



PREGNANCY POLICY

The League respects the rights of people who are pregnant, chest feeding or the carer of a child to participate in community football and is committed to providing support to assist them to do so. The League prohibits any actions that may amount to discrimination against a player because of the player's pregnancy chest feeding or status as the carer of a child.

Our League policy on pregnant persons is based on the "Pregnant Athlete and the Law Guidelines" produced by the Women and Sport Unit at the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) and Sports Medicine Australia (SMA) and the AFL National Female Community Football Guidelines 2019.

Under the Equal Opportunity Act (SA) of 1984, using pregnancy as a basis for discrimination is prohibited. This means that any person has the right to participate in their chosen sport.

- The League respects and supports the rights of pregnant players who, in consultation with medical professionals, elect to continue to participate in community football, provided that at all times the health and wellbeing of the player and their unborn child is paramount;
- All players should agree to, as soon as possible after becoming aware that they are pregnant, and on an ongoing basis throughout their pregnancy, obtain and disclose to their club coach regular medical advice which sets out the player's doctor's opinion regarding"
 - I. the risk associated with participating in the community football competition and associated training and events while pregnant;
 - II. taking into account their individual circumstances, whether it is safe for the player to continue participating in the community football competition and associated training and events;
 - III. any other information that the doctor considers relevant.
- The club may seek additional information about a player's pregnancy as reasonably required;
- All information provided by a player about their pregnancy must be kept strictly confidential unless the express consent of the player is provided. Announcements regarding the player's pregnancy should only be made in consultation with the player.

It is recommended that:

- After a player becomes aware that they are pregnant, the player should receive medical clearance;
- Clubs ensure that all pregnant players are advised that the Australian Football National risk Insurance Program may not cover them while pregnant and that they may need to sign an insurance declaration form to participate.

SPORTS MEDICINE AUSTRALIA

The SMA has developed guidelines entitled “*Participation of the Pregnant Athlete in Contact and Collision Sports.*” The guidelines are intended to provide recommendations to the pregnant athlete and sporting organisations on safe participation in contact and collision sports during pregnancy.

A summary of the guidelines follows:

Football is classified as an Unlimited Contact and Collision Sport:

- Contact or collision is frequent and may be quite forcible.
- A high risk of falls or, blows to the abdomen, or contact with a projectile exists.
- In a normal pregnancy, participation can only be recommended during the first trimester.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Where appropriate, ensure all members receive a copy of the summary of the statement issued by the SMA so that they can make an informed decision.
- Encourage any member that is pregnant to seek the advice of a medical professional.
- Consult with medical professionals, coach and club trainer and modify training accordingly.
- Provide a safe environment for all footballers.

INSURANCE AND THE PREGNANT PLAYER

The pregnant player or official is covered by the same personal accident policy that is provided for all registered members of the League. However, the player or official is not covered if the injury is found to be due to the pregnancy.

No cover is provided for the unborn baby.

Rationale / Comments based on the AFL National Female Community Football Guidelines 2019

While many sporting activities are safe for pregnant persons, there may be **risks that apply to some people during pregnancy**. Those risks will depend on the nature of the sporting activity and the pregnant person’s circumstances. The AFL respects and supports the rights of pregnant players who, in consultation with medical professionals, elect to continue to participate in Australian Football competitions, provided that at all times the health and wellbeing of the player and their unborn child is paramount.

The purpose of these guidelines is to:

- Set guidelines for players’ continued participation in community football competition during pregnancy;
- Provide, so far as possible, a safe and inclusive environment for all participants.

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Approved: Kernahan, 05/03/2021