

The purpose of the policy is to address safety and the heat acclimatization period of early season practice, which is considered the first 14 calendar days of football practice for a member school, commencing with the first day a school begins football practice.

During these first 14 calendar days of practice, it is recommended that an appropriate amount of practice time be spent on the basic fundamentals of blocking and tackling to ensure players are equipped to perform proper techniques before competing in a contest.

2026 Season Dates	Day of Week IHS Calendar Calendar	Football Calendar Day	Practice Type	Allowed Equipment
8/5/26	Wed. WK 5	1	Maximum 3 hours of practice with a 1-hour walk-through 3 hours rest between all practices and w-t	Helmet only
8/6/26	Thurs. WK 5	2	Maximum 3 hours of practice with a 1-hour walk-through 3 hours rest between all practices and w-t	Helmet only
8/7/26	Fri. WK 5	3	Maximum 3 hours of practice with a 1-hour walk-through 3 hours rest between all practices and w-t	Helmet & Shoulder Pads
8/8/26	Sat. WK 5	4	Maximum 3 hours of practice with a 1-hour walk-through 3 hours rest between all practices and w-t	Helmet & Shoulder Pads
8/9/26	Sun. WK 6	5	Day of rest - No practice allowed.	
8/10/26	Mon. WK 6	6	Maximum 3 hours of practice with a 1-hour walk-through 3 hours rest between all practices and w-t	Helmet & Shoulder Pads
8/11/26	Tues. WK 6	7	Maximum 5 hours of practice No single practice can exceed 3 hours. 3 hours rest between all practices	Full Pads
8/12/26	Wed. WK 6	8	Maximum 3 hours of practice with a 1-hour walk-through 3 hours rest between all practices and w-t	Full Pads
8/13/26	Thurs. WK 6	9	Maximum 5 hours of practice No single practice can exceed 3 hours. 3 hours rest between all practices	Full Pads
8/14/26	Fri. WK 6	10	Maximum 3 hours of practice with a 1-hour walk-through 3 hours rest between all practices and w-t	Full Pads
8/15/26	Sat. WK 6	11	Maximum 5 hours of practice No single practice can exceed 3 hours. 3 hours rest between all practices	Full Pads
8/16/26	Sun. WK 7	12	Day of rest - No practice allowed.	
8/17/26	Mon. WK 7	13	Maximum 5 hours of practice No single practice can exceed 3 hours. 3 hours rest between all practices	Full Pads
8/18/26	Tues. WK 7	14	Maximum 3 hours of practice with a 1-hour walk-through 3 hours rest between all practices and w-t	Full Pads

During the first five (5) days of practice for each player, athletes may not participate in more than 3 hours of practice per day (Wednesday of Week 5 – Monday of Week 6 in the IHSA standardized calendar).

If practice is interrupted for any reason, the practice should recommence once the conditions are deemed safe, but total practice time should not exceed three hours per day during the first 5 days of practice.

A one-hour maximum walk-through is permitted during the first five days of practice; however, a minimum of 3-hour recovery period should be inserted between the practices and walk-through (or vice-versa).

During the first two days of practice, helmets and appropriate footwear should be the only protective equipment permitted. During days three through six, helmets, shoulder pads and appropriate footwear should be the only protective equipment permitted. Beginning on calendar day seven (Tuesday of Week 6 in the IHSA standardized calendar), all protective equipment may be worn, and full contact may begin. Sunday of Week 6 and Sunday of Week 7 are rest days. Practice is not allowed on these Sundays.

Beginning no earlier than the 7th calendar day and continuing through the 14th day (Tuesday of Week 6 through Tuesday of Week 7 in the IHSA standardized calendar), 5-hour practice days must be followed by a 3-hour practice day. On 3-hour practice days, one walk-through is permitted, but it must be separated from the practice(s) by at least three hours of continuous rest. When a 5-hour practice day is followed by a rest day, another 5-hour practice day is permitted after the rest day.

On a 5-hour practice day, no single practice duration can exceed three hours total. Warm-up, stretching, cool-down, walk-through, conditioning, and weight room activities are included as part of the practice time.

All practices during the 14-day acclimatization period must be separated by at least three continuous hours of recovery in a cool environment, with no sport- or conditioning-related activity allowed (e.g. speed or agility drills, strength training, conditioning, or walk-through). Treatment with the athletic trainer, classroom work, and video review are allowed

Regardless of the conditioning program and conditioning status leading up to the first formal practice, all students-athletes (including those who arrive after the first day of practice) must follow the 14-day heat-acclimatization plan.

A walk-through is defined as a teaching opportunity with athletes not wearing protective equipment (helmets or shoulder pads). During a walk-through, no running or running activities by team members is allowed and no protective equipment of any kind should be present. A football should not be used during the one-hour walk-through. The walk-through is not part of the practice period on a three-hour practice day, and it can last no more than one (1) hour per day. The walk-through does not include conditioning or weight room activities.

By-law 5.072 specifies that a football player must participate in on-the-field practice for at least ninety (90) minutes per day on twelve (12) different days prior to playing in a contest. Practice on the day of a contest does not count toward this requirement.

Beginning in Week 8 of the IHSA standardized calendar and through the remainder of the season, full-contact is allowed in no more than 3 practices per week, and full-contact time is limited to no more than 90 minutes per week.

When schools conduct twice-daily practices, only one session per day may include full contact.

School Equipment Use

A member school may loan or rent any school-owned football player equipment only to its students

for use in summer camps and may loan or rent football helmets only to its students for use in 7 on 7 passing leagues conducted in compliance with the specifications of IHSA By-law 3.157.

Football Scrimmage Definition

Any action, regardless of whether it would involve 11 on 11, 9 on 8, 4 on 4, etc., which simulates any game play conditions where members of one school would be organized against members of one or more schools would be considered a scrimmage.

Weekly Player Limitations for Football

1. Individual players may participate in a maximum of two games per week. For the purposes of this section, a week is defined as the seven-day period running from Friday through the following Thursday.
2. If a player participates in two games on the same day, the player is limited to participating in a maximum of four total quarters within those two games.
3. If a player participates in two games on consecutive days, the player is limited to participating in a maximum of four total quarters within those two games.
4. Participating in one play counts as participating in a quarter.
5. Special teams players who only kick, punt, or hold for extra-point kicks and field goals are allowed to play in two games on the same day or on consecutive days with no quarter restrictions.
6. Individual players who only kick, punt, or hold for extra-point kicks and field goals in one game are allowed to play all four quarters at any position in another game that week.
7. When a game starts on one day and is delayed to the next day because of weather or other circumstances, players who participated in the portion of the game on the first day are allowed to participate in the portion of the game that resumes the following day.
8. Individual players are not allowed to participate in live contact or Thud in practice the day before or after participating in a game.