

## Wind Policy

One of the factors that a tournament director needs to consider is wind. While the wind itself is out of the control of the tournament director, it is something that should be considered and planned for. Is your site normally windy? Are there times of year that are windier? Are there times of day that are windier? Find out. Check with the field owners or managers. Check websites. Ask your contacts at the CVB or Sports Commission. Check the internet.

So, what choices do you have regarding play?

- Some field complexes are flexible in the way the fields can be efficiently drawn. If you have a sense that wind will be a factor, you might alter your vision of your field map to best suit the expected wind conditions. Most players prefer a cross-wind game (with fields running perpendicular to the wind) to an upwind/downwind game (with fields running parallel to the wind).
- If you are using portable fields, use more garden staples (or the like) than you would under still conditions to help the fields hold their shape against the winds. Use safety cones as the cutouts provide less resistance to the wind and are less likely to blow over/away. Cones can also be secured with garden staples.
- Does your tournament format/schedule allow for flexibility for play to be paused during times of high wind? If so, consider not scheduling games during those times.

More important than play, a tournament director needs to consider the safety of those at his/her tournament. What choices can you make as a tournament director to minimize the chance of injury?

- Consider the shelters at your event. Most events have tents. If the winds are forecast to be extremely high for the weekend, you might choose to forego a tent or tents. If you do choose to have tents, there are choices and options to consider in conjunction with the tent owners and assembly crew. Larger frame tents can be secured to the ground with stakes (which can vary in length) into the ground or with large weights (sandbags, blocks, water barrels). Tents that aren't properly secured to the ground become very dangerous. Even stakes and weights that are professionally installed can become loose and extremely dangerous blowing in high winds. Additionally, ask about sidewalls and the anticipated winds. Sidewalls can offer protection from the wind, but they can also become loose and flap & flail dangerously in high winds. Some sidewalls can be removed or adjusted in windy conditions. Understand your choices and make decisions with safety in mind.
- It is likely that not every tent at your event will be professionally installed. For other tents, both those your organizing committee are utilizing and those brought by vendors, teams, or spectators, communicate your expectations/requirements, including the field rules for tents & stakes (many fields have infrastructure below the surface that can be damaged). They should be placed safely away from play and secured against the wind, too. Many portable "pop-up" tents come with only very short stakes that shouldn't be relied upon to secure them in high winds. Every tent should have someone responsible for it and those persons need to be prepared to take action at your instruction. In the expectation of windy conditions, be prepared to lower tent frames, take off tent tops, and/or take down tents completely.
- Consider other items or structures and how they might react to the wind. More and more tournament have media coverage. Photographers/videographers will sometimes bring

scaffolding for better vantage points. Ensure these are erected appropriately, and that areas around them are clear in case they were to fall. Signage and banners can flap and flail dangerously. Be sure that they are displayed safely and securely or not at all.

- Wind can also cause play and safety to intersect more often. There is certainly a correlation between windy conditions and aptly named “hospital” passes. Again, you can consider pausing play should conditions warrant. Sure, many players will enjoy challenging conditions, but use your judgment and consult with others to determine if the conditions become unsafe or unplayable.

Steps you should take at the outset of your event and re-check periodically during your event:

- Make sure that all tents, signage, and other objects are secured. Even if it isn’t windy during setup and/or wind conditions aren’t supposed to worsen, be prepared by having things properly secured.
- Just as for lightning and other contingencies, you should have a communication plan in place to quickly relay information. As stated above, “Every tent should have someone responsible for it and those persons need to be prepared to take action at your instruction.” You need to have a plan in place to efficiently relay those instructions to everyone at your event that would be responsible and/or can help better secure your event should wind conditions make it necessary. That can be public address, bull horn, walkie-talkies, or other means, but, remember that communication is two-way. Just because you send a message does not mean that it has been heard and understood. Get the word out and then get acknowledgements. If you don’t get acknowledgements, take further action to relay the message. If the message still isn’t received, find others that can assist with those tasks. Remember, safety first.
- Make sure teams are in the communications loop. Tell them what to expect before the event via e-mail, captains meeting, and/or event guide, but be sure to include them. Let them know that following your safety instructions (even when relayed by staff) is not an option.

Understand your options should high winds arise. You can instruct your staff to:

- Confirm that everything is secure
- Re-secure or remove any loose sidewalls
- Lower tent frames
- Remove tent toppers
- Completely take down pop-up tents
- Suspend play
- Have everyone seek shelter