



Netball NSW

Pregnancy Policy

Adopted by New South Wales Netball Association Ltd at its Board Meeting held on 9 December 2021

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1 Definitions

Affiliate means a Premier League Licensee, a Netball Association, or a Netball Club, howsoever described, whether incorporated, unincorporated, a company limited by guarantee, or otherwise, which is a member of Netball NSW.

Individual Member (Member) means a natural person who is a registered financial member of Netball NSW or an Affiliate.

Netball means the sport or game played under the World Netball Rules of Netball as adopted or amended from time to time by Netball NSW or an Affiliate.

Netball Activity means Netball competitions, matches, training and/or events organised, controlled or sanctioned by Netball NSW and /or its Affiliates.

Netball NSW means the New South Wales Netball Association Limited.

Participant means a person who participates, including but not only as official, coaches, players or umpires, parents, guardians and spectators in a Netball Activity.

Policy means this Netball NSW Pregnancy Policy.

Rules of Netball means that the competition or Match will be conducted with reference to the World Netball Official Rules of Netball and World Netball Regulations (INF Rules) as published by the INF from time to time, unless where modified in Netball NSW or its Affiliate's Competition Rules.

2 Purpose and Background

- 2.1 In Australia, Commonwealth, State and Territory legislation exists in relation to discrimination. This anti-discrimination legislation makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of pregnancy, subject to specific exemptions.
- 2.2 Individuals are increasingly seeking to continue participation in sports, such as Netball, throughout their pregnancy. A recent report released by the Australian Federal Department of Health has confirmed that staying active during pregnancy has many benefits for the health of both pregnant persons and their unborn babies.¹ In fact, current guidelines confirm that (assuming no other underlying health concerns exist) pregnant Participants should aim to continue to meet the physical and sedentary behavior guidelines for Participants throughout the duration of their pregnancy.²
- 2.3 However, whilst there are many positive outcomes from continuing physical activity during and after pregnancy as responses to exercise can vary with pre-gestational fitness levels, co-existing medical conditions and/or pregnancy complications, all Participants are encouraged to seek individual medical advice before participating.

3 Position Statement

- 3.1 Netball NSW is committed to providing a safe and enjoyable environment for all its Members, including pregnant Participants.
- 3.2 Netball NSW adopts and endorses the position that any pregnant Participant should be given the opportunity to decide for themselves, in consultation with their medical advisers, whether or not to participate in Netball whilst pregnant and for how long.
- 3.3 Netball NSW encourages all pregnant Participants to discuss the risks involved and their decision to continue participating in Netball during their pregnancy with their medical advisers. As the risks involved may vary at different stages of the pregnancy, Netball NSW encourages all pregnant Participants to have such discussions with their medical advisers on an ongoing basis.
- 3.4 The Netball NSW Member Protection Policy explicitly precludes discrimination on the basis of pregnancy status. Any allegations relating to discrimination on the basis of pregnancy status will be handled under the Netball NSW Member Protection Policy and the complaint handling procedures therein. Netball NSW expressly condemns any discrimination occurring on the basis of a person's pregnancy status.

¹ Australian Government Department of Health, 'For Pregnancy' ([For pregnancy | Australian Government Department of Health](#)), accessed 28 September 2021.

² Australian Government Department of Health, 'Physical activity and exercise guidelines for Australians' ([For adults \(18 to 64 years\) | Australian Government Department of Health](#)), accessed 28 September 2021.

4 When Does this Policy Apply?

4.1. This Policy applies to:

- a) Netball NSW and its Members, staff and volunteers;
- b) Affiliates and their Members, staff and volunteers;
- c) Individuals sitting on Boards, committees and sub-committees of Netball NSW and/or its Affiliates;
- d) All employees, volunteers, independent contractors and other workplace participants;
- e) Any other person or organisation that is an Individual Member of or Affiliated with Netball NSW;
- f) Parents, guardians, spectators and sponsors and any other person or organisation to the fullest extent possible; and
- g) Any other person who has agreed to be bound by this Policy.

4.2 This Policy applies:

- a) At any Netball NSW or Affiliate Netball Activity;
- b) During paid or voluntary activities, including dealing with members, media, sponsors, other support employees, volunteers, independent contractors and other Participants in Netball in NSW;
- c) At all times when providing services on behalf of Netball NSW or an Affiliate; and
- d) At all times when acting in any capacity, whether voluntary or paid on behalf of Netball NSW or an Affiliate.

4.3 Failure to comply with this policy may constitute a breach of the Netball NSW Member Protection Policy (**MPP**) and should be dealt with in accordance with the MPP and the Complaint Handling Procedures set out in Attachment B to the MPP.

5 Guidelines: Pregnant Participant (Player or Umpire)

5.1 The following guidelines may assist Associations and Clubs when a pregnant Participant is involved. A Pregnant Participant is encouraged to:

- 5.1.1 Be aware that their own health, and the wellbeing of their unborn child, is of utmost importance in their decision about whether to continue as a Participant.
- 5.1.2 Make themselves aware of the current medical advice relating to physical activity during pregnancy (refer to the resources section in Clause 10 of this Policy).
- 5.1.3 Obtain expert medical advice as to the risks associated with playing or umpiring Netball when pregnant. The Participant should ensure they understand this advice and where necessary question the advice until they are sure they understand the risks taken in participating in Netball.
- 5.1.5 Take into account their changed physical condition, use common sense and not take unnecessary risks.

- 5.1.6 Remember that the ultimate decision to participate in Netball will always be the Participant's, whilst having regard to all the circumstances.

6 Guidelines: Sports Administrator

- 6.1 The following guidelines may assist Associations and Clubs when a pregnant Participant is involved. A Sports Administrator should:

- 6.1.1 Evaluate the precautions they can take to avoid harm to all Participants, including pregnant Participants.
- 6.1.2 Develop protocols and procedures to communicate with Participants regarding participation in Netball during pregnancy, including:
- a) Providing Participants with the opportunity to advise of their pregnancy should they wish to do so. Any information collected in this way should be handled in accordance with the Netball Australia Privacy Policy which can be accessed at the following link: [Privacy policy - Netball Australia](#).
 - b) Being aware of Commonwealth, State and Territory anti-discrimination legislation and its application in Netball and review the rules, regulations and constitution of the Team / Club / Association with respect to the relevant anti-discrimination legislation. This legislation precludes discrimination on the basis of pregnancy status. Therefore, administrators should be aware of the need to ensure that proper systems are in place in order to mitigate the risk of discrimination on the basis of pregnancy status in accordance with relevant legislation and this Policy.
 - c) Promoting adherence to the rules of the game.
 - d) Create a playing environment that is reasonably safe for all Participants.

7 Guidelines: Coach

- 7.1 The following guidelines may assist Associations and Clubs when a pregnant Participant is involved. A Coach should:

- 7.1.1 Be aware of the professional medical advice should the pregnant Participant wish to share this information. Personal information should be managed in accordance with Netball Australia's Privacy Guidelines available at the following link: [Privacy policy - Netball Australia](#).
- 7.1.2 Take reasonable measures to ensure that all Participants are aware of the issues related to participation in Netball during pregnancy.
- 7.1.3 Respect and support the Participant's right to make their own decisions in relation to their participation or non-participation in Netball whilst pregnant.
- 7.1.4 If the relevant Participant wishes, advise the pertinent Team/Club/Association Officials that you are coaching a pregnant player.

- 7.2 Coaches, trainers and others who give pregnant Participants advice on how to train during their pregnancy must be very careful that they are not placing themselves in the position of medical experts. They should not speak outside their scope of knowledge as they could face legal action for negligent advice. A consultative approach between Participant, coach and medical expert is recommended.

8 Guidelines: Match Official

- 8.1 The following guidelines may assist Associations and Clubs when a pregnant Participant is involved. A Match Official should:

8.1.1 Apply the rules governing the sport equally and fairly to all Participants.

9 Guidelines: Other Participants

- 9.1 The following guidelines may assist Associations and Clubs when a pregnant Participant is involved. Other Participants should:

9.1.1 Respect and support a pregnant Participant in the same way as they would any other Participant.

10 Additional Resources

- Australian Sports Commission 'Pregnancy in Sport – Guidelines for the Australian Sport Industry', 2002 → www.ausport.gov.au
- Sports Medicine Australia's 'Pregnancy Statement, Pregnancy & Exercise Fact Sheet and Guidelines on the participation of the Pregnant Athlete in contact and collision sports.' → www.sma.org.au
- Clearinghouse for Sport – Pregnancy in Sport → [Female performance and health | Clearinghouse for Sport](#)