

Introduction

Hunter Valley Elite Football Academy (HVEFA) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all our players, coaches, and community. This Weather Policy outlines how we manage training sessions and events under extreme weather conditions. It aligns with Australian sports safety guidelines for youth football and reflects best practices from Football NSW and Sports Medicine Australia. Player welfare comes first — if conditions pose a risk, activities will be modified or canceled to prevent harm.

Hot Weather (Extreme Heat)

- **Cancellation Threshold:** Outdoor sessions will not proceed if the ambient temperature is forecast to reach 32°C or above [1][2].
- **Moderate Heat Precautions:** For temperatures below 32°C, sessions may be modified with reduced intensity, frequent hydration, shaded rest breaks, and close monitoring [2].
- **High Humidity:** May lead to session adjustments or cancellations even below 32°C due to impaired thermoregulation [1][2].

Lightning and Thunderstorms

- **30/30 Rule:** If lightning is seen and thunder is heard within 30 seconds, all activities stop immediately. Do not resume until 30 minutes after the last thunder [3].
- **Safe Shelter:** Players must take refuge in enclosed buildings or cars. Fields are cleared without delay.
- **Advance Cancellation:** Severe weather warnings (including lightning) may result in proactive cancellation [3][4].

Heavy Rain and Flooding

- **Unsafe Field Conditions:** Activities canceled if fields are flooded, waterlogged, or dangerously slippery [5].
- **Rain During Session:** Pause up to 15–20 minutes to reassess. Cancel if heavy rain continues or becomes hazardous.
- **Council Closures:** Club follows local government field closure decisions.
- **Light Rain:** Training may proceed if conditions are safe and players are prepared.

Strong Winds and Extreme Weather

- **Wind Warnings:** Activities canceled if Bureau of Meteorology issues damaging wind alerts [6].
- **Observed Hazards:** Activities halted immediately if winds cause falling branches, blowing debris, or poor visibility.
- **Equipment Safety:** Goals and objects secured before training.

Air Quality (Bushfire Smoke)

- **Monitoring:** AQI from NSW Department of Planning & Environment is checked regularly.
- **AQI > 100:** Modify session intensity and duration, especially for players with asthma [7].
- **AQI > 150–200 (“Very Poor” or “Hazardous”):** Outdoor sessions are canceled [7][8].

Session Rescheduling and Refunds

- **Communication:** Timely notifications via email, SMS, or social media.
- **Make-up Sessions:** Rescheduled where possible.
- **Refunds:** Credit or pro-rata refunds offered if rescheduling is not feasible.
- **Partial Sessions:** Not refunded if majority of session completed.

References and Sources

1. **Football NSW – Extreme Heat Guidelines (2023)**
2. **Sports Medicine Australia – Hot Weather Policy for Junior Sport**
3. **Football NSW – Lightning Safety (30/30 Rule)**
4. **NSW Government – Thunderstorm and Severe Weather Safety**
5. **Mudgee Touch Association – Wet Weather Guidelines**
6. **Bureau of Meteorology – Severe Wind Warnings**
7. **NSW Department of Planning & Environment – Air Quality Index Guidelines**
8. **AIS & NSWIS – Bushfire Smoke and Air Quality for Athletes**