

Central Penn Youth Soccer League Lightning Policy

Purpose

To provide safe sport atmosphere during the soccer season for **Central Penn Youth Soccer League** Participants, Referees, Coaches, & Fans as well as establish guidelines and procedures for inclement weather. This policy serves to inform **CPYSL** Participants of the guidelines to utilize when thunderstorms approach.

Lightning Prediction

Lightning is a hazard that must be taken seriously by coaches, referees, parents, spectators and participants. Lightning is a form of electrical discharge between clouds or between a cloud and the ground. The discharge may take place between two parts of the same cloud, between two clouds or between a cloud and the ground. Thunder is the sound waves produced by the explosive heating of air in the lightning channel during the return. The average lightning strike is six miles long (but could strike from 20 miles away resulting in "a bolt out of the blue"), reaches 50,000 degrees Fahrenheit (four times as hot as the sun's surface), and voltage in a cloud-to-ground strike is 100 million to 1 billion volts. Thunder can only be heard about 12 miles away under quiet outdoor conditions. Ground-based items such as fences, trees, blades of grass, light poles, bleachers, dugouts and people emit varying degrees of induced electric activity which can act as a lightning rod. It is worth noting that many of the lightning deaths and injuries that occur each year are from the first lightning strike from an incoming storm or come from the rear of a storm that appears to have passed through an area.

Previously, many people have relied on the "Flash/Bang" technique (the sound of thunder will take five seconds to travel one mile) to measure their distance from lightning. You must be aware that on average, thunder can only be heard over a distance of only three to four miles. By the time you hear thunder, you are already well within the reach of a lightning strike. For this reason **Central Penn Youth Soccer League** has instituted a weather policy for when observed or heard lightning or thunder is present.

The CPYSL Lightning Policy is as follows:

1. Observed lightning or thunder heard will suspend play immediately, all participants, coaches, match officials, and fans shall seek shelter for a period of no less than 30 minutes. Additional strikes will reset the clock to 30 minutes until the threat has past. Fields with weather detection devises will add an additional level of precaution, their operation detecting that conditions are present even though no observed inclement weather may have

surfaced will also suspend play until the weather threat is no longer present. Use of good judgment, common sense, and precaution will only result in safety for all involved. Referees should feel, using their best judgment that if the potential threat is present, they have the authority to suspend the match.

2. Matches suspended before the start of the second half will be delayed and played in their entirety as possible so that teams traveling and match officials present can complete the scheduled game. Match delays shall not be longer than the match time scheduled, therefore a match consisting of two 30 minute halves should resume no later than 1 hour past the scheduled kick off (a match with two 25 minute halves should resume within 50 minutes of scheduled kick off). Matches unable to continue due to this time constraint or the inability to continue due to impending darkness shall be rescheduled dependent on field availability and played in their entirety. Match officials assigned shall do all within reason to complete their assigned match, if time delays interfere with assigned matches later in the day, please notify the assignor during the delay so that those matches can be re-assigned.
3. Matches being played and already into the second half will be considered valid, they will not be rescheduled, and the score will be entered into their respective division standings.
4. Referee fees: If the match has begun yet not entered the second half before suspension and the match cannot be completed as outlined above, then the referees will return match fees to the respective teams and file a match report outlining that the match was suspended for inclement weather and the league will pay one half match fees to the match officials. If the match has entered the second half, or the match is restarted and completed in its entirety from a suspension in the first half, the match officials will retain the match fees received from the teams.

Items to consider

- Stay tuned to local weather forecasts and radar if thunderstorms are predicted.
- Stay away from metal including fencing, bleachers, flagpoles, dugouts, sheds, and goals.
- Avoid high places, open areas, overhead wires and power lines, telephones and cellular phones, radios, isolated trees, picnic shelters, golf carts, or any type of standing water.
- If you are outside, the interior of a car, truck, or bus with a metal roof and the windows closed is relatively safe from lightning. To be safe, do not touch the metal on the inside of the vehicle.
- If you are outdoors with no shelter available, find a low spot away from trees, bleachers, fences, and other metal structures. Make sure the area is not prone to flooding.
- If you feel your hair suddenly stand on end, it means you may be a lightning target. Crouch low on the balls of your feet and try not to touch the ground with your knees or hands.
- Just because the skies look relatively clear, a lightning strike can still occur.