



Williamson County Soccer Association

Weather Policy

(Adopted August 2013; Updated July 2016)

1. Introduction

This document details WCSA policy in the event inclement weather threatens the WCSA Complex during a game day or evening. This Policy cannot, and does not, protect any or every individual from property damage or injury. A safe and effective response to inclement weather is the responsibility of the individual, parent, and/or guardian. WCSA does not assume any responsibility or liability for injury or property damage due to inclement weather.

2. Equipment

In September, 2012, WCSA purchased Gibson Ridge Level 3, Version 2.x radar software (the "Radar"). WCSA also purchased an Allison House subscription to provide data to the Radar, which has been installed on a desktop PC located in the WCSA Office. The Radar is configured to display precipitation, USPLN lightning data, Severe Thunderstorm and Tornado Watch boxes and Warning polygons. Two placefiles have been installed on the radar which label the exact location of the WCSA Complex, along with concentric circles depicting radii of 15, 12, 8 and 6 miles from the Complex. WCSA has purchased a NOAA weather radio as a secondary/backup source of warning information. WCSA has obtained access to a Kestrel handheld device to calculate temperature, dew point, relative humidity, and wind chill, for use in implementing the heat policy found in this document.

3. Weather Watcher

Radar will be monitored by a WCSA official or designee trained to understand the Radar and data displayed.

4. NWS & Contact Information

In the event any WCSA official has a question about the threat of a particular storm or the general threat for storms, he/she should dial the public number for the National Weather Service in Nashville: 615-754-8500. Questions about this policy, the Gibson Ridge radar, or any other matter may also be answered by contacting David Drobný at 615-202-2065 (cell).

5. Game Day Protocols

WCSA reserves the right to delay, suspend, or cancel play due to anticipated inclement weather conditions.

6. Game In-Progress Protocols

a. Suspensions & Cancelations

Decisions about suspension or cancellation of play will be made by any member of the Board, the Executive Direction, or the Executive Director's designee.

b. Communication Methods/Dissemination

Suspension, resumption, cancellation, and related information will be announced over the public address loudspeaker and disseminated via @WCSAInfo (Twitter), the WCSA website, and on the WCSA Facebook page as quickly as practical. All information should also be disseminated via the Rained-Out text message service.

7. Lightning Protocols

a. Detection Methods – Referees and League Officials

This policy does not remove decision-making authority from a referee to suspend play in the event lightning is seen or thunder is heard. Every referee is permitted, unilaterally and at his/her discretion, to suspend play. When play is suspended, referees shall direct players, coaches, and spectators to a fully enclosed structure or vehicle to wait for the league decision on whether the game will resume. Referees shall not make the final decision to cancel a game.

WCSA officials are empowered to suspend play in the same manner as a referee. Gibson Ridge software and USPLN data will be utilized in the Field Office or remotely to determine the proximity of lightning to the Complex. Any WCSA official who observes lightning on the radar in proximity to the Complex based on the below criteria shall suspend and resume play as indicated.

A member of the Board, the Executive Director (or the Executive Director's designee) are the only persons with authority to cancel games.

b. Designated Lightning Shelters

In the event of lightning, all persons should be directed to fully enclosed indoor facilities and vehicles. The Indoor Soccer Arena shall be the primary shelter in the event of lightning.

If the Arena is closed, too far away, or crowded, people should be directed to their cars.

No place outside is safe if lightning is in the vicinity. Partially enclosed vending areas, the pavilion, and picnic shelters are not safe.

c. Suspension & Resumption Protocols

1. **15 miles** -- Lightning detected via Radar/USPLN data within **15 miles**

The following announcement is made over the loudspeaker:

Lightning has been detected within 15 miles of the WCSA Complex. Play may be suspended soon. Prepare to seek shelter in your car [or inside the Indoor Arena if it's open] if the decision is made to suspend play. Outdoor pavilions are not safe and should be abandoned.

The following will be posted on @WCSAInfo, the WCSA Facebook page, the WCSA website¹, and disseminated via Rained-Out:

Lightning has been detected within 15 miles. Seek shelter in cars or indoor arena if play is suspended.

2A. **12 Miles** -- Lightning detected within **12 miles and the storm is moving toward the Complex**

Play is suspended and evacuation of the fields begins. The following announcement is made:

A thunderstorm is moving toward the Complex. Play is suspended until further notice. Immediately leave your field and go to the Indoor facility or your vehicle, then await further instructions on Twitter @WCSAInfo, the WCSA Facebook page, or williamsoncountysoccer.com. Outdoor pavilions are not safe and should be abandoned.

The following will be posted on @WCSAInfo, the WCSA Facebook page, the WCSA website, and disseminated via Rained-Out:

Play is suspended due to lightning. Proceed to the indoor arena or to your car and await further information.

To improve lead time, any WCSA official or designee shall have the authority to suspend play if the storm 12 miles away is moving quickly toward the Complex and he/she believes it will impact the fields.

2B. **12 Miles** -- Lightning detected within **12 miles but no storm is moving toward the Complex**

Play will not be suspended.

3. **8 Miles** -- Lightning detected within **8 miles** of the Complex regardless of the direction of the storm.

Play is suspended.

¹ Website may not be updated on weeknights.

The following announcement is made:

Lightning has been detected within 8 miles of the Complex. Play is suspended until further notice. Immediately leave your field and go to the Indoor facility or your vehicle, then await further instructions on Twitter @WCSAInfo. Outdoor pavilions are not safe and should be abandoned.

The following will be posted on @WCSAInfo, the WCSA Facebook page, the WCSA website, and disseminated via Rained-Out:

Play is suspended due to lightning. Go to the indoor arena or to your car and await further information.

4. **Resumption of Play**

If suspended due to lightning, play resumes 30 minutes after the last detection of lightning within a 6 mile radius of the Complex. Play may also resume if 30 minutes have elapsed since the last observed occurrence of lightning and thunder.

If suspended due to other severe weather, play resumes after the storm has moved outside a 6 mile radius of the Complex. Lightning rules still apply.

WCSA officials/designees have authority to extend the waiting period beyond 30 minutes if deemed necessary.

8. **Severe Thunderstorm or Tornado Watch In Effect**

A watch indicates that conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop.

A warning means that severe weather has been detected and/or may be imminent. The NWS depicts the warned area in a polygon.

Storms do not always move in a predictable, linear fashion. Storms can also develop at or near the Complex and intensify before they are seen on radar.

1. Severe Thunderstorm Watch or Tornado Watch Issued for the WCSA Complex

The following will be posted on @WCSAInfo, the WCSA Facebook page, the WCSA website, and disseminated via Rained-Out:

The Soccer Complex is under a [Severe Thunderstorm or Tornado] Watch. Consult reliable weather sources for additional information.

2. Severe Thunderstorm Warning or Tornado Warning Issued for the WCSA Complex

In the event the Complex is inside a Tornado Warning polygon, the following announcement is made:

The National Weather Service has issued a [Severe/Tornado] Warning for the WCSA Complex. [Read the warning information in the text of the warning]

The following will be posted on @WCSAInfo, the WCSA Facebook page, the WCSA website, and disseminated via Rained-Out:

The NWS has issued a [Severe/Tornado] Warning for our fields. There is no structure on the premises guaranteed safe from a [severe thunderstorm/tornado].

9. Heat Policy

a. Game Days

WCSA hereby abandons the heat index metric to determine whether the heat and humidity is too high to play. WCSA shall use the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) as a measuring tool, and will purchase or otherwise acquire use of a Kestrel 5400 Heat Stress Tracker to measure actual conditions on the field during Game Days. Play may be suspended to allow for breaks on game days. The following is adapted from U.S. Soccer Heat Guidelines²:

1. WBGT 82.0° - 87.1°

U11-U12: Halftime break increased from 5 minutes to 10 minutes.

U14+: Halftime break increased from 5 minutes to 12 minutes.

2. WBGT 87.1° - 90.0°

U7-U8: 2 minute breaks during each quarter increased to 4 minutes.

U9-U10: 5 minute halftime increased to 10 minutes.

U11-U12: Halftime break increased from 5 minutes to 10 minutes.

U14+: Halftime break increased from 5 minutes to 12 minutes.

3. WBGT 90.0° - 91.9°

U5-U6: 2 minute breaks during each quarter increased to 4 minutes.

U7-U8: 2 minute breaks during each quarter increased to 4 minutes.

U9-U10: Midway through each half, the referee shall halt play and enforce a 4 minute break. Halftime remains 5 minutes.

U11-U12: Midway through each half, the referee shall halt play and enforce a 4 minute break. Halftime increased from 5 minutes to 8 minutes.

U14+: Midway through each half, the referee shall halt play and enforce a 4 minute break. Halftime increased from 5 minutes to 8 minutes.

²http://www.illinoisyouthsoccer.org/docs/CoachesHome/CoachingArticles/Heat%20Guidelines_pdf%20poster.pdf

4. WBGT 92.0° or Higher – no games shall be played.

When any of the above is in effect, WSCA officials shall communicate to the coaches (U5-U6) and center referees what actions to take. The WSCA official(s) may use the public address system and/or @WCSAInfo, the WSCA Facebook page, the WSCA website³, and Rained-Out as deemed most effective.

Coaches shall comply with this policy or face discipline, including, but not limited to, suspension. Break time requires rest and hydration, and should occur inside any shaded area where possible. No practice or other similar physical activity shall occur during break times.

b. Practices

Coaches shall be cognizant of the dangers of heat-related illness and require all players to take frequent water, rest, and shade breaks.

³ The website may not be updated on weeknights.