

SRI BULLETIN # 3 APRIL 2019

WEATHER

Umpires,

Difficult weather brings difficult umpiring decisions. Our ability to make judgments involving player safety has to be our number one concern. Thunder, lightning, rain, darkness and deteriorating playing conditions are all issues directly related to keeping the kids safe. Let's review some specifics.

Lightning Standards

- Recognition. When thunder is heard, or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the thunder storm is close enough to strike your location. **SUSPEND PLAY** and seek shelter immediately.
- Thirty-minute rule. Once play has been suspended wait at least thirty minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning bolt is witnessed prior to resuming play.
- Any subsequent lightning or thunder after the beginning of the 30 minute count should reset the clock and an another 30 minute count should begin.

Rain

- There is no concrete rain rule. Using all the tools available to us, weather radar, knowledge of weather patterns and our own experience in determining if the field conditions are safe for play, continuing play, or suspension of play. Coaches and umpires must work together to make these tough decisions. Ultimately the crew must make the final decision.

Turf

- Just because you are playing on turf field **DO NOT** play through a down pour and/or poor playing conditions. All turf field are different and not all entirely turf. Obvious areas of concern are the dirt mounds and grass out fields in evaluating playing conditions. Although turf has its advantages, slipping on turf *is* no different than slipping on grass, you can still get injured. *Umpires should never be expected to play through heavy rainfall because the "turf drains really well."*

Darkness

- Another difficult decision that must always be pre-gamed with your partner and discussed with the coaches on non-lighted fields. There is no hard and fast rule for darkness, but working with your partner to insure the game can be played safely in low light is a point of emphasis.

To wrap up, to always err on the side of student athlete safety will make these tough calls much easier.

Be safe, see you at the yard.