

# The Great Public Schools Association of Queensland

## ABANDONMENT OF GPS COMPETITIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Effective 1 January 2026

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## Introduction

The Great Public Schools Association of Queensland manages several Sport and Activities across the academic year. It is recognised that various factors may prevent these competitions from being completed in their entirety. This guideline outlines what process to be carried out should a game, match or competition be abandoned for any particular reason.

This Policy will be used if a single game/ activity, round or Championship is abandoned by inclement weather or circumstances such as venue evacuation, venue issues, serious injury, lack of officials or other unforeseen events including pandemic and war.

This Policy document includes the following adverse weather procedures:

1. Hot Weather (Heat)
2. Wet Weather
3. Hail
4. Lightning
5. Cold Weather
6. Fog
7. Fire, Smoke and Haze (Air Quality)

The recommendations in this Policy are to be used for all participants involved in GPS Sport and Activities, including students, officials, referees, umpires, coaches, scorers, volunteers, staff and spectators.

**Jodie Watson**

**Executive Officer**

**The Great Public Schools Association of Queensland**

## Previous amendments

Name	Effective	Approved date
GPS Abandonment of Competition and Activities	1 Jan 2026	
GPS Abandonment of Competition and Activities	1 Jan 2022	8 Aug 2022
GPS Abandonment of Competition and Activities	1 Jan 2021	19 Oct 2020
GPS Wet Weather Procedures - Draft V2 - 9 May 2016	9 May 2016	9 May 2016
GPS Extreme Weather Policy - 1 May 2010	1 May 2010	1 August 2008

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## DEFINITIONS

- **Activity/ Activities:** To encompass all GPS Association organised events. Including but not limited to competitions, student debates, selection events, training, meetings, courses and presentations.
- **Adult/ Adolescent:** A post-pubescent participant
- **Ambient Temperature:** Temperature of the surrounding air, not taking into account humidity or wind in the air
- **Child:** A pre-pubescent participant
- **Dehydration:** Loss of body water and salts essential for normal body function. Excessive dehydration in a sporting environment may lead to heat exhaustion and heat stroke
- **Drizzle:** To rain gently in fine, mist-like drops
- **Fog:** Condensed water vapor in cloud like masses lying close to the ground and limiting visibility
- **Frost:** A deposit of minute ice crystals formed when water vapour condenses at a temperature below freezing
- **Heat exhaustion:** A form of heat illness characterised by a high heart rate, dizziness, headache, loss of endurance/skill/confusion and nausea
- **Heat Illness:** Occurs with a high-intensity activity that elevates body temperature and/or prolonged exposure to hot weather
- **Heat stroke:** A form of heat illness with characteristics similar to heat exhaustion in conjunction with dry skin and confusion. Heat stroke may arise in a participant who has not been identified as suffering from heat exhaustion and has persisted in further activity
- **Intermittent** – Stopping and starting at intervals
- **Lightning** - a flash of light in the sky, occurring during a thunderstorm and caused by a discharge of electricity, either between clouds or between a cloud and the earth
- **Serious Injury:** Where a participants injuries require immediate medical intervention that have been deemed life-threatening or would cause permanent or long-term impairment and can not be moved. Eg. Cardiac arrest, head trauma, major internal injuries, loss of function in limbs or organ or disfigurement.
- **Storm** - An atmospheric disturbance manifested in strong winds accompanied by rain, snow, and/or other precipitation and often by thunder and lightning
- **Thunder** - The crashing or booming sound produced by rapidly expanding air along the path of the electrical discharge of lightning
- **Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT)** – is a composite temperature used to estimate the effect of temperature, humidity, wind speed (wind chill, and visible and infrared radiation - usually sunlight) on humans. It is used by industrial hygienists, athletes, and the military to determine approximate exposure levels to high temperatures.

## PART 1: ABANDONMENT DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

The GPS Executive Office in conjunction with the Member School host representative, will have the authority to implement decisions relating to inclement weather utilising the following guidelines.

### 1 EXTREME WEATHER

Extreme weather may be defined as weather that threatens individuals' short- or long-term safety due to rain, hail, lightning, wind chill or heat. The risk is determined in conjunction with Sport Medicine Australia's Guidelines as well as the Bureau of Meteorology's forecast conditions and State Government.

Weather condition	Extreme weather determinant
Ambient temperature	>36 degrees Celsius
Wet bulb globe temperature (Shade)	>30
Apparent temperature (wind chill)	<2 degrees Celsius
Wind speed	>40km per hour
Rainfall	>80mm within 24hours

NOTE:

- Wind may create additional hazards regarding tree branches or other materials becoming projectiles.
- Rain also needs to be considered concerning its impact on the safety of the playing surface.

### 2 HEAT ILLNESS (HOT WEATHER ENVIRONMENT FACTORS)

Preventive measures can always be undertaken to minimise heat injuries or illness. Whether providing shade, hats, appropriate sunscreen, spray bottles, water supply, nutrient supplements and more, it is essential to have trained personnel available to manage heat injuries and designated recovery areas for patients. An experienced medical practitioner should be present when heat illness arises, as heat stroke is potentially life-threatening. Any indication of this condition should be immediately referred to a professional medical practitioner for medical assessment

#### 2.1 Temperature (Preliminary Assessment)

Ambient temperature is the most easily understood guide available. Please refer to the below Temperature Matrix. The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) produces ambient readings for many locations within Australia. You can check these readings and a guide for the relative risk of your location at [www.bom.gov.au/products/IDS65004.shtml](http://www.bom.gov.au/products/IDS65004.shtml). However, it is also essential to note relative humidity levels in combination with ambient temperatures. When combining these two temperatures, you will better gauge the risk of thermal injury, as outlined in the tables below.

Ambient temperature (Easily understood, most useful on hot, dry days.)	Relative Humidity	Risk of heat illness	Possible modifying action for vigorous sustained activity
15 – 20		Low	Heat illness can occur in distance running. Caution over-motivation.
21 – 25	<60%	Low – Moderate	Increase vigilance. Caution over-motivation.
26 – 30	<50%	Moderate	Moderate early pre-season training intensity. Reduce intensity and duration of play/ training. Take more breaks.
31 – 35	<30%	High – Very High	Limit intensity. Limit duration to less than 60minutes per session.
36 and above	<25%	Extreme	Consider postponement to a cooler part of the day or cancellation.

<b>WBGT</b> (The WBGT is particularly useful for hot, humid days.)	<b>Risk of heat illness</b>	<b>Possible modifying action for vigorous sustained activity</b>
Less than 20	Low	Heat illness can occur in distance running. Caution over-motivation.
21 – 25	Moderate – High	Increase vigilance. Caution over-motivation. Moderate early pre-season training. Take more breaks.
26 – 29	High – Very High	Limit intensity, take more breaks Limit duration to less than 60minutes per session.
30 and above	Extreme	Consider postponement to a cooler part of the day or cancellation (allow swimming).

## 2.2 Duration and Intensity

The combination of extreme environmental conditions and sustained vigorous exercise is particularly hazardous for the athlete. The greater the intensity of the exercise, the greater the risk of heat-related symptoms. Factors to consider include:

- The length of the game (30 minutes or greater)
- The number of Player and Referee rotations (Minimal – Unlimited)
- Competition grade/level (Social/ A Grade/ Representative/ Elite)

## 2.3 Conduct of Hydration & Interchange Opportunities

It is important to note that (5) five minutes of rest can cause a significant reduction in core temperatures. Therefore consideration of the following factors include:

- dividing games into shorter playing periods to allow for extra breaks
- suitable hydration methods available (drink containers/ ice/ fans)
- alternative training/playing times
- alternative venues

## 2.4 Time of Day

The hottest part of the day is usually between 11am – 3pm. Scheduling activities outside this time should be considered throughout any summer competition/ training/ event or activity.

## 2.5 Local Environment

The type of exercise surface and the amount of sunlight vary significantly with different sporting activities and, therefore, must be analysed for each sport and activity. Factors to consider include:

- Type of playing surface (Synthetic grass/ Cement or Hardcourt/ Lawn)
- Location (Sheltered/ Open)
- Air movement (Enclosed/ Open)

Note: The more the venue is open to air movement, this will help decrease heat stress.

# 3 HEAT ILLNESS (HOT WEATHER PERSONAL FACTORS)

## 3.1 Clothing

The type of clothing worn by players, referees, officials and volunteers is vital in minimising health risks associated with exercise in hot conditions. Therefore consideration of the following factors include:

- Fabrics that minimise heat storage and enhance sweat evaporation
- Lightweight, light-coloured, loose-fitting
- Made of natural fibres or composite fabrics with high wicking (absorption) properties that provide for adequate ventilation

Note: The clothing should complement the existing practices in Australia that protect the skin against permanent damage from the sun.

## 3.2 Acclimatisation of the participant

The process by which an individual adjusts to gradual changes in the environment, such as a change in temperature and humidity. Allowing the individual to maintain performance across a range of environmental conditions. Consideration of the following factors should include the following, especially if the athlete/team has travelled from cool temperature climate to compete in hot/humid conditions:

- Origin of participant/team
- Distance Travelled
- A suitable period of preparation and acclimatisation under relative conditions (60 minutes activity per day for 7-10 days)

### 3.3 Fitness levels/ athletic ability

The potential for heat-related illnesses can be exacerbated if the following conditions haven't been considered:

- a. Physical/ Physiological characteristics of the athlete, including body size and endurance fitness (overweight/ unconditioned)
- b. Lack of hydration
- c. Level of athletic ability playing in a grade of competition

### 3.4 Age and gender

The age and gender of a participant can affect the level of risk towards heat exhaustion. Females may suffer more during exercise in the heat because of their greater body fat percentage. Young children are especially at risk due to the poor development of essential body mechanisms that help the adult body to cool itself naturally. Veteran participants may also cope less well with exercise in the heat due to reduced cardiac function.

### 3.5 Predisposed medical conditions

It is essential to know if participants, referees, officials or volunteers have a pre-existing medical condition or are taking medication that may predispose them to heat illness. The following conditions are examples of illnesses that will put the participant, referee, official or volunteer at a high risk of illness:

- a. Asthma
- b. Diabetes
- c. Pregnancy
- d. Heart Conditions
- e. Epilepsy
- f. Virus, Flu or Gastro

## 4 HAIL

4.1 All hailstorms present some risk to players in an open playing field, and the size and intensity of the storm can change dramatically in a short period.

- a. All play should be suspended during hailstorms so that players and officials can seek suitable shelter
- b. Monitor temperature drop, rainfall and high wind that may be associated with the hail conditions.
- c. Play can be restarted after the hail has stopped falling, with particular attention to the amount of ice on the playing surface (size and thickness).
- d. It may be unsafe to resume play, deferral of the restart to allow melting (or manual clearing in parts) should be considered.

## 5 LIGHTNING

5.1 When lightning is a possible or actual threat to a game, the following procedures are applicable:

- a. Observe the approaching storm clouds, the first flash of lightning or clap of thunder, no matter how far away should heighten lightning awareness.
- b. The method of determining the distance to the storm cell is to measure the time elapsed between when the lightning flash is observed and when the associated thunder is heard. The distance can be determined by using the following rule:
  - I. Distance (Km) = time from observing flash to hearing thunder (in 3 seconds)

5.2 In the absence of specific information from weather radar, a lightning location system, or specialised warning device, then the 30/30 Safety Guideline should be used. The 30/30 Rule is a guide to postponement or suspension of play/competition. The accepted "safe" distance from lightning is greater than 10km. This means:

- a. That as the time interval between observing the flash and hearing the thunder approaches 30 seconds, all those in exposed areas should be seeking or already inside safe shelters. A storm cell with lightning within 10km constitutes a threat
- b. For resumption of play/competition, a minimum 30 minutes after the last sighting of lightning or sound of thunder is required.

5.3 Identification of safe structures

- a. No place is absolutely safe from lightning strikes, but some areas are much safer than others.
- b. Safer areas include:
  - I. Enclosed vehicles with windows closed (car, bus, tractor with cab), do not touch metal parts
  - II. Substantial enclosed buildings
  - III. Low ground, sheltering in clumps of low bushes
  - IV. Trees of uniform height- ie forest.
- c. Unsafe areas include:
  - I. High ground
  - II. Open ground
  - III. Water
  - IV. Isolated or tall trees
  - V. Near outdoor metal structures such as fences, gates, poles, seating, ropes courses

- VI. Insubstantial structures such as picnic sheds and shade shelters
- VII. Machineries such as mowers or unenclosed tractors
- d. Blue sky and lack of rainfall is not a reason to breach the 30min return-to-activity rule

## 6 COLD WEATHER

- 6.1 Extreme weather can produce two chill risks: the absolute air temperature and the wind chill factor. Of these, wind chill in winter sports is the more significant risk.
- 6.2 Apparent Temperature (AT) is an adjustment to the actual air (ambient) temperature based on the perceived effect of the extra elements such as humidity and wind.
- 6.3 AT is valid over a wide range of temperatures, and it includes the chilling effect of the wind at lower temperatures. Minus 2°C (AT) is the point where play is to be suspended for wind chill factor.

## 7 FOG

- 7.1 When the difference between air temperature and the dew point is less than 2.5 degrees Celsius fog will form. Producing water vapour condenses into tiny water droplets that are suspended in the air, causing a change in visibility.
- 7.2 While fog can moisten the playing field and make it slick during a competition, its most impactful effect is low visibility.
- 7.3 All play should not commence or be suspended during fog events and not commence until players and officials can see all areas of the field of play.

## 8 AIR QUALITY

- 8.1 To determine if a competition should proceed, or if the events on offer should be amended, information from the AQICN website and a local assessment of conditions are to be used.
- 8.2 Major causes of Poor Air Quality include bush fire smoke and dust storms
- 8.3 The following table outlines the actions that should be taken for any Sport or Activity based on the air quality index.

AQI	Category	Action
0-66	Very Good/Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business as usual</li> </ul>
67-99	Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For most people there will be no noticeable symptoms of exposure</li> <li>• People who are sensitive to air pollution should take some precautions and/or consult their health practitioner before participating</li> <li>• Competition/Training to continue as planned</li> </ul>
100-149	Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular messaging to participants, staff, volunteers, officials and team staff regarding hydration, general health awareness and the potential risk to personal health</li> <li>• For sensitive groups (and symptomatic students) they should consider their participation</li> <li>• For asymptomatic students, they should reduce the amount they are training</li> <li>• Any junior event should be cancelled</li> <li>• Senior and 1<sup>st</sup> Sport and Activities/training may continue but options around start time and reducing competition/training duration and distances should be reviewed if there is the possibility to shift the event to better conditions</li> </ul>
150 – 200	Very Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular messaging to participants, coaches and officials regarding hydration, general health awareness and the potential risk to personal health</li> <li>• For sensitive groups (and symptomatic athletes) they should consider their participation in the event</li> <li>• For asymptomatic athletes, they should reduce the amount they are training</li> <li>• To consider modification of start time and communicate accordingly, in order to try and find a more suitable time and/or duration for the event</li> <li>• All non-premiership and junior training and competition should be cancelled</li> </ul>
200+	Hazardous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cancellation of all sport and activities</li> </ul>

- 8.4 The Australian Institute of Sport has published the following guidelines taking into account the activity guidelines as they relate to the AQI.



General population and low intensity exercise		Endurance based and high intensity exercise	
AQI	Action	AQI	Action
VERY GOOD [0-33]	Enjoy activities	VERY GOOD [0-33]	Enjoy activities
GOOD [34-66]	Enjoy activities	GOOD [34-66]	Enjoy activities
FAIR [67-99]	People unusually sensitive to air pollution: Plan strenuous outdoor activities when air quality is better	FAIR [67-99]	<b>Asthmatic athletes:</b> Should have medical review prior to performing high intensity extended training outdoors
POOR [100-149]	<b>AIR POLLUTION HEALTH ALERT</b> <b>Sensitive groups:</b> Avoid strenuous outdoor activities <b>Everyone:</b> Cut back or reschedule strenuous outdoor activities	VERY POOR [100-149]	<b>AIR POLLUTION HEALTH ALERT</b> Asthmatics or symptomatic non-asthmatics should not compete or train outdoors. Minimise asymptomatic athlete exposure
VERY POOR [150-200]	<b>AIR POLLUTION HEALTH ALERT</b> <b>Sensitive groups:</b> Avoid strenuous outdoor activities <b>Everyone:</b> Cut back or reschedule strenuous outdoor activities	HAZARDOUS [150-200]	<b>AIR POLLUTION HEALTH ALERT</b> Outdoor training should be rescheduled indoors, and exposure should be minimised for everyone
HAZARDOUS [>200]	<b>AIR POLLUTION HEALTH ALERT</b> <b>Sensitive groups:</b> Avoid strenuous outdoor activities <b>Everyone:</b> Significantly cut back on outdoor physical activities		

## PART 2: ABANDONMENT GUIDELINES

### 9 SPORT SPECIFIC ABANDONMENT/ MATCH DELAY GUIDELINES

In a general sense, most sports will have specific abandonment of match delay guidelines in place for their sport. These are to be considered in the context of this overall GPS guideline by the Directors of Sport and Activities in conjunction with the GPS Executive Officer when implementing their decision.

- 9.1 Most Sport and Activities can change venue to the "away" school up to 2 hours before the scheduled game time.  
With the following exceptions:
  - I. Cricket: Venue change by 6.30am, normal starting time.
  - II. Tennis: Venue change decision by 10am, game commenced by 12noon
- 9.2 Only pre-approved regular school competition venues can be used when change of venue is implemented
- 9.3 In the case of a serious injury causing a delay during the game, if an alternate court/ field is available games can be moved to such court/ field
  - I. Within reasonable walking distance – 5 minutes
- 9.4 In Flagship fixtures if mutual agreement on a delay cannot be reached, then the fixture shall be called off 1.5 hours after the commencement of the delay.
- 9.5 In the case of any delay, teams will be provided with a minimum of 3 minutes and maximum of 5 minutes for warm-up once the venue is ready to be used.
- 9.6 Serious injury
  - a. GPS recognises that serious injuries can take place on the field of play and some injuries require the injured person to be immobilised until they can be safely removed from the field of play by appropriate medical personnel.
  - b. If a player is injured and cannot be moved from the field, the game will stop until such time that person is removed safely by approved medical personnel. Upon removal of the injured player,
- 9.7 After a delay, games will recommence, provided that there is still official time left in the game as per clause 11.

## 10 GPS INCLEMENT WEATHER - PLAY IMMEDIATELY SUSPENDED SUMMARY

GPS Inclement weather play immediately suspended						
	Heat	Hail	Lightening	Cold weather	Fog	Air Quality
Cricket	36 and above with 25% humidity  Resumption: Decrease in temperature below the limit.	Hail on field of play.  Resumption after hail/ storm passed with an evaluation of playing conditions.	A storm cell with lightning within 10km (30/30 safety Guideline).  Resumption minimum 30 minutes after the last sighting of lightning or sound of thunder	Minus 2°C (AT) for wind chill factor.  Resumption: Increase of temperature above the limit.	Unable to see the full field of play from all positions on the field.	AQI 150-200  Resumption: Decrease in AQI to under 150.
Cross Country						
Football						
Tennis						
Track and Field						
Rugby						
Rowing						
Basketball outdoor	Resumption: Decrease in temperature below the limit.	Hail on field of play.  Resumption after hail/ storm passed with an evaluation of playing conditions.	A storm cell with lightning within 10km (30/30 safety Guideline).  Resumption minimum 30 minutes after the last sighting of lightning or sound of thunder	Minus 2°C (AT) for wind chill factor.  Resumption: Increase of temperature above the limit.	Unable to see the full field of play from all positions on the field.	AQI 150-200  Resumption: Decrease in AQI to under 150.
Basketball indoors		Not applicable	Not applicable		Not applicable	AQI 200+  Resumption: Decrease in AQI to under 150.

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**11 GPS GAME ABANDONMENT SUMMARY**

	Full game/ day	Non-Flagship - Partial game/ Delays - Venue/ Evacuation/ Fire drill/ Serious injury/ Weather	Flagship - Partial game/ Delays - Venue/ Evacuation/ Fire drill/ Serious injury/ Weather
General all		Games can not go into the time slot of the next scheduled fixture. If a delay looks to extend into the next allotted game time, the game will be abandoned with consideration of the following rules.	<p>All efforts should be made to complete Flagship fixtures during daylight hours.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the remaining time of a delayed game can be completed <b>before the cut-off time</b>, the game may restart.</li> <li>If calculations show that finishing the game would <b>exceed the cut-off time</b>, the game <b>cannot restart</b>. In this case, apply the specific rules outlined for incomplete games.</li> </ul> <p><b>The GPS Competition Manager must be contacted</b> for approval and confirmation of all delayed game including restarts.</p> <p>Cut off time: Term 1 – 5.45pm Cut off time: Term 2&amp;3 – 5.00pm</p>
Football	Draw	<p>0-20min delay</p> <p>- If in 1st half, resume at the start of 2nd half</p> <p>- If in 2nd half, the game is deemed completed and the result declared by the current score</p>	<p>A game is deemed “official” if it has commenced the 2<sup>nd</sup> Half. Games failing will result in a draw.</p>
Basketball		<p>21+min delay - Game completed</p> <p>- If in 1st half, declared a draw</p> <p>- If in 2nd half, the game is deemed completed and the result declared by the current score</p>	<p>If the GPS Competition Manager does not approve a restart the following applies:</p> <p>- If in 1st half, the game deemed incomplete and result declared a draw</p> <p>- If in 2nd half, the game is deemed completed and the result declared by the current score</p>
Rugby			
Tennis		<p>4 Rubbers must be completed to be deemed a “official game”</p> <p>Continue rubbers from when delay started.</p> <p>0-20min delay. Continue as normal.</p> <p>21+min delay, continue using no-ad scoring.</p> <p>1 x set (first to 6 games)</p>	<p>4 Rubbers must be completed to be deemed a “official game”. Games failing will result in a draw.</p> <p>After a delay, the match/ fixture will continue rubbers from when delay started, as per the below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0-45min delay. Continue as normal.</li> <li>46+min delay, continue using no-ad scoring.</li> </ul> <p>If an official fixture, the winner will be determined on a countback, first by rubbers, then by sets, and finally by games.</p>
Cricket		<p>15 Overs must be played to be deemed a “official game” (2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, A &amp; B Divisions)</p> <p>10 Overs must be played to deemed “official game” (4<sup>th</sup> and C Division and below)</p> <p>The last completed over (subject to minimum overs met) will be used as the final over for both teams. The team then compare the scores at the corresponding</p>	<p>15 Overs must be played to be deemed a “official game”. Games failing will result in a draw.</p> <p>Duckworth Lewis scoring system used for results (1<sup>st</sup>)</p>

		number of overs faced by both teams. The team with the highest runs is the winner.	
Debating		0-20min delay continues from when delay started 21+ min delay, the game concluded and draw awarded	<p>The first three speakers must have completed their section to be deemed a "official debate". Games failing will result in a draw.</p> <p>After a delay, the debate will continue from when delay started, as per the below:</p> <p>0-10 minute delay: Return for replies and adjudication. 11-20 minute delay: No replies; proceed straight to adjudication. 21+minute delay: Adjudicators to complete adjudication.</p>
Chess			<p>The match must be completed to be deemed a "official game". Games failing will result in a draw.</p> <p>0-20min delay continues from when delay started 21+ min delay, the game concluded and draw awarded</p>
Volleyball		<p>After a delay, the game will continue from when the delay started.</p> <p>If the cut-off time is reached (scheduled next fixture time) the game will stop, with the below in determining a winner:</p> <p>A set will be deemed complete if it has reached 13 points in a 25-point set, or 8 points in a 15-point set, provided there is a two-point lead.</p> <p>If an official fixture, the winner will be determined by countback, first by completed sets and then by total points won for completed sets.</p>	<p>3 sets must be completed to be deemed a "official game". Games failing will result in a draw.</p> <p>After a delay, the game will continue from when the delay started, with the below in determining a winner:</p> <p>If the cut-off time is reached and the fixture is incomplete, a set will be deemed complete if it has reached 13 points in a 25-point set, or 8 points in a 15-point set, provided there is a two-point lead.</p> <p>If an official fixture, the winner will be determined by countback, first by completed sets and then by total points won for completed sets.</p>

