

## **RISK MANAGEMENT INFONET: RM 5 WET WEATHER GUIDELINES**

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The health and safety of members is a primary concern to Netball Victoria. Every club within Victoria has a responsibility to provide a safe environment for players, coaches, umpires and spectators, not only to reduce the potential of injury but also to meet legal duties of care. Clubs must take responsibility to develop guidelines for cancelling netball during wet weather.

Netball is played all year round and has traditionally been a winter sport. This means that on more than one occasion during the year an Association will be faced with making a decision to cancel or continue to play matches during wet weather. It is obviously preferable that games are not cancelled. However, if the courts become dangerous it is in the best interest of all to cancel games. Safety of members is paramount.

### **WHO WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING THE DECISION?**

The committee of management is responsible for making decisions in relation to wet weather. This may be to postpone the game, move to another court/venue or cancel the match. The decision should be based on participant safety, determining whether the wet weather increases the risk of injury beyond an acceptable level. It is advisable to consult the officiating umpires when making this decision.

In some circumstances where matches are played at different venues ie: Football Netball Leagues and there may not be a committee member present, each club should have a designated representative to make this decision and consult the umpires to make an informed decision.

Netball Victoria's SafetyNet: Healthy Environments workshop provides valuable training in the area of risk management and all volunteers responsible for making decisions relating to safety are encouraged to attend.

### **WHEN SHOULD A GAME BE CANCELLED?**

Netball Victoria has developed a pre-match checklist (Infonet RM13) that can be used to assess the current status of the court and its surrounds. This checklist should be reviewed in light of changes in the weather conditions. As each court may vary in surface condition, position, drainage etc. courts should be audited individually and decisions made accordingly.

The age and skill level of players should also be considered. Children are susceptible to illness in cold climates, in particular thin/lean children because they have greater body surface to mass ratio from which to lose heat. Children also have a less developed perception of when they are cold and therefore may continue to exercise when they should actually stop. Coaches should pay particular attention to these factors when children are subjected to wet conditions, as water will enhance the loss of body heat.

### **IN WET OR COLD CONDITIONS**

- avoid standing exposed for long periods
- wet clothing should be changed as soon as practicable
- wear appropriate clothing

### HOW WILL THE DECISION BE COMMUNICATED TO TEAMS OR TEAM MANAGEMENT?

The Association should develop procedures to notify participants of cancellations.

Option 1: All teams required to report to the courts.

Option 2: Association to make a decision by a designated time and notify appointed team representative who passes the message on to their team.

### CAN PLAYERS AND UMPIRES WEAR MATCHING TRACKSUIT PANTS IN EXTREMELY COLD WEATHER?

Yes, an Association add a clause to their By-Laws that allows the competition convenor to permit the wearing of tracksuit pants in extreme circumstances.

### WHAT HAPPENS IF A MATCH IS CANCELLED AFTER THE MATCH HAS STARTED?

Option 1: Teams are awarded two points each.

Option 2: If the match is cancelled after half time, the current score stands. If cancelled prior to half time, teams are awarded two points each.

### WHAT HAPPENS IF THE FIRST ROUND HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND MATCHES ARE CANCELLED PRIOR TO THE NEXT ROUND?

Option 1: If more than half the matches in any section are completed, then scores stand for those matches, all other teams receive two points each.

Option 2 : If less than half the matches in any section are completed, then all teams in that section receive two points each.

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