



Excessive Heat and AQI Policy

The health and safety of our players and coaches is paramount. GHSC practices and games may be cancelled due to extreme heat or unhealthy air quality. This decision is made by the President, the Director of Coaching and the Girl's Technical Director. We will always err on the side of caution when health and safety are involved. Please know that parents or guardians are the decision makers as to what is best for their player. In addition, coaches have the discretion to cancel practice even if the club does not. Again; parents/guardians may hold their kids out of practices or games even if the club/team does not cancel. There will be **no** negative repercussions for those players that are held out.

With regard to extreme heat:

When the temperature is between 95-102 degrees; at minimum, coaches are required to limit physical exertion and plan frequent water breaks. However; if we believe that conditions warrant, we will cancel practice. We tend to be more cautious with our younger players (Tots through U8) and may at times cancel practices for them, but allow practices for older age groups to continue under the aforementioned guidelines.

Again, if a coach believes that it is too hot for their team to practice, they have the discretion to cancel even if the club does not cancel. And parents/guardians may hold their kids out.

GHSC follows a general rule that if the forecast is for 103 degrees or higher at 5:00pm, practice is cancelled. However, if temperatures are forecast to be lower at 7:00pm (if the Delta Breezes kick in) we may offer our U9-U19 teams an opportunity to practice if they begin at that later time.

We also pay heed to [the US Soccer's Recognize to Recover Heat Guidelines](#) , paying particular attention to the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT), which takes into account five weather related factors to provide an accurate measurement of the environmental heat stress risk. For our area, a WBGT value above 92 (see the chart in the aforementioned US Soccer document) will result in GHSC cancelling practices or games.

We will do our best to have a decision made by 3:30pm during the week. However, a sudden change of conditions may dictate a more last minute decision. We will notify families via Byga, as well as notify coaches to contact their teams. For Saturday games, we will do our best to notify you the night before or no later than 7:30am Saturday morning.

For games played in hot weather, GHSC and our recreational playing partners cancel at 103 degrees. NorCal Premier League (our competitive league) lists 105 degrees as the temperature for cancellation. For games played in 95-102 degree heat, the referees will allow for extra water breaks. The number and duration of the breaks is at the referee's discretion. **Referees also have the discretion and authority to cancel games if they believe it is too hot to safely play. Their decision is final and cannot be challenged.**

With regard to air quality:

If there is a smell of smoke in our area, we will cancel. If you can smell smoke, you are breathing in particulate matter which is extremely unhealthy for all ages.

GHSC will use an average of 2 or 3 AQI sources in conjunction with other data points (forecast, map appearance and wind direction/forecast) to determine our recommendation/decision in the absence of smoke.

GHSC uses the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Air Quality Index values, which can be found on [Airnow.gov](https://www.airnow.gov).

For a comprehensive description of AQI measurements and values, please see the EPA's [Guide to Air Quality and Your Health](#).

When we have an AQI between 101-130 we may cancel for all age groups or we may cancel for our Tots-U8 or we may allow practices to continue under very strict guidelines. If GHSC allows practices to proceed; for those teams that wish to have practice, we require them to severely curtail physical activity and instead have a chalk talk with **very** low intensity drills. Coaches are encouraged to contact Director of Coaching Amsalu Fantahun or Girl's Technical Director Alexia Poon for ideas regarding the chalk talk and/or the very low intensity drills.

When we have an AQI of 131 and higher, we will cancel but will keep an eye on prevailing winds and potentially changing conditions. If the wind is clearing the air, we may allow our older (U14-U19) teams to begin practice at a later time if the AQI is back down to between 101-129. Again, coaches have the discretion to cancel anyway, and parents may hold their kids out as well.

For Recreational Games:

If the air quality deteriorates during the course of a game, as long as there is no smell of smoke, and the AQI remains under 130, the game will be allowed to continue;

When the AQI is 130 or higher, GHSC cancels all Recreational games.

For Competitive Games:

Our playing league, NorCal Premier has a policy that if the AQI is under 150, then games proceed.

We will do our best to have a decision made by 3:30pm during the week. However, a sudden change of conditions may dictate a more last minute decision. We will notify families via Byga, as well as notify coaches to contact their teams. For Saturday games, we will do our best to notify you the night before or no later than 7:30am Saturday morning.

If air quality becomes problematic once a practice or game begins, e.g. the smell of smoke is apparent and lingering for more than 5 minutes, then coaches/referees are required to cancel the practice or game.

Please note that if the decision is to cancel, the decision is final. Even if the AQI improves by practice time, the cancellation holds. Again, the health and safety our players and coaches is our top priority. We will err on the side of caution.