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## PREPARATION FOR COLD WEATHER COMPETITION



It's time for tournaments! With the fall season fading into the past, club teams from coast to coast are hitting the road in search of tournament trophies during the winter months.

However, with freezing temperatures coming in to play, it's imperative that your players take proper precautions to protect themselves during cold weather competition.

### The Risks:

**Dehydration** - Cold weather respiration (breathing cold, dry air) forces the body to warm and humidify the air with every breath. The result is a significant loss of water. Coupled with a decreased desire to drink fluids, dehydration becomes a major cold weather concern ([UNH Media](#)).

**Frostbite** - Dehydration affects the body's ability to regulate heat and increases the risk of frostbite (freezing of superficial tissues of the face, ears, fingers and toes - [eMedicineHealth.com](#)).



**Hypothermia** - A more severe response to cold resulting from a significant drop in core body temperature. For more info check out [MayoClinic.com](#).

Before your players step onto the friggid field of battle, make sure they are prepared physically and dressed appropriately for the elements. It all starts with proper hydration.

**Proper Hydration** is the first step to preventing cold weather risks, and assuring your players compete at the highest level possible. [Click here](#) for a quick guide to proper hydration before, during, and after competition. Each club should take five minutes and shoot a bulk email to all tournament-bound teams with proper hydration guidelines.



Additionally, since a large amount of fluid is lost through respiration, a player can maximize his or her hydration usage by covering the mouth during competition. This heats the air before entering the lungs, allowing the body to exert less work to warm the air with each breath.

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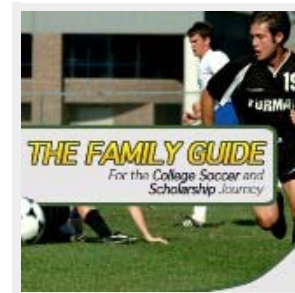
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**Proper Nutrition** regulates the core temperature, keeping the body warm while fueling the muscles. In order to heat the body, a young player's metabolism will increase to warm and humidify the air breathed. As a result, a soccer player will often burn more calories during cold weather competition.



For fuel, *The Administrator* suggests complex carbohydrates consumed 2 hours prior to exercise in addition to a balanced meal. Some practical choices include: soups, bread, bagels, pasta, baked potatoes, chili, cereals, and lean meats.

Additionally, players must continually replace carbohydrates being used for exercise as well as for warming the body. This is especially important for children, as they fatigue quicker. Plan ahead and bring energy bars, bananas, and other sources of energy. Shoot for 100-200 calories per snack every 45 minutes ([Moms Team](#)).

The organization should create a nutrition section on the club's website or blog. If one of your club members is a nutritionist, then the organization can host a Q&A [podcast](#). This would be a great source of information for all traveling soccer teams this winter.

**Proper Apparel** - You've probably heard it before, but layers are the player's best defense against the winter elements. Not only do layers maintain warmth better than one heavy layer, but they can be easily removed to accommodate varying temperatures. In addition to layers, a player should wear synthetic materials that keep moisture away from the skin.



Cotton garments are not a good option as they hold moisture. Instead opt for a material like polypropylene. Finally, keep your head covered. As much as 50% of heat loss can come from the head and neck.

Each club should provide the proper winter gear through their online club store. This is beneficial for parents and coaches as they can easily acquire matching club branded apparel during registration. Furthermore, the club as a whole stands to benefit through additional revenue generated with the sale of these items... and this is a good thing. Good luck this winter!

*The Administrator* wants to know about your organization. Do you provide the proper apparel for your club's players? Parents, do you know what foods to feed your young athletes? Coaches, what steps do you take to make sure your players are ready to play in winter weather? Post a comment below, send an email to [Jon@bluesombrero.com](mailto:Jon@bluesombrero.com) or call 404-835-0305.

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The right apparel is vital in cold temperatures. What I like to use is either earmuffs or a beanie. If your head stays warm so will the rest of your body!

POSTED BY: CAMPBELL | [DECEMBER 21, 2007 AT 11:03 AM](#)

This article is very important. I know first hand the effects that cold weather can have on the body and the importance of proper hydration. In a game december of 06', my teammate experienced kramps throughout his entire body due to a lack of hydration in the cold.

POSTED BY: LINUS | [DECEMBER 21, 2007 AT 12:54 PM](#)

Some extra warm up time and stretching is a good idea too.

POSTED BY: SEAN | [DECEMBER 27, 2007 AT 07:07 PM](#)

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