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1. Purpose and Background

- 1.1. Women are increasingly seeking to continue participation in sports, such as netball, throughout their pregnancy. 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.
- 1.2. Further information on Pregnancy and Sport may be gained from:
 - 1.2.1. Australian Sports Commission 'Pregnancy in Sport – Guidelines for the Australian Sport Industry', 2002. www.ausport.gov.au
 - 1.2.2. Sports Medicine Australia's 'Exercise in Pregnancy' Fact Sheet. www.sma.org.au
- 1.3. 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.
- 1.4. There are a number of legal issues to be considered in relation to pregnant players, these include;
 - 1.4.1. providing reasonably safe playing environments;
 - 1.4.2. privacy of the pregnant participant; and
 - 1.4.3. Responsibility of the pregnant player for inherent and obvious risks.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1. Netball Australia is committed to providing a safe and enjoyable environment for all its members, including pregnant players. Netball Australia encourages all pregnant players to discuss their decision to continue playing during their pregnancy with their medical practitioner.

3. Jurisdiction

- 3.1. The Netball Australia Constitution enables Netball Australia to formulate, approve, issue, adopt, interpret and amend such policies, procedures, rules, by-laws, and regulations as appropriate to better regulate netball; and to promote and secure uniformity in such rules and standards as may be necessary for the management of netball nationally and internationally.
- 3.2. This Policy is made by the Netball Australia Board under Clause 35 of Netball Australia's Constitution and is binding.
- 3.3. Members Organisations are required to be in compliance with this Policy where applicable and relevant.
- 3.4. This Policy may be amended from time to time by the Netball Australia Board.

4. Guidelines: Pregnant Player

- 4.1. The following guidelines may assist clubs/ associations when a pregnant player is involved. A Pregnant Player should:
 - 4.1.1. Be aware that her own health, and the wellbeing of her unborn child, is of utmost importance in her decision about whether to continue playing sport.

- 4.1.2. Obtain expert medical advice as to the risks associated with playing sport when pregnant. She should ensure she understands this advice and where necessary question the advice until she is sure she understands the risks taken in participating in Netball.
- 4.1.3. Have regular antenatal reviews with her doctor, including ongoing review of her exercise participation.
- 4.1.4. Take into account her changed physical condition, use common sense and not take unnecessary risks
- 4.1.5. Remember that the ultimate decision to participate in Netball will always be hers, whilst having regard to all the circumstances

5. Guidelines: Sports Administrator

- 5.1. The following guidelines may assist clubs/ associations when a pregnant player is involved. A Sports Administrator should:
 - 5.1.1. Evaluate the precautions she/ he can take to avoid harm to all players, including pregnant players.
 - 5.1.2. Develop protocols and procedures to communicate with players regarding participation in Netball during pregnancy, including:
 - (a) Providing players with the opportunity to advise of their pregnancy.
 - (b) 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).
 - (c) Being 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.
 - (d) Seeking 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.
 - (e) Ensuring that the organisation's insurance (including public liability and player injury insurance) is up to date and that it provides appropriate cover.
 - (f) Promoting adherence to the rules of the game.
 - (g) Creating a playing environment that is reasonably safe for all players.

6. Guidelines: Coach

- 6.1. The following guidelines may assist clubs/ associations when a pregnant player is involved. A Coach should:
 - 6.1.1. Be aware of the professional medical advice (refer to abovementioned references).
 - 6.1.2. Take reasonable measures to ensure that all athletes are aware of the issues related to participation in Netball during pregnancy
 - 6.1.3. Respect and support the player's right to make her own decisions in relation to her participation or non-participation in Netball whilst pregnant

- 6.1.4. With the agreement of the player, advise the pertinent team/ club association/ member organisation officials that you are coaching a pregnant player
- 6.2. 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.

7. Guidelines: Match Officials

- 7.1. The following guidelines may assist clubs/ associations when a pregnant player is involved. A Match Official should:
 - 7.1.1. Apply the rules governing the sport equally and fairly to all participants.

8. Guidelines: Other Players

- 8.1. The following guidelines may assist clubs/ associations when a pregnant player is involved. Other Players should:
 - 8.1.1. Respect and support a pregnant athlete in the same way as they would any other participant

9. Definitions

- 9.1. Words mean will have the same meaning as in Netball Australia's Constitution.

Related Documents

- Netball Australia Constitution
- Netball Australia Member Protection Policy
- Netball Australia National Codes of Behaviour