



MHSAA
michigan high school athletic association
FOOTBALL PRACTICE POLICY

Following is the MHSAA Football Practice Policy, as adopted by the Representative Council 3/21/14, and modified 5/8/17

1. During the first week of practice of the season, only helmets are allowed the first two days, only shoulder pads may be added on the third and fourth days, and full pads may not be worn until the fifth day of team practice.
2. Before the first regular-season game, schools may not schedule more than one “collision” practice in a day.
 - A “collision” practice is one in which there is **live, game-speed, player-vs.-player** contact in pads (not walk-throughs) involving any number of players. This includes practices with scrimmages, drills and simulations where action is live, game-speed, player-vs.-player.
 - If any part of a drill or scrimmage involves live game-speed player-vs.-player contact in pads, it is a collision practice even if players do not execute full tackles at a competitive pace that takes players to the ground.
 - During any additional practice sessions, players may wear helmets and other pads (neither is mandatory). Blocking and tackling technique may be taught and practiced. However, full-speed contact is limited to players vs. pads, shields, sleds or dummies.
3. After the first regular-season game, teams may conduct no more than 90 total minutes of collision practice in any week, Monday through Sunday. During other practice sessions, players may wear helmets and other protective pads (neither is mandatory). Blocking and tackling technique may be taught and practiced. However, full-speed contact is limited to players vs. pads, shields, sleds or dummies. **(New in 2017: Required that there is no more than 90 total collision minutes per week during these practice days). Monitoring protocols will be determined by the local school, league or conference.**
4. No single practice may exceed three hours, and the total practice time for days with multiple practice sessions may not exceed five hours.
 - Warm-up, stretching, speed and agility drills and cool down are all considered part of practice. Neither strength/weight training activities nor video/classroom sessions are considered practice for the purposes of the three- or five-hour limits.

FOOTBALL PRACTICE Q & As

- A. **Q Do the policies apply at both the high school and junior high/middle school levels?**
- A Yes.
- B. **Q Is the policies to improve student-athlete acclimatization or reduce head trauma?**
- A Both.
- C. **Q Are “girdle pads” allowed during the first week of practice?**
- A Girdle pads may be worn under or in place of shorts during the first four days of acclimatization practice that precede the first day in full pads.
- D. **Q Does the three-hour limit on single practices and the five-hour limit for multiple practices on the same day apply only to football?**
- A Yes. The MHSAA recommends that the limits be added as soon as possible to the MHSAA “Model Policies for Managing Heat & Humidity” and apply to all sports.
- E. **Q How much time is required between sessions on days with multiple practices?**
- A Because practice venues differ greatly and some may raise questions regarding supervision and the possibility of injury risks as great off the field as on, the Task Force declined to set a maximum and minimum length of rest periods. However, one hour between practices when there is no physical activity is the minimum recommendation. Classroom sessions would be allowed during the period of physical rest. To be clear, break time is **not** included in the five-hour limit..
- F. **Q Can a team have different collision days for different levels of players?**
- A If varsity and subvarsity squads practice separately, their collision days may be different. However, if the squads practice together, then their collision days must be the same.
- G. **Q How are the 90 minutes of collision practices per week calculated?**
- A Any part of a full contact drill or live scrimmage constitutes time that should be included in the 90-minute total. Team breaks or time out from the collision portions of practice where players are being given instruction or resting from contact, need not be included in the 90 minutes. Moving from a huddle to the line of scrimmage or standing in line to enter a full contact segment of a drill are to be counted as part of the 90-minute total. The calculation is to the team, or portion of a team, within a week (see previous question). It is not intended that time be counted and recorded separately for each individual player. See points 2 and 3 in the practice polices for the criteria of a collision practice.