

FOOTBALL



HELP DESK

'Helping Coaches Helping Kids'

HYDRATION

You can't expect anyone to be properly acclimated and conditioned if you are going to not do it as close to the environment you are going to be playing in.

You need to have a hydration plan in place and it should require hydration throughout the entire day (pre-hydrate and post-hydrate for practice). You need to have a Heat Exhaustion plan in place and your coaches, players, and parents need to know the signs and levels of heat sickness. And you need to have a progressive plan in place that acclimates your kids and coaches (in some cases).

1. Send out a letter or try to have a talk with your parents about pre-acclimation maybe a month before the season or as soon as possible. Every kid needs to get outside and play or horse around for 30 minutes a day for one week and add 10 minutes to that each week until football starts. This gets your couch potatoes and house mice outside (those are the kids you need to be concerned with).
2. Get them used to drinking water and sports drinks (50/50 solution of water is best because most have too much sugar in them) prior to the start of season.
3. A good indicator of a child's level of hydration is their urine.
DARK = dehydrated and needs fluids as soon as possible.
YELLOW = beginning to dehydrate, should get fluids soon.
CLEAR = good to go, just maintain this level of hydration.
4. When you start your workouts, more than likely it will be the hottest time of your practice. Use that to your advantage. Conduct your dynamic warm-ups quickly and at a good quick pace. That is 10 to 15 minutes of work under your hottest conditions. Then have them take water as you move to the next portion of your practice.
5. Have an ice chest with ice water and towels. Or you could try using bags of ice or even a bug sprayer with ice water. Just try to find something that will allow you to cool them down as they work.
6. If you feel that your climate or weather will affect your players then my suggestion is to do the easy stuff first and slowly put the more rigorous portions in the front end of your practice schedule to allow

the players to acclimate to the hotter temps. The key is to progressively add more conditioning into the hotter temps and allow for the body to adapt. You will find the human body (even a child's) adapts pretty quickly. Just keep in mind that their body temperature control is not fully developed so watch players for redness, over exhaustion, fatigue, and dizziness. If you see any of these things, you should sit them down, get their helmets and shoulder pads off and get some water in them.

7. On game day, don't over warm-up or over work your kids. Try to keep them cool because fatigue and exhaustion are linear in effect. Let the other team over do it. Simply warm-up and review things as they drink water and it will pay off. Keep them under the shade if possible and if they arrive really early tell them to stay under the shade as much as possible.

As far as conditioning goes I don't subscribe to simply running plays over and over because the body is adaptive. If you keep changing up what the players do and the intensity level of what they do, then their level of conditioning will increase rapidly as they adapt to the new and varied stimulation. Figure that if you do the same thing repeatedly the body will adapt to it in a few weeks time. Also this can cause mental fatigue and under stimulation and that in turn can cause "flatness" or the look of players that are moving slowly.

Jack Gregory
www.gregorydoublewing.com
www.doublewingsymposium.com

HELP DESK
'Helping Coaches Helping Kids'