

Recreation Soccer Coaches Manual



Mount Laurel United Soccer Association

What is MLU Recreation Soccer?	3
Overview	3
Changes to our Recreational Soccer Program	3
Coaching a Recreational Team?	5
Attending a PCA workshop	5
Working with Training Staff	5
Coaching Education	5
Codes of Conduct	6
Coach's Code	6
Players Code of Conduct	7
Parents Code of Conduct (things we all should remember)	7
Before Starting the Season...things to do!	8
Setting up Coach/ Parent contact lists	8
Practice Times and Locations	8
Emergency Contact List	8
Equipment	8
Sample Email to parents:	10
Risk Management	11
Prevention and Care of Soccer Injuries	11
Basic First Aid Information	11
Dehydration Facts	13
Dehydration Warning Signs	13
Risk Factors	13
What to Drink during Exercise	13
What NOT to Drink during Exercise	13
Hydration Tips	14
Fluid Replacement Guidelines	14

What is MLU Recreation Soccer?

Overview

Welcome to the Mount Laurel United Soccer Association Recreation Program. We are proud to offer this Recreation Manual as a service to our volunteers and participants. MLU was founded in 1996. Our club is a volunteer, non – profit association, governed by an elected Board of Directors. We are partners with New Jersey State Youth Soccer Association.

MLU Recreation Soccer provides the children of our community with the opportunity to experience the joy and thrill of the game of soccer in a player centered environment where the focus is on fun, age appropriate training and coaching, encouragement, individual skills development, building self esteem in all players and fostering the love of the game.

Beginning fall 2008, MLU Recreation Soccer will embark on a new journey. We have modified the focus of youth instruction specifically with the U7 age bracket. In doing so, we will increase each player's exposure to the proper technique and fundamentals, to instruct age appropriate skills and to provide a good, fun experience for all participants. The primary change will take place with roster size and match play to increase each player's touches on the ball.

Changes to our Recreational Soccer Program

The primary changes to the recreational will be phased in over a period of 3-5 years. Playing format, roster size, and coaching and parent education will be affected.

Playing Format

AGE	Current Format	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12
U4	Saturday Morning Session	Saturday Morning Session	Saturday Morning Session	Saturday Morning Session	Saturday Morning Session
U5	Saturday Morning Session	Saturday Morning Session	Saturday Morning Session	Saturday Morning Session	Saturday Morning Session
U6		3v3	3v3	3v3	3v3
U7	Current format	4v4*	4v4*	4v4*	4v4*
U8	Current format	Current format	6v6	6v6	6v6
U9	Current format	Current format	Current format	6v6*	6v6*
U10	Current format	Current format	Current format	Current format	8v8
U11 +	Current format	Current format	Current format	Current format	11v11

Gray shaded areas represent new changes to playing format.

*If registration is lower for ages U7 and U9, these age groups will join with U8 and U10 respectively. They will play the format for that specific age group (U7 would play 6v6 with U8 and U9 would play 8v8 with U10).

Why the changes?

If you watch a U7 or U8 8v8 game, you will be struck by the number of times a player touches the ball....it is very few. In fact, players tend to be more interested in what grows in the grass, talking to other players around who are also not engaged in play, or will simply follow play around.

Studies show that development directly correlates to playing format and number of touches per player. Many states and clubs within the USA are following recommendations made by US Soccer regarding the development of our children. Not only is development increased by reducing the playing format, but also the enjoyment level. As a nation, we lag behind other countries when it comes to our youth. Many academies, clubs and organization outside of the USA adopted smaller playing formats over 10 years ago.

Because of the changes we are making, MLU will provide more teams with more coaching and parent involvement, increased player development and enjoyment.

For more information about Small Sided Games and playing formats please read:

http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/doc_lib/Small_Sided_Games_Manual.pdf

U8 Travel and U8 Recreational Soccer

Travel soccer has long been seen as more competitive than recreational soccer. This is not always the case. Players enjoy competing and playing against others; whether it be friends within a club or rivals from another club.

If MLU enters a team into a competitive travel league at U8, these teams will be playing 8v8. They will also be receiving regular and more frequent professional training compared to those who chose to play U8 recreational soccer (6v6).

Because of the reduced roster size at recreational U8 (compared to U8 travel) there will be more teams, coaches and parent volunteer opportunities. Players will receive benefits of participating in small sided games due to increased participation, increased number of touches of the ball and increased fun!

At U8, some players are able to commit to and have developed to a standard that allows them to compete at Travel level. Some players, however, take longer to develop, and may not be ready to enter the Travel program until a year or two or three later. The MLU travel program is always open to new players. Tryouts occur every year.

Coaching a Recreational Team?

Attending a PCA workshop

Volunteer coaching is a privilege you have to influence children in important principles of life. In MLU, we believe that it is your privilege not your right to coach those children out on the soccer field. We have partnered with Positive Coaching Alliance (www.positivecoach.org) and their philosophy of a Double Goal Coach. For youth sports coaches, the Double Goal coach has two goals, the first - winning, but secondly and more importantly the goal is to teach valuable life lessons through sports.



Meeting with PCA in a workshop provided by MLU will be expected.

Working with Training Staff

MLU has the benefit of working hand in hand with professional soccer trainers from all over the world. Each of these trainers is highly qualified with different licensing from organizations such as USSF, UEFA, NSCAA, etc. as well as personal experience of the game. These trainers will be invaluable to your experience as a volunteer coach and will be available for guidance and instruction to you and your players in all areas of soccer.

Please take the time to get to know these indispensable members of our club.



Coaching Education

MLU has been a leader of youth soccer instruction over the years and has taken measures to assure that education is a large part of the game of soccer here in our community. We will provide coaching education for each age level that matches up with the guidelines of (U.S. Youth Soccer).

(Coaching U8 and below). There will be a mandatory preseason meeting to go over methods of teaching with games, activities and exercises that we will encourage you to teach this season so that there is uniformity across the board for the year.

Codes of Conduct

Club Expectations of Coaches, Parents and Players

In honoring the game, good sportsmanship and our MLU policies, we would like to pass along to all coaches, players, parents and spectators of Mount Laurel United Soccer, the Codes of Conduct as required by Mount Laurel United Soccer Association (MLU), South Jersey Soccer League (SJSJL), South Jersey Girls Soccer League (SJGSL), and the New Jersey Youth Soccer Association (NJYSA).

We all must be responsible for our words and actions and their consequences. Our goal is one to project a positive image of our program, and to avoid any unnecessary disciplinary actions by officials of the game, MLU or its Board of Directors.

Thank you, in advance for reading the following information and most of all, for your effort in helping us to maintain a program in which we can all be proud to be a part.

Coach's Code

1. Promote an environment of fun and enjoyment (both on and off the field) where winning is only a part of it.
2. Enthusiastically support an "Everyone Plays" philosophy. Remember this is a developmental league where all players should try different positions, ie. An offensive position for half the game and a defensive position for the other half of the game.
3. Be reasonable in your demands of young players' time, energy, enthusiasm and performance on the field.
4. Be knowledgeable of the rules of the game and impress them on your players at all times.
5. Develop your players to have an attitude of respect for the judgment of the referees and the ability of their opponents. Also treat the opponent and opposing coach with respect and good sportsmanship.
6. Teach your players how to win and lose with dignity and grace. You are their role model and they are watching.
7. Only provide positive reinforcement and encouragement. Be generous with your praise when it is deserved. Players should never be yelled at or ridiculed for making a mistake or losing a game. Children need a coach that they can respect and trust.
8. Continue your own education of the game, sound principles of coaching and the development of growing children so you can best enrich the players' learning environment.
9. Lobby for the support of your teams' parents to help foster proper attitudes and values in their players.
10. Check equipment, fields and facilities you use. They should meet all safety standards and meet age and ability guidelines of your players.

Players Code of Conduct

1. Have fun! Make new friends and learn new skills. Be a good supportive teammate and do your best for the TEAM!
2. Obey the rules of the game. Listen to and respect your coaches, officials, referees, and treat your opponents fairly.
3. Be kind to others, whether you win or lose. And finish off the game with a congratulatory handshake or "good game" for the opposing team.
 - In turn you will have the right:
 - For qualified coaches.
 - Of participation to play at your developmental level.
 - To an equal opportunity for success.
 - To be treated with dignity by all involved.
 - To play as a child and not as an adult.

Parents Code of Conduct (things we all should remember)

1. Encourage and praise your child which they need more than criticism and negative yelling.
2. Cheer your child's team from the sidelines but do not direct or coach the play. LET THE COACH DO HIS/HER JOB. Children need to be afforded the opportunity to have only one set of guidelines to follow.
3. Relieve your child of the pressure of competition, do not increase it. A child is easily affected by outside influences.
4. Instill personal excellence in each of your players. Help them follow through with their commitment to the team and keep a sense of good work ethic with responsibility towards their own player's development.
5. Be kind and respectful to your child's coach. These coaches volunteer to give their personal time to provide a recreational activity for your child. These people are providing a valuable community service, often without reward, other than the personal satisfaction of having served the community and making a positive difference in the lives of Mount Laurel children. Foster a spirit of contribution in giving back to our community.
6. Respect the decisions of the referees. The referee is a symbol of fair play, integrity, sportsmanship and impartiality. Please remember, often times these refs are still children themselves learning how to call a game.

"Did you win?" or "Did you score a goal?" are not proper questions. Parental critique after game or in the car going home is a player's greatest fear.

Before Starting the Season...things to do!

Setting up Coach/ Parent contact lists

1. Once you receive your roster, it is imperative that you make contact with the parents ASAP.
 - ☒ Sending an email with all of the pertinent information about you, your philosophy, your contact information, your practice times, and your expectations should be sent and you should request a response email so that you know they have received it.
 - ☒ Verify their contact information with you and their player's name /age. Remember that this is their first contact with you.
 - ☒ First impressions count; open the lines of communication with your parents.

Practice Times and Locations.

1. You will be assigned a practice time and location.
 - ☒ Remember that the fields are for all of MLU. If you have received an email for field closings, you must abide. This system is in place not only for the children's safety, but also to preserve the life of the fields.
 - ☒ If your practice is rained out and you would like to reschedule, then you must contact Keith Walters at preaknesshome@comcast.net and wait for a field assignment.
 - ☒ Please remember that there are many teams that have only one night to practice due to limited space. We try to make accommodations for everyone.

Emergency Contact List

1. It is extremely important that you have emergency contact information on the field with you at all times. There could be unexpected emergencies that arise, injuries, inclement weather, parent picking up is late, etc.
 - ☒ The following example should be used to collect that emergency information you will need for coaching your team. Please make sure you get to know the parents as well as their players. Know who will be picking up and dropping off, carpooling, etc. The more time you take to invest in players and their families, the more invested they will be to the team.

Equipment

1. Equipment for your season will be distributed at the Recreation Coaches meeting. This meeting will occur before the season starts. If you are unable to attend this meeting; you will need to contact the Recreation Director to schedule a time to meet.

TEAM CONTACT DETAILS FORM

TEAM: _____ AGE: U _____ M / F

COACH: _____ Phone: _____

Email address: _____

PLAYERS NAME	CONTACT NAME	TELEPHONE #1.	TELEPHONE #2	ILLNESS, ALLERGIES, MEDICATION

This form must be filled out by each team and their coach at the first session and be kept with you at all times whenever you have this team, during sessions or games etc.

Sample Email to parents:

Hello Parents,

My name is Jill Murray. I will be the adult volunteer coaching your child this fall season. I have 3 girls, two of which, play soccer and I am currently coaching both of those children. I have been coaching soccer at both a rec and travel level for 6 years, but I am new to the rec program here in Mt. Laurel. I have also coached lacrosse for 2 years in the Marlton Rec Council. I thoroughly enjoy working with the kids out on the field.

My main goal as a coach is to teach the fundamentals of soccer while having fun! I would like for your child to come away from this season with a desire to learn more and continue to get out and play!

In order to accomplish this, I will be also working with a Mt. Laurel United Trainer. His name is Billy Paton. Our practices will be at Parkway school on **Thursday evenings from 5:00 - 6:00pm starting this Thursday Aug 30th**. The following are dates and times that we will be working with our trainer:

MURRAY	6:00-7:00PM	THURSDAYS	9/20, 10/4, 10/18, 11/1	TROTTERS FLD 5	BILLY
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on these dates, we will not be having practice at Parkway, only at the Trotter's Field 5. Please make every effort to come to these practices from 6:00pm until 7:00pm.

Our games will begin on September 8th and should be scheduled at either the 9am or 10:30am time slot.

I know that you will make every effort to have your child at practice and games, but if you are not going to be able to make it, would you please email or call me to let me know? I would greatly appreciate your notification since this will help me to better prepare.

Remember that the club will be providing the girls with a shirt and socks for games. It is your responsibility for them to have shin guards for their protection and cleats are a good idea if you can. Protective sportswear eye glasses are required for all players whom need prescription eyewear on the field of play. I will be bringing balls out to the field, but if you have a ball, have your player bring it with her with her name written on it. Also, a water bottle is recommended to keep them hydrated.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to call or email me. I look forward to a great season with your soccer player! Meet you out on the field!

Sincerely,
Jill Murray
000-000-0000

Risk Management

Prevention and Care of Soccer Injuries

The first line of defense in the treatment of soccer injuries is to prevent them. This is accomplished by a well organized program, a proper warm-up, and adherence to the Laws of the Game.

Make sure you have the following, and check the players also:

- ☑ Proper equipment (shin guards, appropriate/tied shoes, no jewelry, appropriate uniform)
- ☑ Ample water supply and breaks.
- ☑ Prior knowledge of existing conditions (asthma, sprains, etc.)
- ☑ If a player is injured, inform parents and follow-up within 48 hours.
- ☑ Keep a First-Aid kit accessible
- ☑ Have medical release forms, information forms and treatment forms signed by parents for each player.

REMEMBER...

R.I.C.E



Basic First Aid Information

R.I.C.E.-Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation

- ☑ **Strains** are the stretching of tendon or muscle fibers.
Recommended treatment: **R.I.C.E. and alert Parent**
- ☑ **Dislocations and Fractures** involve deformation or breaking of bones,
Recommended treatment: seek medical treatment **immediately and alert Parent.**
- ☑ **Cramps** are a result of an insufficient flow of blood to the muscle and can be caused by a blow to the muscle, insufficient consumption of fluids, poor diet or fatigue.
Recommended treatment: **massage and stretch**
- ☑ **Heat Exhaustion** is exhibited by signs of weakness, pale skin, cold and clammy skin, pupils slightly dilated, and a rapid pulse.
Recommended treatment: **remove from the game/practice immediately**, lie down in a cool or shaded area, give plenty of liquids and if improvement is minimal, should see a doctor.
- ☑ **Heat Stroke** is a life-threatening situation where the body has lost a significant amount of fluid and salt. Exhibited by high body temperature, hot to the touch, dry and flushed skin, strong rapid pulse, and player is dizzy and weak.
Recommended treatment: give a cold bath (pouring ice water over body) and give plenty of cold fluids, get to medical care immediately.

- ☑ **Blisters** are often caused by poor fitting footwear, usually shoes that are too big (so the player can "grow into them") and/or wet, causing excessive rubbing against the skin.

Recommended treatment: apply adhesive tape to the reddened area and do not use gauze (the sore will rub against the tape rather than the skin.)

- ☑ **Concussions** are caused by a blow to the head and are mild bruising of brain tissue. Recommended treatment: get player checked immediately by a physician.

Rules of thumb when handling injuries

- ☑ When an accident occurs, stop all activity. Send others for water break or with another coach
- ☑ Look for any deformity, discoloration, bleeding or shock.
- ☑ Ask questions. Have the player explain where it hurts.
- ☑ Stay calm, inspire confidence and reassurance in the injured player
- ☑ Follow up all injuries by informing parents. Especially Head Injuries!
- ☑ Don't move the player if the injury looks serious.
- ☑ Consult a Medical Professional if serious



Dehydration Facts

It can happen faster than you think!

In less than one hour of physical activity, an athlete may become dehydrated and performance and health will surely suffer. Dehydration of just 1-2% of body weight (only 0.6-1.2 lbs. for a 60 lb. athlete) can negatively influence performance. Dehydration of greater than 3% of body weight substantially increases an athlete's risk of heat illness (heat cramps, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke). During physical activity, most athletes only drink enough fluid to replace 50% of what was lost. Thirst should not be used as a guideline. Once an athlete is thirsty, he has already started to become dehydrated.

Dehydration Warning Signs

Basic signs of dehydration are:

- Thirst
- Irritability
- Headache
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Cramps
- Nausea
- Decreased performance

Risk Factors

The following are risk factors for heat illness. An athlete experiencing one or more of these should be closely monitored while engaged in physical activity in high heat and humidity.

- Dehydration or previous heat problems
- Physical barriers to evaporation - *(includes athletic equipment or wearing excessive or dark colored clothing)*
- History of illness - *(Sickness involving sweating, vomiting, and diarrhea increases susceptibility to heat related illnesses.)*
- Overweight
- Poor physical conditioning
- Lack of adjustment to the heat
- Medications and drugs - *(Some medications result in a dehydrating effect. Also alcohol and caffeine can cause an increased loss of body fluids.)*
- Fluid imbalance - *(This can result from not replacing fluids from a previous exercise session or from vomiting or diarrhea.)*

What to Drink during Exercise

Water is adequate for 45-50 minutes of physical activity. However, if activity lasts longer or is particularly intense, sports drinks are more effective in replacing fluids and nutrients. Through sweat, the body loses essential nutrients that must be replaced to ensure peak athletic performance. The body loses important nutrients, through sweat, that need to be replaced in order to not affect an athlete's health and performance. If exercise lasts longer than 45-50 minutes and you are unable to provide a sports drink, cold water (50-55 degrees F) should be provided in order to replace the fluid that has been lost.

The carbohydrate concentration in the ideal fluid replacement solution should be in the range of 6-8%.² Fluids with salt are beneficial to increase thirst and voluntary fluid intake as well as offsetting the amount of salt lost in sweat.

What NOT to Drink during Exercise

Fruit juices, carbohydrate gels, sodas and those sports drinks that have carbohydrate levels greater than 8% are **not recommended** as the sole beverage during exercise. The use of beverages comprising caffeine, alcohol, and carbonated water is discouraged because they may cause dehydration by stimulating urine production and decreasing voluntary fluid intake.

Hydration Tips

- Drink according to a schedule based on individual fluid needs. By the time you become thirsty, you're already dehydrated.
- Drink before, during and after practices and games (follow the fluid guidelines listed to maintain hydration and maximize performance).
- Avoid soft drinks and juices during play. Drinks with high carbohydrate content may cause stomach problems.

Fluid Replacement Guidelines

Before Exercise

- Drink 17-20 oz. of water or a sports drink 2-3 hours before exercise.
- Drink an additional 7-10 oz. of water or sports drink 10-20 minutes before exercise.

During Exercise

- Begin drinking early during the sporting event - even minimal dehydration compromises performance.
- In general, drink at least 7-10 oz. of water or a sports drink every 10-20 minutes. Remember to drink beyond your thirst to maintain hydration. Optimally, drink fluids based on the amount of sweat and urine loss.
- Athletes should be given unlimited access to fluids.
- Weight, before and after practice, should be monitored to determine proper hydration levels. Parents may be given this responsibility.

After Exercise

- Within two hours, drink enough to replace weight loss from exercise.

US Soccer's Youth Soccer Heat Stress Guidelines

The popularity of soccer among American youth is at an all-time high. Nearly 14 million young athletes (13,832,000) under the age of 18 play soccer at elite and recreational levels in the United States.

The rapid growth of youth soccer participation in recent years, coupled with an increased need for qualified and certified coaches, has made insuring the safety of youth soccer players more important than ever before. Moreover, new youth soccer research from the University of Connecticut and serious cases of heat illness in the past few years across a variety of sports has prompted the U.S. Soccer Federation to issue an updated version of its "Youth Soccer Heat Stress Guidelines."

The aim is to help parents, young athletes and coaches understand one of the most common and most preventable sports injuries - heat-related illnesses, including dehydration, heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

The following information and youth heat stress guidelines provide suggestions for preventing the potentially dangerous and sometimes deadly effects of playing in hot or humid conditions.

PHYSIOLOGICAL FACTORS THAT PUT YOUNG ATHLETES AT RISK

Heat-induced illness is one of the most preventable sports injuries. Parents, young athletes and coaches need to understand the physiological factors that put children and adolescents at risk for heat-related illness and take steps to prevent it.

Exercising children face unique stresses when they perform intense exercise in the heat. Like adults, they may have trouble adapting to the physiological demands of high environmental temperatures when participating in soccer practice and game situations. When a youth is also dehydrated this may exacerbate the response to exercise in the heat.

The physiological/psychological reasons that place children at risk are:

- Children absorb more heat from a hot environment because they have a greater surface-area to body-mass ratio than adults. The smaller the child the faster the heat absorption.
- Children and adolescents may have a reduced ability to dissipate heat through sweating.
- Children and adolescents frequently do not have the physiological drive to drink enough fluids to replenish sweat losses during prolonged exercise.
- Youth athletes may be more easily distracted when occasions allow for them to rest and rehydrate.
- Some youth athletes may be under intense pressure to make a competitive squad and may not want to report feelings of heat distress or take the appropriate amount of time to rehydrate.

FACTORS THAT PUT YOUNG SOCCER PLAYERS AT RISK

In addition to physiological considerations, several factors specific to the sport of soccer place young players at risk for heat illness. However, these risks can be reduced significantly with the close attention of medical staff (i.e. athletic trainers), parents, young athletes and their coaches. These soccer-specific factors are:

- Limited stoppage time during matches, with players constantly running and moving.
- Young soccer players are not encouraged to use the limited stoppage time they do have for fluid consumption.
- Games are held outdoors, often in high temperatures and humidity, on large fields that offer little or no shade. Heat radiated by the sun is a major component of heat stress. This issue is complicated by limited access to shaded areas for players between halves or between games.

- Young players fail to drink enough fluids at tournaments and summer camps, where numerous games and practices take place each day.
- Games and practice sessions are often not modified when players are confronted with extreme heat and humidity conditions.

Additional Factors to Consider

Communication between playing fields and medical tents at tournaments is sometimes insufficient. Many teams fail to recognize the need and/or importance of using light-colored, loose-fitting uniforms. Referees could be unaware of the need and/or importance of fluid breaks. Mental alertness and skill performance decline with dehydration and could be a factor in injuries occurring late in matches and training sessions.

HEAT ILLNESS PREVENTION TECHNIQUES

Acclimatization to the heat is an important factor in preventing heat illness. The rate of acclimation for children is slower than that of adults. A child needs as many as 8 to 10 days (45-60 minutes/day) in the new climate to acclimate sufficiently. Such exposures can be taken at a rate of one per day or one every other day. A majority of the benefits of acclimatization occur in the first 4-6 days and hence this should be an absolute minimum amount of time provided to children before intense practice and game situations are enacted. During the acclimation process, it's important to drink adequate amounts of fluid to build blood plasma volumes.

When a child becomes heat acclimated, the child's sweat rate and total sweat losses increase because they begin to sweat sooner and produce more sweat than before becoming acclimated. This allows the child to dissipate more body heat into the environment through sweat evaporation. When a child becomes acclimated and the child's sweat rate increases, it's important the child drink sufficient fluids to replace the increased sweat losses and stay hydrated. Medical staff, parents, players and coaches must understand that thirst is not a good indicator of a child's fluid needs, so children need to drink on a schedule (see FLUID GUIDELINES below).

Children must wear clothing that is light-colored and lightweight to facilitate evaporation of sweat. Parents and coaches should encourage breaks in a shaded area whenever possible, especially during tournaments, multi-game and multi-practice days. It's important to be aware of high temperatures and humidity and change practice and game times to cooler portions in the day, such as morning and dusk. Additionally, competitive rules need to be relaxed during hot weather playing conditions by allowing a 5-minute break in the middle of each half and allowing water bags to be carried by players during play. Practices must be modified based on conditions. Add rest breaks to lower core temperature and provide ample time to rehydrate.

ACTIVITY RESTRICTIONS FOR OUTDOOR PHYSICAL CONDITIONING IN HOT WEATHER

WBGT* Degrees C (Degrees F)	Flag Color	Guidance = for non-acclimatized personnel in boldface <i>Guidance for fully acclimatized personnel in italics</i>
less than 78.0 F	no flag	Extreme exertion may precipitate heat illness
78.0 F - 82.0 F	Green	Use discretion in planning intense exercise <i>Normal activity</i> Pay special attention to at-risk individuals in both cases.
82.1 F - 86.0 F	Yellow	Limit intense exercise to 1 hour, limit total outdoor exercise to 2.5 hours <i>Use discretion in planning intense physical activity</i> Pay special attention to at-risk individuals in both cases. Be on high alert: watch for early signs and symptoms in both cases.
86.1 F - 89.9 F	Red	Stop outdoor practice sessions and outdoor physical conditioning <i>Limit intense exercise to 1 hour, limit total outdoor exercise to 4 hours</i> Be on high alert: watch for early signs and symptoms throughout.
greater than 90 F	BLACK	Cancel all outdoor exercise requiring intense physical exertion

