying effect, or reduce perspiration.

Anyone can fall victim to heat stress through a lack of hydration, over exertion or being over exposed to the sun. Acclimatisation plays an important role in protecting healthy people from heat stress and therefore new residents and visitors to the NT are particularly vulnerable.

Heat stress is best described as excessive exposure to heat that may lead to a number of heat conditions ranging from mild conditions, to more life threatening conditions, like heat stroke. People suffer from heat stress when the body absorbs more heat than it can dispel.

Prompt action will avoid the serious or even fatal consequences of fully developed heat stroke.

This heat policy is designed to ensure that table tennis is not played in conditions which could potentially threaten the health of some participants.

Scope

This policy applies to member associations of Table Tennis NT (TTNT) and to members of member associations.

Policy

TTNT and its member associations will not schedule competition matches, social table tennis, or organize table tennis events:

- in un-air-conditioned indoor facilities between the hours of 1pm and 5pm on days when the maximum temperature is forecast to reach 35° or more;
- in outdoor, unshaded venues, between 11am and 5pm on days when the maximum temperature is forecast to reach 34° or more;
- in roofed, open venues, between the hours of 11am and 5pm on days when the maximum temperature is forecast to reach 35° or more.

TTNT and its member associations need to ensure that there is access to free cool water at all scheduled table tennis events.

TTNT and its member associations should also ensure that in the summer months there is access to a cooling off area, which is air-conditioned or has fans, so that players can properly cool down after strenuous exercise.

Players should be advised that, in order to avoid heat stress:

- They should drink plenty of fluids - this generally means drinking two to three litres of water per day but may be more depending on heat, humidity and physical activity;
- Rehydration is best with water and not carbonated drinks - alcohol and caffeinated drinks should be avoided during exercise as it increases your risk of hyperthermia;
- It takes several weeks to acclimatise to a hotter climate - in conditions where the climate is not controlled strenuous exercise should be avoided during this period.

Heat Stress Symptoms:

- Heavy sweating, tired and thirsty
- Moist cool skin
- Irritability
- Nausea
- Muscle spasms / twitching
- Painful muscle cramps (abdomen, arms and legs)

Treatment (First Aid):

- Move to a cool place (e.g. cool shady area, air conditioned environment)
- Lie down with legs supported and slightly elevated
- Have a cool shower or bath

- Drink more water
- Massage muscles gently to ease spasms, or firmly if cramped, then apply ice packs and drink glucose (e.g. diluted cordial)
- Additional salt treatment is not recommended

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is a serious heat illness which may progress to heat stroke if not properly treated. It is most common in non-acclimatised individuals. Symptoms:

- Profuse sweating
- Cold, clammy, pale skin
- Fatigue, weakness and restlessness
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea and /or vomiting
- Weak, but rapid pulse
- Normal temperature
- Faintness

Treatment (First Aid):

- Move person to a cool place (e.g. cool shady area, air conditioned environment)
- Lay person down with legs supported and slightly elevated
- Loosen clothing
- Cool person e.g. apply cool wet cloths to person's head and body, fan them
- Give sips of cool water
- If vomiting continues, seek medical assistance immediately.

Heat Stroke (Hyperthermia)

THIS IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY – Do not delay, call 000 immediately. Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness. It occurs when the body is unable to control its temperature. The body's temperature rise rapidly to dangerous levels and internal systems start to shut down, leading to permanent disability and death if emergency treatment is not provided.

Symptoms

- High body temperature (more than 40°C)
- Altered mental state, e.g. confusion, disorientation, rapid development of unconsciousness
- Dry skin (though this is not often present)
- Dry swollen tongue
- Rapid, strong pulse at first, then weaker
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Fits/seizures, coma

Treatment (First Aid) Seek medical assistance urgently. In the meantime:

- Move person to a cool place (e.g. shady area, air conditioned environment).
- Lay person down with legs supported and slightly elevated
- Remove clothing
- Cool person rapidly: Apply ice packs to the person's groin and armpits. Also, apply cool water, or wrap in a wet sheet and fan them (keep wet)
- If person is unconscious, check person's airway, breathing and pulse: If person is in cardiac arrest, begin CPR (Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation). If person is breathing and has a pulse, position unconscious person on their side and clear their airway
- Do not give sips of cold water.

Approved by TTNT Board: September 2016.

Amended: October 2016.