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.

CANCELLATION POLICY

SAMA will not compete when temperatures are 38 degrees or above.

In temperatures between 32 and 38 degrees, the length of races above 1500m may be adjusted according to the temperature and humidity.

If the predicted temperature is 38 degrees or above, and an evening cool change is not predicted, the meet will be cancelled on the day before the meet.

If the predicted temperature is 38 degrees or above, but a cool change is predicted to come in by 6pm we may still plan to meet. In these circumstances the final decision will be made by 10am on the morning of the competition. A message will be posted on the SAMA website and Facebook page advising the cancellation. The website will also show the contact details for the person to be contacted for further information.

COMPETITION ABOVE 32 DEGREES (decisions made 20 minutes before race time*)

New competitors to be advised to only compete in shorter races. At 36 degrees and above no under 15s to compete.

The water table to be set up early and competitors advised to drink before, during and after competition.

Officials attend only if they are comfortable – competitors will have to assist more.

Reduction of Middle/Distance distances

Temp Up to 32	**Normal programs**
32 to 35	**5km races reduced to 3km and 4km races reduced to 2km at the Competition Director's/Coordinator's discretion**
36 to 38	**Maximum race distance 3km**

***Decisions to be made by the Summer Coordinator as appropriate.**

AN INDIVIDUAL'S RESPONSIBILITY

As athletics is an individual sport, it is 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.

SAMA wishes to stress that those who decide to compete in hot weather should only do so if completely well, sufficiently fit, and acclimatised to hot weather. Normal precautions such as hydration, lightweight clothing, sunscreen and taking advantage of shade should be paramount.
Officials are frequently active for longer periods than competitors and therefore if officials feel that the conditions are too extreme they should not attend.

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.

As humidity rises, the cooling effect of sweating is reduced because the sweat cannot evaporate as fast and the apparent temperature or "Heat Index" [what the combination of humidity and temperature make it feel like] increases. At a Heat Index of over 32°C, heat stress is a possibility and all necessary precautions should be taken. When the Index tops 40°C it becomes dangerous to train or compete.

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. In general athletes who are well nourished, adequately rested, hydrated and acclimatised to heat are at less risk of heat related illnesses.

Drink adequate amounts of liquids

Drinking adequate (i.e. to a degree appropriate to the likely fluid loss) fluids before exercise will improve cardiovascular function and temperature regulation during exercise when it is difficult 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. However it is essential not to over hydrate and succumb to Hyper-hydration. Drinking fluids should ideally begin in the 24 hours prior to the event.

Thirst is not a good indicator of need – by the time you are thirsty it is already too late! Sports Medicine Australia recommends drinking 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. (To determine more accurately 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].)

Finally, re-hydrate after exercise [at least 500mls].

Acclimatise to hot weather exercise

If competition in hot weather is expected a period of 7-14 days gradual acclimatisation will facilitate adaptation and assist in performance and resistance to heat stress.

Race to your fitness level

Fitness definitely confers some protection. 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.

Slip-Slop-Slap

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

19. SUN-SMART POLICY

The health and well-being of members and supporters is of primary concern to SAMA. SAMA acknowledges that skin cancer is a major public health problem in Australia with a majority of the population requiring treatment for some form of skin cancer during a lifetime.

SAMA recognises that skin cancer is preventable and treatable with early detection and in the interests of all members and supporters of the Club will actively promote and encourage sun protection at all meetings, training and competitions conducted by and for its members.

SAMA will:

- Schedule summer activities to avoid the peak UV period of 11am to 3pm wherever possible.
- Utilise existing shade at event venues and encourage members and spectators to provide their own shade structures.
- Provide sunscreen

SAMA also encourages athletes and officials to:

- Wear sun protective clothing.
- Use high value (SPF 50+) broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen.