



MHSAA FOOTBALL PRACTICE POLICIES

Adopted March 21, 2014, Modified May 8, 2017 and May 5, 2019

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.

NEW DEFINITIONS:

1. **“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 **executing full tackles at a competitive pace, taking players to the ground.**

NEW LIMITATIONS:

2. **First two weeks of practice before first contest:** Collision contact is limited to no more than 6 hours in a week (Monday – Sunday). Inter-squad scrimmages will calculate collision contact based on ½ of the total time (2-hour scrimmage = 1 hour of collision contact, 3 – hour scrimmage = 1.5 hours of collision contact).
3. **Thud:** Full speed, **contact above the waist only, with no player being taken to the ground.** There is no winner or loser, predetermined or otherwise. Coaches are not grading physical domination in thud.
Teammates are merely trying to give each other a simulation of full-speed game action. Thud is not collision contact and is an alternative to live/full contact. Thus drills and segments are unlimited during the football season.
Note: Thud tempo drills and activity is not considered Collision contact and is unlimited.
 - 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. player in thud activity or calculated in collision practice.
4. **After the first regular-season game,** teams may conduct no more than **30** 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.
5. 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 & A

- A. Q** Do the policies apply at both the high school and junior high/middle school levels?
A Yes.
- B. Q** Is the purpose of the Policy 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, there is no 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 practices for different levels of players?
A If varsity and sub-varsity squads practice separately, their collision sessions may be different. However, if the squads practice together, then their collision sessions must be the same.
- G. Q** How are the 6-hours or 30-minutes of collision practices per week calculated?
A Any part of a full contact drill or live scrimmage where players are taken to the ground constitutes time that should be included in the 6-hour or 30-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 6-hour or 30-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 6-hour or 30-minute total. The calculation is to the team or portion of a team within a week. It is not intended that time be counted and recorded separately for each individual player. See points 2 and 3 in the practice policies for the criteria of a Collision vs. Thud practice.