

## **Thunder & Lightning Delay Policy (If Necessary):**

All tournament games will utilize the following protocol in the event of lightning delays. (Games will be played through rain, depending upon safe field conditions).

All games must finish within their allotted time slot. An allotted time slot means kick-off time until five (5) minutes before the next scheduled kick-off.

### **Lightning Delay / Air Horn / Fields Cleared / Re-Start:**

- One single air horn means everyone should clear the fields. If you hear the single air horn sound, you must clear the fields for 20 minutes, minimum. Take shelter, preferably in your vehicle. Do not leave the facility unless instructed to do so via your team coach/representative, who will be given instructions directly from the tournament via email and/or text message.
- In lieu of an air horn sound, teams should also clear the field if the referee orders teams off the field following a notice from the Tournament Director/Site Director.
- When the air horn sounds for three consecutive times, or referees waive teams back on, it means all teams should re-take the fields, immediately.
- On-site Athletic Trainers, who have lightning detection equipment, will work with Site Coordinators and Tournament Directors to determine when it's safe to return to a field.
  
- No game may recommence without the authorization of the Tournament Directors, or the Site Coordinators via the Tournament Directors. Referees do not have the authority to restart matches on their own and must wait for notice to do so. Matches that restart without proper authorization will not have any moments of that match counted toward a final score. All scores are frozen at the time of a lightning delay and may only change via play in a match that has been properly authorized to resume.

### **Lightning delay occurrence during a game:**

- To ensure that all matches throughout the day get played the following procedures will be in place:
  - If a game is suspended due to a lightning delay in the **first half**:
    - Play will resume where the game left off, with the understanding that halftime will be reduced to one minute and as much of the second half should be played within the remaining time slot. Warm up time will be at the referee's discretion.
    - It is possible, that to remain on time with subsequent games being played on a particular field, that a game delayed in the first half may automatically be jumped to the start of the second half and resume with either a full, or an abbreviated, second half.
    - Each field, or site venue, may operate differently in terms of ending, or continuing, games based on time of day, number of games left to be played on a particular field, or additional circumstances.

- While unlikely, it is possible a game delayed in the first half can be considered “final” and the score stands. This course of action will be avoided at all costs but is a possibility due to multiple factors.
  - If a game is suspended due to a lightning delay in the **second half**, the game will be considered complete and over.
- The Tournament will do everything possible to get maximum minutes of each game played for every team. Circumstances may be different for every age group, field, and venue and decisions will be made accordingly. The Tournament Directors reserve the right to make any and all changes necessary to facility the completion of the tournament. Tournament Director decisions are final and not subject to protest.

**Lightning Delay Knock-on Effect:**

- If a lightning delay extends into the next game slot, the next game will begin as soon as possible.
  - When field space/daylight is available, games will be played in their entirety, just starting with a later kick-off time.
  - If necessary, each subsequent match following the lightning delay, will be shortened to bring games back in line with the originally allotted time slot.
    - Example: An open time slot the next game is 50 minutes. Teams will play two equal 25 min. halves even if their age group calls for 35 min halves.
- For the game that has not yet kicked off, the Tournament Directors will evaluate the weather and send communication directly to the team contacts as listed in Gotsoccer regarding possible later kickoff times, or venue changes.

While not perfect, we believe the above protocols will minimize the number of games affected by possible lightning delays.

**Please note that the Tournament Directors have final say over all actions and decisions made regarding Thunder & Lightning Delay Policy, Weather Policy, and game scheduling. This includes the amendment of the above policy as needed.**