

ARTICLE 7
LIMITATION OF SEASONS

Section 1. RATIONALE FOR THE LIMITATION OF SEASONS

Since the school by virtue of the regulations of the RIASP and its Committee on Athletics has some control over what students do out of school after school hours, it would seem important that school authorities be aware of the kinds of organized competitive athletics their students participate in on their own. Various leagues are sponsored by a wide variety of community groups. If the same consideration for the health, safety, and education of the young people is not followed by these community sponsors, the health and safety of students might be impaired. The school's interest and concern with this problem should be made known and appropriate guidance given to the community sponsoring groups.

A. No student below Grade 9 will be allowed to practice or play with any high school freshman, junior varsity or varsity team.

Section 2. DEFINITION OF A GAME

- A. A game (See Article 1, Section 3, paragraph I) is any competition between two or more schools, i.e. RIIL League or non-league RIIL games exclusive of scrimmages, which meets any of the following conditions:
1. teams wearing game uniforms
 2. paid officials
 3. there is an admission charge, either by sale of tickets, or by collection, or by donation; and/or, results of the contest appears in any newspaper.
 4. A scrimmage shall be defined as a controlled practice supervised by coaches which does not meet any requirements for a game.
- B. Schools are required to submit and list all varsity games (League and Non-League) on the RIIL online team schedule at www.riil.org. This includes any out of state games that have been approved and sanctioned by the RI Interscholastic League.

Section 3. LIMITATION OF SEASONS

A. **Fall Sports:** Football, Soccer (Boys & Girls), Cross Country (Boys & Girls), Tennis (Girls), Field Hockey (Girls) and Volleyball (Girls).

1. **OPENING DATE: August 21, 2017 (Except for Football-opening date August 10, 2017)**
2. **CLOSING DATE:** Immediately after RIIL games have been concluded except meets or tournaments sanctioned by the RIIL to determine championships.
3. Number of League games and Non-League games:

# of League Games	# of Non- League Games	Total # of games (cap)
14	4	18
15	3	18
16	3	19
17	3	20
18	2	20

Notes:

- For B/G Volleyball a tournament that runs over the course of one day is equivalent to one (1) game against the cap.
- (Game cap in soccer is 20)
- For Football: During the regular season and post season, no football player is allowed to participate in more than ninety (90) minutes of full contact practice per week.

These contact levels are defined below:

Air: Players should run unopposed without bags or any opposition

Bags: activity is executed against a bag, shield or pad to allow for a soft-contact surface, with or without the resistance of a teammate or coach standing behind the bag.

Wrap: Drills run at full speed until contact, which is above the waist with the players remaining on their feet.

Thud: Same as wrap but tempo is competitive with no pre-determined winner and the players are not tackling to the ground.

B. Fundamentals for Minimizing Head Impact Exposure and Concussion Risk in Football

1. Full-contact should be limited during the regular season. For purposes of these recommendations full-contact consists of both “Thud” and Live Action” using the USA Football definitions of *Levels of Contact*.

Rationale: By definition, “Thud” involves initiation of contact at full speed with no pre-determined winner, but no take-down to the ground. Accordingly, the task force supports that initial contact, particularly with lineman, is just as violent with “Thud” as with “Live Action.” However, the task force also recognized that “Live Action” likely carries a higher risk for other injuries to the body than does “Thud.” The USA Football Levels of Contact “Air,” Bags” and “Control” are considered no- or light-contact and thus no limitations are placed on their use.

C. **PRE-SEASON HEAT-ACCLIMATIZATION RULES FOR ALL FALL SPORTS**

Intent: To provide pre-season acclimatization rules prior to the season for student athletes with the purpose of minimizing injury and enhancing the player’s health, performance, and well-being.

Core Principals:

1. *Acclimatization Period:* The first six days of RIIL approved practice will consist of no more than three (3) hours of practice time.
 - a. For Field Hockey, a goalie helmet may be worn on the first two days. Beginning on the third (3rd) day, full protective (field hockey goalie) gear is permitted
 - b. For Football: helmets only (days 1-2); helmets and shoulder pads (days 3 – 5).
2. *Scrimmages/Games:*
 - a. A student/athlete shall not be permitted to participate in a scrimmage until he/she has completed five (5) days of practice for all sports. Football: Full pads after five (5) days.
 - b. Number of practices (prior to the first game) is ten (10). The first 5 days – no scrimmages; during the next 5 days scrimmages would be allowed. Games (in accordance with our rules) may begin on the 11th day of practice
3. *Rest Period:* During the first 14 days – No Sunday practices, games, scrimmages, walk-throughs, or other athletic activity.
4. *3 – 5 Practice Rule:* Days 8 – 13. The maximum allotted time per day for practice is 5 hours. A 5-hour practice day may not be followed by a practice day greater than 3 hours; therefore, practice days may follow a 3hr-5hr-3hr-5hr format.
5. *Recovery Period:* On days 6-14 a minimum of a three (3) hour recovery period must be provided after any session of greater than 2 hours in length. A three-hour recovery period must be provided before a walkthrough
6. Double sessions on the same day count as one (1) practice day.
7. Any student-athlete or transfer student who joins the team after the official starting date or mid-season must have the minimum number of practices as listed above.

Definitions:

Practice – the time a player engages in physical activity. It is recommended that any practice session be no greater than three (3) hours in length. Warm-up-stretching, conditioning, weight training and ‘cool-down’ periods are **all considered practice**.

Chalk talk, skull sessions, film review are not considered practice time.

Note: Practice sessions may be divided while adhering to the time restrictions as described above in #4.

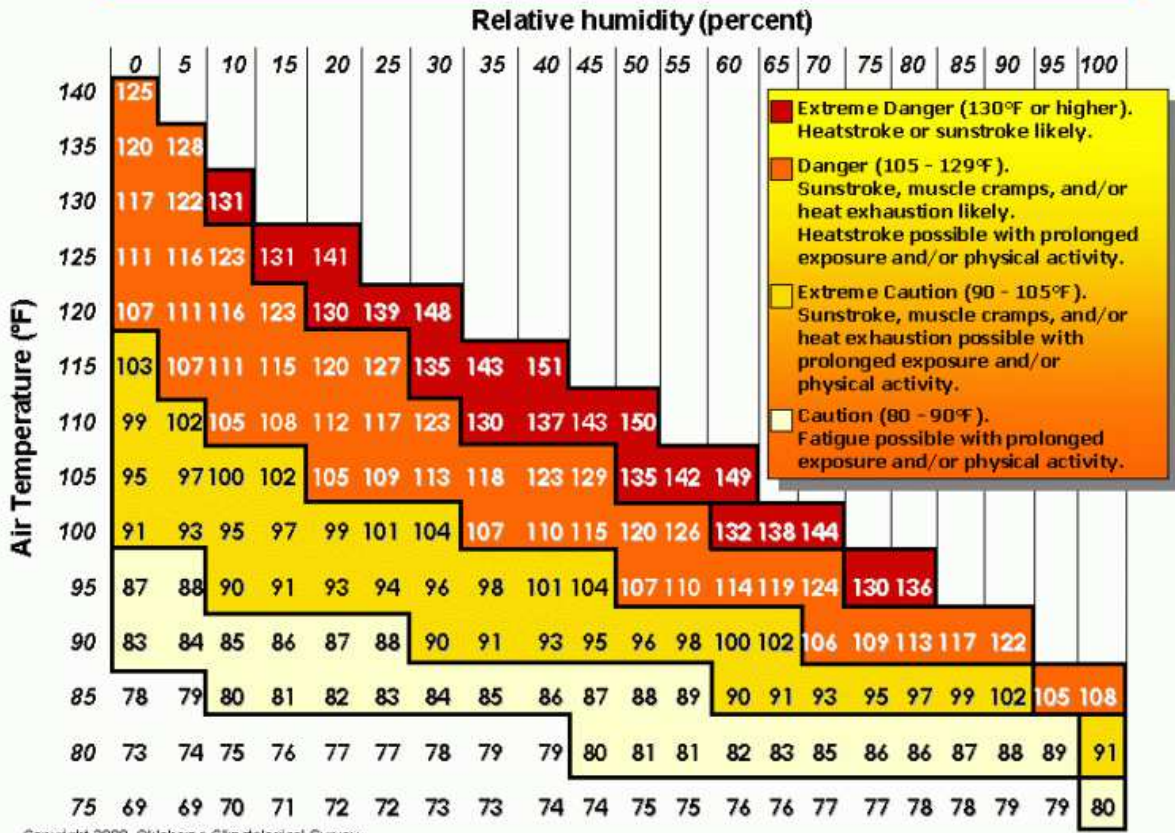
Example: 3 Hour Day: one 3-hour practice or two 1 ½ hour practices

5 Hour Day: one 3-hour practice and one 2-hour practice or one 2 ½ hour practice and one 2 ½ hour practice

Walk-through – No protective equipment or strenuous activity permitted. Only balls and field markers (cones) may be used.

Heat Index

how hot the combination of temperature and humidity feels



Fall Heat Acclimatization Guidelines

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Day 1 3 total hours of practice 1 hour walkthrough * Football Helmets Only	Day 2 3 total hours of practice 1 hour walkthrough * Football Helmets Only	Day 3 3 total hours of practice 1 hour walkthrough * Football Helmets and Shoulder pads only	Day 4 3 total hours of practice 1 hour walkthrough * Football Helmets and Shoulder pads only	Day 5 3 total hours of practice 1 hour walkthrough * Football Helmets and Shoulder pads only	Day 6 3 total hours of practice/scrimmage 1 hour walkthrough * Scrimmages permitted Football full pads
Day 7 Rest - no practice	Day 8 5 total hours of practice	Day 9 3 total hours of practice 1 hour walkthrough *	Day 10 5 total hours of practice	Day 11 3 total hours of practice 1 hour walkthrough * Scrimmage vs opponents in football	Day 12 5 total hours of practice	Day 13 3 total hours of practice 1 hour walkthrough *
Day 14 Rest - no practice						

* = walkthrough permitted after 3 hours of complete rest between session

- In general, athletes do not voluntarily drink sufficient water to prevent dehydration during physical activity.
 - Drink early, by the time you're thirsty, you're already dehydrated.
 - Drink before, during, and after practices and games. Specifically, the *American College of Sports Medicine* recommends the following:
 - Drink 16 ounces of fluid 2 hours before exercise.
 - Drink another 8 to 16 ounces 15 minutes before exercise.
 - During exercise, drink 4 to 16 ounces of fluid every 15 to 20 minutes.
 - The NFHS SMAC strongly recommends that coaches, certified athletic trainers, physicians, and other school personnel working with athletes not provide or encourage use of any beverages for hydration of these youngsters other than water and appropriate sports drinks. They should also make information on the potential harm and lack of benefit associated with many of these other beverages available to parents and athletes.
- C. **WINTER SPORTS:** Basketball (Boys & Girls), Cheerleading, Gymnastics, Hockey, Winter Track (Boys & Girls), Swimming and Wrestling.

1. OPENING DATE: Monday, November 27, 2017

Exception: Girls Ice Hockey opening date is Monday, November 13, 2017.

Exception: Boys Ice Hockey opening date is Thursday, November 16, 2017.

- A student/athlete shall not be permitted to participate in a scrimmage until he/she has completed five (5) days of practice for all sports.
 - Games may begin on the 11th day.
2. **CLOSING DATE:** Immediately after RIIL games have been concluded or the scheduled manual date for the beginning of practice for the spring sports, whichever is later, except tournaments or meets sanctioned by the RIIL to determine championships.

Hockey Round Robin or RIIL contests shall not be scheduled before the first Friday of December. Basketball, Swimming, Track, Wrestling, or Gymnastic Round Robin or games shall not be scheduled before the second Friday of December.

3. Number of League games and Non-League games:

<i>Sport</i>	<i># of League Games</i>	<i>Maximum # of Games (Cap)</i>
Basketball	18	22
Ice Hockey	18	24
Gymnastics	6	14
Indoor track	4	14
Swim	7	18
Wrestling	16	20
		Note: This includes a max of 5 tournaments)
Cheerleading	12	12

4. PRACTICE LIMITATIONS:
- Number of practices (prior to the first game) is ten (10). The first 5 days – no scrimmages; during the next 5 days scrimmages would be allowed. Games (in accordance with our rules) may begin on the 11th day of practice.
 - Double sessions on the same day count as one (1) practice day.
 - Any student-athlete or transfer-student who joins the team after the official starting date or mid-season must have the minimum number of practices as listed above for each sport.
 - Student-athletes who participate in fall sports and come out for winter sports shall be exempt from practice limitations and conditioning periods.
5. The official start time for winter sports (boys’ and girls’ basketball and wrestling) will be 7:00 pm. However, schools may schedule their home contests at a different time, provided they contact the visiting school to confirm the starting time.
- D. **SPRING SPORTS:** Baseball, Golf, Spring Track (Boys and Girls), Lacrosse (Boys and Girls), Softball (Girls), Tennis (Boys) and Volleyball. (Boys).

1. OPENING DATE: March 19, 2018

Start of the Season for Baseball Only:

- Teams may allow two (2) catchers and up to eight (8) pitchers (Grades 9 – 12) to report one week prior to the start of the spring season. Date to be determined by the RIIL (March 12, 2018).
 - Pre-season conditioning is for 5 days only. (March 12-16, 2018).
 - Recommend a pre-season conditioning program developed and coordinated by a certified athletic trainer or other medical doctor.
 - All athletes must be eligible by all RIIL Rules
 - Athlete cannot simultaneously be playing on another RIIL team i.e. winter sport.

Start of the Season for Fast Pitch Only:

- Teams may allow two (2) catchers and up to four (4) pitchers (Grades 9 – 12) to report one week prior to the start of the spring season. Date to be determined by the RIIL (March 12, 2018).
 - Pre-season conditioning is for 5 days only. (March 12-16, 2018)
 - Recommend a pre-season conditioning program developed and coordinated by a certified athletic trainer or other medical doctor.
 - All athletes must be eligible by all RIIL Rules

2. Number of League games and Non-League games:

# of League Games	# of Non- League Games	Total # of games (cap)
14	4	18
15	3	18
16	3	19
17	3	20
18	2	20

Note 1: For B/G Volleyball a tournament that runs over the course of one day is equivalent to one (1) game against the cap.

Note 2: For Golf: The maximum number of golf matches is twelve (12) i.e. eight (8) league and four (4) non-league.

Note 3: Number of League meets for outdoor track is 4 – Meet Cap is 14.

3. PRACTICE LIMITATIONS:
 - a) Extend the number of practices (prior to the first game) to 10.
 - b) A student/athlete shall not be permitted to participate in a scrimmage until he/she has completed five (5) days of practice for all sports.
 - c) Games (in accordance with our rules) may begin on the 11th day of practice.
 - d) Double sessions on the same day count as one (1) practice day.
 - e) Any student-athlete or transfer-student who joins the team after the official starting date or mid-season must have the minimum number of practices as listed above for each sport.
 - f) Student-athletes who participate in Winter sports and come out for spring sports shall be exempt from practice limitations and conditioning periods.
4. Rescheduling of a game(s) which result in no game(s) being played during the annual spring recess will result in a forfeiture of the rescheduled games.

Notations:

1. The number of games allowed in each sport for one season does not count the Injury Fund and/or RIIL Playoffs or Sanctioned Championships.
2. All games and scrimmages out-of-state must be sanctioned by RIIL.
3. There will be no spring practice for fall sports.
4. Cancellation or forfeiting of a RIIL contest is not allowed without prior consent and will be subject to penalties as outlined in Article 6.
5. No RIIL contest will be scheduled to begin before 12 noon on Sundays.

Section 4. NON-LEAGUE GAMES

- A. Schools are required to submit-and list all varsity games (League and Non-League) on the RIIL online team schedule at www.riil.org. This includes any out of state games that have been approve and sanctioned by the RI Interscholastic League.

Section 5. ALL STAR COMPETITION/GAMES

- A. No athletic team from any school shall compete against any all-star team.

The Committee on Athletics may sanction only one all-star game per sport provided the game is played during the regular season of the sport involved.

Section 6. NON-SCHOOL COMPETITION AND LOYALTY TO SCHOOL TEAM

- A. Definition of school sports season - A school sports season shall be defined as the period beginning with the date of the school's first practice with any part of a sports squad and ending with the school's last contest, including district and state tournament contests, in that sport.
- B. Definition of Organized Non-School Competition - organized non-school competition shall be defined as any game(s) which is sponsored by an individual or organization and for which any of the following have been prearranged: coach, official(s), scorer, or team membership.

- C. A member of a school team is defined as a student-athlete who is listed on a freshman, junior varsity, or varsity Eligibility List who is regularly present for and/or actively participates in, all team practices and competitions.
1. Bonafide members of a school team are prevented from missing a practice or competition to compete with an "out-of-school" team.
 2. If a conflict arises between the high school team practice/competition and ***an out-of-school practice/competition*** on the same day, the high school team practice/competition must be honored by the student-athlete. Priority/loyalty must be given at all times to the high school team practices and contests unless a waiver has been granted by the Principal and Athletic Director on a case-by-case basis.
 3. ***Student-athletes may be a member of and compete for "out-of-school" teams if the conditions set forth in #1, 2, and 3 above are met.***
 4. **Penalties:**
 - a. Any student-athlete who is in violation shall be ineligible for the next two (2) consecutive RIIL **League** contests in which the student-athlete is a participant. This penalty is effective from the date of his/her last participation in a high school sport and may carry over to the next sports season in which s/he participates.
 - b. Any student-athlete who is found to be in violation of the rule a second (2nd) time or subsequent time(s) shall be ineligible for participation for the rest of that sport season. ***A student-athlete found to be in violation of Article 7, Section 6c at the end of that sport season shall be ineligible for the first two (2) RIIL League contests of the same sport in the following year. If the student-athlete has senior eligibility, s/he shall be ineligible for the first two (2) contests of the next sport in which s/he participates. In both instances, the student-athlete may be declared ineligible for participation in all interscholastic athletics for his/her school for the remainder of the school year.***

Section 7. COACHING DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR

- A. During the academic year:
1. The high school coach(s) **may not** coach:
 - a. prospective member(s) of a high school, club, freshman, junior varsity or varsity team during the off season of his/her sport
 2. Schools should obtain and maintain an up-to-date active roster of athletes participating on non-school athletic teams during the school year. The RIIL may request the school(s) to submit the roster of active members of a non-school team should a question of RIIL eligibility arises.

EXCEPTIONS:

1. **Coaches may coach students during the off season who have exhausted their athletic eligibility in their particular sport.**
2. **Member school coaches may coach or instruct their son or daughter in the sport they coach during the school year.**

Section 8. GUIDELINES FOR INTRAMURALS, WEIGHT TRAINING AND OPEN GYM (Athletic Facilities)

- A. Schools may provide students opportunities for Intramurals, weight training and open athletic facilities during the school year provided the criteria listed below is followed.
1. the time and day(s) of the open athletic facilities and weight training are to be made known to the entire student body by the administrator through announcements, bulletin board postings and social media, etc.
 2. the weight training area and athletic facilities must be open to anyone enrolled in the school and must be on a voluntary basis. Coaches cannot mandate attendance of team members or potential team members.
 3. The open athletic facilities cannot precede, follow or be in conjunction with an off-season conditioning program.
 4. During the school year, no coach (including assistants, volunteers, etc.) can be present in any open athletic facilities if students (grades 9-12) are participating in the coach's out of season sport.

5. The person(s) in charge of supervising the open athletic facilities may not organize, coach or instruct students in any sport not in season.
6. Students participating in weight training and open athletic facilities must furnish their own clothing (sweat shirts, shorts, shoes, etc.) No equipment is to be used that is specific and/or unique to any particular sport.
7. Schools may furnish basketballs, volleyballs, basketball standards, volleyball standards, floor mats and wrestling mats, etc.

Violations:

1. Making the open athletic facilities available only to specific sport participants.
2. The coach being present or in the vicinity during any open athletic facility time block of his/her sport.
3. Select group of students working out in the athletic facilities at times other than the open athletic facilities period.

Note:

An “open athletics facilities” program is one in which a variety of recreational type activities are offered, i.e., badminton, basketball, volleyball, table tennis, and the like. Coaches at any level may not be present when their specific sport activity is a part of the Open-Gym program.

Responsibility for monitoring Open-Gym

Programs should be with the Athletic Director and Principal of the school. All specific sport activities have to be recreational in nature; therefore, practice routines, such as, softball/baseball pitching. Catching and batting, football place-kicking, golfing/putting, and similar routines are always interpreted as an attempt to circumvent the out-of-season rule.

- B. Summer Sport Camps are held in the summer months, whose purpose is to improve the skill level of athletes in a sport.

Member schools are permitted to host summer camps provided the following standards are met:

1. Attendance is during the summer only (beginning 6/15)
 2. Summer sport camps cannot be used to recruit athletes (see Article 3, Section 10)
 3. Summer athletic camps that are run by a school and offer financial assistance to athletes, must have the financial assistance program approved by the RIIL
- C. Summer programs involving high school coaches coaching their own students can begin on **June 15**, of any given school year. Students still involved in RIIL playoffs may not participate until their playoffs have ended.
- D. Summer programs involving high school coaches coaching their own students who will participate on fall teams must complete play prior to the submission of the varsity eligibility list to the RIIL Office.
- E. Students whose names are removed from school's varsity eligibility list are free to participate in outside programs but may not return to play for the school's varsity teams. However, they may participate in the junior varsity program(s) of that sport.
- F. Students who participate in outside programs as individuals not representing their school nor using school uniforms or equipment do not violate the simultaneous participation rule.
- G. Use of School Equipment during the summer – See Article 6, Section 14.
- H. **Captain's Practice:** The term “Captain's Practice” usually means the team's captain(s) organizing and conducting, ***without adult supervision***, out-of-season practice for that sport.

The RIIL does not in any way sanction, encourage, or condone “Captain’s Practice” in any sport. “Captain’s Practice”, depending on the member schools’ involvement, may be a clear violation of the rules defining season limitations.

Even though coaches are not present, allowing captain’s practice to be held on school grounds may constitute that the school has organized, encouraged or condoned the activity.

There is also a serious practical consideration. If it can be demonstrated that a school is allowing “Captain’s Practice”, the liability responsibility for an injured athlete may be quite serious.

We strongly recommend that member schools communicate their stance on captain’s practices to coaches, students and parents so that there is no confusion. In many cases, students and parents perceive that this type of activity is organized and administered by the school and there is an obligation for students to participate.

Section 7. NATIONAL FEDERATION SANCTIONS

National Federation Sanction forms are available at the RIIL office and on the RIIL web-site. (<http://www.riil.org>).

Updated 4/19/17