



# Stratford Youth Soccer – 2025 Heat-Related Weather Policy

**Player and participant safety is the highest priority for Stratford Youth Soccer. In accordance with Environment Canada advisories and Ontario and Canada Soccer policies, the following guidelines are to be strictly followed during periods of high heat and humidity:**

## **1. Optional Water Breaks (No Heat Advisory in Effect)**

If **no heat advisory** has been issued but teams are concerned about heat:

- Coaches may request water breaks **before the start of the match**.
- These breaks are allowed **at the discretion of the referee** and should follow the same format: one 60-second break at the midpoint of each half.

## **2. Mandatory Water Breaks (Heat Advisory in Effect)**

If **Environment Canada issues a Heat Advisory**, the following **mandatory procedures** apply:

- A **60-to-120 second water break** must be provided every **10-to-15 minutes of playing time**.
- The **game clock must be stopped** during these mandated breaks.
- These breaks are **not coaching opportunities** — players are to hydrate and promptly return to the field.
- **This policy is mandatory** for all match officials and cannot be ignored under any circumstances.

## **3. Additional Heat Safety Protocols For Match Officials**

- Match officials are encouraged to be **liberal with substitutions**. If a player is overheating, fatigued, or unwell, allow substitutions **regardless of standard substitution rules**.
- If a player appears **fatigued, overheated, or injured**, stop play immediately and have the **team's medical personnel, guardian, or trainer assess the player**. Do not attempt to assess the situation yourself.
- All participants — **players, officials, coaches, and spectators** — should prioritize hydration and seek shade when possible.

#### **4. Parental and Guardian Discretion**

- It is ultimately the **responsibility of parents or guardians to decide whether their child should participate in practices or games** during periods of extreme heat.
- There are no consequences for players who are held out of activities due to heat-related safety concerns.

#### **5. Stratford Youth Soccer and Match Official Responsibilities**

- The **Stratford Youth Soccer Board decides on** suspending games and/or practices due to extreme heat or other adverse weather conditions.
- The Stratford Youth Soccer Board and Match Officials must **clearly communicate** heat-related safety measures to teams before the match begins. The Board will communicate these measures via SportsEngine and their official social media accounts.

#### **6. Stratford Youth Soccer Directive**

This policy follows the directive of the **Stratford Youth Soccer Board** and applies to **all games played within the Stratford Youth Soccer Club**.

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**Stay safe, stay hydrated, and prioritize health over play!**