Introduction
If you are involved in sport – particularly outdoor sport – as a competitor, official or spectator, there’s a fair chance that you’re spending time in the sun. Have you thought about protecting yourself, your members and supporters from skin cancer?

Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. It is estimated that two out of every three Australians will develop some form of skin cancer in their lifetime. Look closely and you’ll realise that our days spent in the sun are costing lives – at the alarming rate of 1,200 deaths every year.

The good news is that most skin cancers are preventable.

What is skin Cancer?
Skin cancer occurs when the ultraviolet (UV) rays in sunlight damage healthy cells in our skin. Overexposure to the sun can result in:

- wrinkling and premature aging
- eye damage
- solar keratoses (sun spots) – a precancerous stage which indicates that you may be prone to developing skin cancer
- skin cancer

There are three types of skin cancer:

- basal cell carcinoma
- squamous cell carcinoma
- melanoma

There are four main reasons for this:

- Australia is situated in an area of high UV radiation intensity
- a high proportion of the population has fair skin
- our lifestyles expose us to the sun frequently, often for long periods and during peak radiation times
- for most of this century social values have supported the belief that a suntan is healthy and attractive.

What can be done?

As a sporting organisation you probably have rules and policies relating to the safety and conduct of your members and supporters. Have you considered developing a SunSmart Policy and implementing sun protection strategies? Over the page are some tips for your organisation to consider.
NSW PSSA  
SUN PROTECTION POLICY

Introduction

i) It is well known that Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world.
ii) Levels of ultraviolet radiation are particularly high in many locations around Australia.
iii) Many sporting events organised by the NSWPSSA and its member associations are conducted outdoors and in locations which have been identified as high skin cancer risk areas, particularly at certain times of the day.
v) It is therefore incumbent on the NSWPSSA and its member associations to protect students and staff to the greatest extent possible from the dangers of exposure to the sun.

Aims

The aims of this policy are to promote:

i) An awareness of the dangers of the exposure to the sun and the need for protective measures.
ii) The need for positive attitudes and responsible behaviours toward skin protection.
iii) Practices which can reduce the incidence of skin cancer.

Implementation Strategies

In order to ensure that all participants at NSWPSSA events are afforded the best possible protection from skin damage caused by the sun, the following implementation strategies are recommended:

i) The NSWPSSA and affiliated associations should ensure that team uniforms are suitable for the locations to be visited and that hats are included.
ii) The NSWPSSA and affiliated associations where possible, should schedule matches outside the identified high risk times.
iii) The NSWPSSA and affiliated associations where possible, should ensure that adequate shade areas are provided at competition venues.
iv) The NSWPSSA and affiliated associations should ensure that team officials provide modelling behaviours which are appropriate for protection from the sun.
v) The NSWPSSA and affiliated associations should ensure that team officials encourage personal protection measures for students at all times, including:

- Encouraging the wearing of hats when in the sun
- Encouraging the use of a +15 water based broad spectrum sunscreen
- Encouraging the use of available shade areas whenever possible

The above are protective measures which the NSWPSSA encourages all participants to embrace, so as to ensure that appropriate precautions are taken when exposed to the sun.

Heat Stress

Heat stress can also affect sporting performance.
The Diocese of Lismore is committed to promoting the awareness of the danger to exposure to the sun and ensuring a positive attitude and responsible behaviour toward skin protection.

All outdoor diocesan events should implement the following strategies:

- Provide sun protection guidelines in your letters to competitors/team members/parents.

- Be a role model:
  - slip on a shirt with collar and long sleeves
  - slop on a broad spectrum 15+ sunscreen
  - slap on a broad brim hat
  - wrap on a pair of close fitting EPF 10 sunglasses

- Ensure there is shade provision for competitors and spectators
  - Select venues with adequate shade
  - Possibly provide portable shade structures/marquee

- Provide a “Slop Stop Station”. Place a sunscreen pump pack along with your drinks supply in a shaded area for players’ easy access.

- When possible, try to schedule sports events earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon away from solar noon (1.00pm daylight saving time).

- Be SunSmart even on a cloudy day or cool day. Ultra violet rays cannot be seen or felt. It is possible to be sunburnt even on cool or cloudy days – even during winter.

- Ensure that sports uniforms are sunsmart – made of a close weave fabric; have a high collar and longer sleeves. Include a hat as part of the uniform. Even when a hat cannot be worn in a competition game, it should be used during warm-ups, training and other times.
BE SUN SMART!

SEEK! out shade ☁️
SLIP! on a shirt 🧣
SLAP! on a hat 🧢
& sunglasses
SLOP! on sunscreen 🌞
SunSmart tips for sporting organisations

Rescheduling activities
The most effective way of protecting your skin from UV rays is to avoid the sun between 10am and 2pm (11am to 3pm daylight saving time).

Have you thought about rescheduling your competition or training to occur outside these peak radiation times?

If this is not yet achievable it is even more important to:

Slip on a shirt with a collar and sleeves. Long sleeves are preferable, but elbow-length is a good compromise. Fabrics with a close weave offer the best protection. In loosely woven garments however, darker colours give more protection than lighter colours.

Are SunSmart features incorporated into the design of your uniform?

Slop on SPF15+ broad spectrum water resistant sunscreen.

Apply sunscreen at least 15 minutes before going out into the sun and reapply at regular intervals.

Is sunscreen included in your team's sport kit so that it is taken to competitions? Is sunscreen available for sale and/or use to members and spectators?

Slap on a broad brimmed hat or legionnaire cap. Your hat should protect the face, ears, neck, shoulders and crown of the head. A baseball cap offers little protection to the ears, neck and cheeks.

Is a hat part of your uniform? Are players allowed to wear hats when they are competing? If you are concerned about injuries, have you considered hats with a soft brim?

Wrap on sunglasses. Make sure they meet Australian Standard 1067 and give 99% UV protection. They don't have to be expensive.

Do you encourage your members to wear sunglasses at appropriate times?

Stand or rest in the shade whenever you can. When adequate shade is available at facilities, sun protection becomes easier for your sporting community. Being in the shade does not guarantee 100% protection. Be aware that UV rays will reflect off nearby surfaces such as snow, sand, concrete, water and grass.

Is there enough shade at your sporting facilities? Are there opportunities to use existing shade more effectively, or to increase the amount of shade?

Don't be fooled by the cool. On winter or cloudy days you can still receive enough UV radiation to cause skin damage. So even when the weather's cool, don't forget to cover up!

Do you practise sun protection all year round?

For a copy of the SunSmart Guidelines for Sporting Organisations or for further information contact the NSW Cancer Council on (02) 9334 1900.