



South Australian Masters Athletics Inc.

HOT WEATHER POLICY

HOT WEATHER COMPETITION POLICY

Summer competition will normally be held in the evening to avoid the heat of the day. Further, as sprint event competitors are less affected by heat than those in endurance races, the longer races will be scheduled at the end of the meeting when temperatures should be lower. Where morning competition is held the reverse applies. In the event of competition under hot conditions the Meet Director will reduce the length of distance races.

Cancellation: Competition will be cancelled if, on the day prior the forecast temperature is 40°C or above, or on the day of competition if the temperature exceeds 40°C (without prior forecast).

AN INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

As athletics is an individual sport it is the South Australian Masters Athletics Inc. [SAMA] policy to encourage all members to take a sensible approach to training and competition in hot weather. The decision to participate or not in competition on hot days is one that each member and official must make. Officials are frequently active for longer periods than competitors and therefore if officials feel that the conditions are too extreme and do not attend, then that event or meeting will become unofficial. Each athlete must then make a personal decision whether to compete on an unofficial basis.

BACKGROUND

High temperatures or moderate temperatures and high humidity increase the risk of injury from heat stress. The body adapts to heat by sweating and the cooling effect of evaporation. Despite enormous amounts of sweat when exercising in hot weather, heat does not leave the body easily. This causes the body temperature to rise and there is a danger of dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

SAMA GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to our competition policy SAMA recommends the following to all our members training and competing in hot weather and these recommendations apply whatever the time of year.

1. Drink lots of liquids

Drinking plenty of fluids before exercise will improve cardiovascular function and body temperature regulation during exercise when it is impossible to drink enough. The body absorbs fluid at less than the rate it sweats it out during hard exercise. The objective is to minimise the loss by taking in plenty of fluids before and during activity. Drinking fluids should ideally begin in the 24 hours prior to the event.

Do not rely on thirst as an indicator of need – by the time you are thirsty it is already too late! As recommended by Sports Medicine Australia, SAMA advises members to drink at least 500mls of fluid before activity and 200mls for every 15 minutes of activity. Sports drinks with electrolytes will assist in retaining more fluid and cool water is absorbed more rapidly than warm water. Finally, re-hydrate after exercise [at least 500mls].

To determine how much you need to drink for a long race or training session in hot weather, weigh yourself before and afterwards. Every kilogram of change represents a litre of fluid you should have drunk [subtract any fluid taken during the session of course].

2. Acclimatise to hot weather exercise

If competition in hot weather is expected then a period of 7-10 days gradual acclimatisation will facilitate adaptation and assist in performance and resistance to heat stress.

Practice drinking before training to ensure you are accustomed to the feeling; otherwise it could lead to gastrointestinal discomfort during a race.

3. Race to your fitness level

The less conditioned, those carrying a little more weight than desirable, asthmatics, diabetics, females and older athletes will generally be more susceptible to heat stress. In hot weather only race to your personal level of fitness, never over-extend yourself.

4. Slip-Slop-Slap

Be sun-smart, cover-up, use sunscreen and slap on hats and sunglasses.

For more information see the Sports Medicine Australia website www.sma.org.au