Swarthmore College Sports Medicine
Lightning Policy

Definition:

**Lightning** is a giant discharge of electricity accompanied by a brilliant flash of light and a loud crack of thunder. The spark can reach over five miles in length, raise the temperature of the air by as much as 50,000 degrees Fahrenheit, and contain a hundred million electrical volts.

Facts:

~ Lightning detection systems in the United States monitor an average of 25 million strokes of lightning from clouds to ground during some 100,000 thunderstorms every year. It is estimated that Earth as a whole is struck by an average of more than a hundred lightning bolts every second.
~ The odds of becoming a lightning victim in the U.S. in any one year is 1 in 700,000. The odds of being struck in your lifetime is 1 in 3,000.
~ Lightning can kill people or cause cardiac arrest. Injuries range from severe burns and permanent brain damage to memory loss and personality change.
~ About 10 percent of lightning strike victims are killed, and 70 percent suffer serious long-term effects. About 400 people survive lightning strikes in the U.S. each year.

What to do:

~ **If you can hear thunder,** you are within 10 miles of a storm—and can be struck by lightning. Seek shelter and avoid situations in which you may be vulnerable.
~ **Use the 30-30 rule/flash-to-bang rule,** when visibility is good and there is nothing obstructing your view of the thunderstorm. When you see lightning, count the time until you hear thunder. If that time is 30 seconds or less, the thunderstorm is within six miles of you and is dangerous. Seek shelter immediately.
~ You may return to outdoor or water activities 30 minutes after you see the last lightning strike or hear the last sound of thunder.

Where to Seek Shelter for your Venue:

Baseball Field – Tarble building

Clothier Field/Track – Fieldhouse

Cunningham Field – Bond or Mertz Hall or Ben West

Softball Field – Tarble building

Ware Pool – remove yourself from the water

Updated 8/2013 by Jessica Lydon, MS, LAT, ATC