

DAKOTA ALLIANCE SOCCER CLUB

Soccer Weather Policy

Weather conditions are the responsibility of the game officials (Referees), coaches, tournament directors and club administrators. All should be aware of the potential dangers posed by different weather conditions and work together to keep the players and other participants as safe as possible. If the weather conditions warrant, game officials and coaches should discuss before the game starts what the procedures will be to ensure the safety of the players and spectators. Tournament Directors should monitor weather conditions including any warnings and watches issued by the National Weather Service. In the event of sudden changes, the tournament directors should have a means of sending warnings to the site officials. A weather plan should be provided to the participating teams to allow a clear understanding of shelter locations, evacuation plans and how the weather will affect tournament results. Club administrators should perform similar functions for league play.

The following information applies to both games and other soccer activities.

Technology has improved the monitoring capability for all concerned. There are many new apps for phones and tablets that provide accurate and timely weather reports, forecasts and warnings. Lightning detectors can take the guesswork out of how far away lightning is. Cell phones and two-way radios can meet communication requirements to implement weather plans. DASC recommends using the “weatherbug” app as it has a lightning tracker.

Preliminary Concerns

It is strongly recommended that coaches all have the latest weather apps loaded on their phones. These apps should include instant weather conditions and lightning strike notification.

Conditions in one location may be very different from another, especially the further apart the two locations are. The coaches are responsible for keeping informed of the weather conditions at home, along their route to the game and at the match site. DASC will make any announcements pertaining to the suspension or postponement of league or tournament matches.

Severe Storms

Severe storms can produce high winds, heavy rain, hail, lightning, thunder and/or tornados. If a severe storm approaches the playing area, the safety of the players is the number one priority of coaches and referees, and may require that the game be suspended while shelter is sought. In the event the game is suspended, ALL participants MUST clear the field immediately and move into their cars or other permanent shelter.

High winds can create problems by dust and debris being in the air or blowing over objects. Heavy rain can create hazardous field conditions or lead to flash flooding. Hail can cause injury. Lightning and thunder is discussed separately below. Tornados are obvious dangers of any severe storm. Use common sense and seek shelter as appropriate.

Thunder and Lightning

Lightning is the second leading cause of storm-related deaths (flooding is first). Lightning can strike up to 10 miles outside of a thunderstorm, literally a bolt from the blue. The danger from lightning can persist for 20-30 minutes or more after a thunderstorm has passed. The National Weather Service does not issue watches or warnings for lightning by itself. However, the National Weather Service does advise that if you see a lightning bolt and hear the thunder in 30 seconds or less, you seek shelter and wait 30 minutes before resuming outdoor activity.

If a person can hear thunder, or see lightning, the danger already is present. A clear, sunny sky overhead with storm clouds nearby can still be dangerous.

Referees and Coaches should adhere to the following:

If lightning is within fifteen (15) miles, with or without hearing thunder, the game(s) or practice(s) should be suspended and shelter sought. A lightning detector or similar app can identify the distance accurately but may not be available. A rough guideline is to **measure the time between the lightning flash and hearing the corresponding thunder. If it is 30 seconds or less, seek shelter.** It may not be possible to determine which lightning strike generated which roll of thunder. A simple rule: **If you can see it or hear it, clear it!**

Dakota Alliance Soccer recommends that participants seek immediate shelter in their automobiles or a designated severe weather shelter, if there is one nearby. Smaller, open structures, tents, trees, isolated areas, etc, should be avoided. Cars, with windows rolled up or buses, can provide good shelter. Avoid contact with metal or other conducting materials to the outside surfaces. Do not stay in open, unprotected areas.

Games should not be restarted for at least 30 minutes after the last lightning strike is seen or roll of thunder is heard.

Tournaments should inform participating teams of notification and evacuation plans and shelters near the playing sites.

Games shall be considered completed if abandoned by match officials if one half of the match has been played. (Meaning the match has been suspended at halftime or into the second half)

In short,

please make sure to have a weather app downloaded to your phone - one that has a lightning tracker

if lightning is 15 miles or less --- vacate the field for 30 minutes --- if there are additional lightning strikes, the 30-minute timer restarts

if a game is called at halftime or into the 2nd half of a game, the game score at the time of the game being called will stand as an official result

Thank you all for what you do for DASC it is greatly appreciated!!