

# ADELAIDE COUGARS NETBALL CLUB



**POLICY 015:**

**PREGNANCY**



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### 1. Background:

Women are increasingly seeking to continue participation in sports, such as netball, throughout their pregnancy. Adelaide Cougars Netball Club (CNC) and Netball Australia (A) see that there are many positive outcomes from continuing physical activity during and after pregnancy, however, as maternal and foetal responses to exercise can vary with pre-gestational maternal fitness levels, co-existing medical conditions and/ or pregnancy complications, all women are encouraged to seek individual medical advice before participating.

Further information on Pregnancy and Sport may be gained from Sports Medicine Australia's "SMA Statement – The Benefits and Risks of Exercise in Pregnancy" Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport 5 (1): p11-19.

In Australia, Commonwealth, State and Territory legislation exists in relation to discrimination. This anti-discrimination legislation makes it unlawful to discriminate against a female on the basis of pregnancy, subject to specific exemptions.

There are a number of legal issues to be considered if there are pregnant players, these include; providing reasonably safe playing environments, privacy of the pregnant participant and responsibility of the pregnant player for inherent and obvious risks. Further information on these issues is available in the Australian Sports Commission's publication "Pregnancy, Sport and the Law".

### 2. Policy Statement

ACNC and NA are committed to providing a safe and enjoyable environment for all its members, including pregnant players. All pregnant players are encouraged to discuss their decision to continue playing during their pregnancy with their medical practitioner.

Actively eliminating and preventing all forms of harassment throughout the club.

### 3. Responsibilities

Responsibilities for ensuring the safety of all players, including those that are pregnant are as follows:

#### 4.1 A Pregnant Player

A pregnant player should:

- Be aware that her own health, and the well-being of her unborn child



- Make an informed decision about whether to continue playing sport based on the health of herself and her child.
- Obtain expert medical advice as to the risks associated with playing sport when pregnant.
- Ensure she understands the expert advice and where necessary question the advice until she is sure she understands the risks taken in participating in Netball
- Have regular antenatal reviews with her doctor, including ongoing review of her exercise participation
- Take into account her changed physical condition, use common sense and not take unnecessary risks
- Remember that the ultimate decision to participate in Netball will always be hers, whilst having regard to all the circumstances

### 4.2 Sports Administrator

A Sports Administrator should:

- Evaluate the precautions she/ he can take to avoid harm to all players, including pregnant players
- Develop protocols and procedures to communicate with players regarding participation in Netball during pregnancy, including:
  - providing players with the opportunity to advise of their pregnancy;
  - adding pregnancy advice and risk information to registration forms and
  - prominent places where participants may view it

(Note: legal advice about the form and wording of documents should be obtained)

- Be aware of Commonwealth, State and Territory anti-discrimination legislation and its application in Netball and review the rules, regulations and constitution of her/ his team/ club/ association/ member organisation with respect to the relevant anti-discrimination legislation
- Seek professional advice, (including medical and/ or legal,) if a situation arises where it is not clear what steps should be taken in a given circumstance



- Ensure that the organisation's insurance (including public liability and player injury insurance) is up to date and that it provides appropriate cover
- Promote adherence to the rules of the game
- Create a playing environment that is reasonably safe for all players

### 4.3 A Coach:

A Coach should:

- Be aware of the professional medical advice "SMA Statement - The Benefits and Risks of Exercise in Pregnancy" Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport 5 (1) :p11–19 in relation to exercise and pregnancy and the implications of participation in Netball during pregnancy
- Take reasonable measures to ensure that all athletes are aware of the issues related to participation in Netball during pregnancy
- Respect and support the player's right to make her own decisions in relation to her participation or non-participation in Netball whilst pregnant
- With the agreement of the player, advise the pertinent team/club association/member organisation officials that you are coaching a pregnant player

NOTE: Coaches, trainers and others who give pregnant athletes 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 athlete, coach and medical expert is recommended.

### 4.4 Match Officials:

The Match Officials Should:

- Apply the rules governing the sport equally and fairly to all participants

### 4.5 Other Players:

Other Players Should:

- Respect and support a pregnant athlete in the same way as they would any other participant



#### **4. References**

Australian Rugby Union "Pregnancy Policy"

Australian Sports Commission "Pregnancy, Sport and the Law"

Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport 5 (1): p11–19 "SMA Statement – The Benefits and Risks of Exercise in Pregnancy"

Surf Life Saving Australia "Policy Statement: Pregnancy and the Surf Lifesaver – Competition and Patrols"

South Australia Netball Association "Pregnancy Policy and Guidelines"  
Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984

The Equal Opportunity Act 1984.