Loudoun Soccer Extreme Cold Weather Policy

Overview:

Loudoun Soccer conducts numerous outdoor activities during the winter months. These events may encounter extreme cold weather. The following are guidelines to follow in determining whether activities should take place, be modified, or be canceled outright.

Determining Factors:

The Wind Chill Index should be used to determine whether activities occur. The Wind Chill Index was developed by the National Weather Service and updated in 2001 to describe the relative discomfort/danger resulting from the combination of wind and temperature. Factors that determine the Wind Chill Index include temperature, wind speed, relative humidity and sunshine.

Session Status:

Travel teams that rent field space at Loudoun Soccer Park must follow these guidelines:

- 30 degree wind chill and warmer: sessions should take place as scheduled with all players in appropriate clothing
- 29 degree wind chill and cooler: teams may cancel their field rental at their discretion without cost or penalty. A team representative (coach or manager) MUST communicate via email to Caroline Deutsch at caroline@loudounsoccer.com by 12pm of the day of the rental if they wish to cancel their rental with no charge; this policy will be amended at a later date to reflect rentals at Evergreen Sportsplex.

Teams that elect to train in these conditions MUST ensure their players are dressed appropriately (see below) and should modify their sessions accordingly. Players who do not dress appropriately should be prohibited from participating.

Please note that Loudoun Soccer reserves the right to cancel sessions at its discretion, both for club programs (Sunday Club Training, Winter League, Winter Goalkeeper Academy, etc) and individual team rentals.

Recommended Strategies for Training in Cold (from 2013-14 NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook):

Clothing:

Individuals should be advised to dress in layers and try to stay dry. Moisture, whether from perspiration or precipitation, significantly increases body heat loss. Layers can be added or removed depending on temperature, activity and wind chill.

- Begin with a wicking fabric next to the skin; wicking will not only keep the body warm and dry, but also eliminates the moisture retention of cotton. For example, polypropylene and wool can wick moisture away from the skin and retain insulating properties when wet.

- Add lightweight pile or wool layers for warmth and use a wind-blocking garment to avoid wind chill.
- Because heat loss from the head and neck may account for as much as 40 percent of total heat loss, the head and ears should be covered during cold conditions.
- Hand coverings should be worn as needed, and in extreme conditions, a scarf or face mask should be worn. Mittens are warmer than gloves.
- Feet can be kept dry by wearing moisture-wicking or wool socks that breathe and should be dried between wears.

Energy/Hydration:

Maintain energy levels via the use of meals, energy snacks and carbohydrate/electrolyte sports drinks. Negative energy balance increases the susceptibility to hypothermia. Stay hydrated, since dehydration affects the body's ability to regulate temperature and increases the risk of frostbite. Fluids are as important in the cold as in the heat. Avoid alcohol, caffeine, nicotine and other drugs that cause water loss, vasodilatation or vasoconstriction of skin vessels.

Fatigue/Exhaustion:

Fatigue and exhaustion deplete energy reserves. Exertional fatigue and exhaustion increase the susceptibility to hypothermia, as does sleep loss.

Warm-up and Session Length:

Warm up thoroughly and keep warm throughout the practice or competition to prevent a drop in muscle or body temperature. Time the warm-up to lead almost immediately to competition. After competition, add clothing to avoid rapid cooling.

Warm extremely cold air with a mask or scarf to prevent bronchospasm.

Session length may be decreased from 90 minutes to 60 minutes in more extreme circumstances to minimize exposure to the cold.

Partner:

Participants should never train alone. An injury or delay in recognizing early cold exposure symptoms could become life-threatening if it occurs during a cold-weather workout on an isolated trail.