



Pregnancy in Sport Policy

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Controlling Body: Lacrosse WA



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2	16/10/24		Reviewed	Executive Officer



PURPOSE

Lacrosse WA is committed to providing a safe and enjoyable environment for all its members, including pregnant players. Playing sport can contribute to a person's health, fitness and physical well-being. These factors don't change because a player is pregnant. LWA encourages all pregnant players to discuss their decision to continue playing during their pregnancy, including the benefits and risks, with their medical practitioner. The following guidelines may assist clubs when a pregnant player is involved. This policy is designed to assist those who are involved in the management of active pregnant players, and the player themselves, to consider these benefits and risks, so that they can make informed decisions about participation. This policy and guidelines will be reviewed annually and against related legislative changes.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Women are increasingly seeking to continue participation in sports, such as lacrosse, 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.

Further information on Pregnancy and Sport may be gained from:

- AIS - High Performance Pregnancy Guidelines www.ausport.gov.au
- AIS - Female Performance & Health Initiative www.ausport.gov.au
- SMA – Active Women in Sport www.sma.org.au

In Australia, Commonwealth, State and Territory Legislation exist 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 in relation to pregnant players, these include:

- Providing reasonably safe playing environments.
- Privacy of the pregnant participant.
- Responsibility of the pregnant player for inherent and obvious risks.

GUIDELINES: PREGNANT PLAYER

The following guidelines may assist clubs when a pregnant player is involved. A pregnant player should:

- 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.
- 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 Lacrosse.
- 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 lacrosse will always be hers, whilst having regard to the circumstances.

GUIDELINES: SPORTS ADMINISTRATOR

The following guidelines may assist clubs when a pregnant player is involved. 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 lacrosse during pregnancy, including:
 - Providing players with the opportunity to advise their pregnancy.
 - Being aware of Commonwealth, State and Territory anti-discrimination legislation and its application in lacrosse and review the rules, regulations and constitution of her/his team and club with respect to the relevant anti-discrimination legislation.
 - 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. Ensuring that the organisation's insurance (including public liability and player injury insurance) is up to date and that it provides appropriate cover.
 - Promoting adherence to the rules of the game.
 - Creating a playing environment that is reasonably safe for all players.

GUIDELINES: COACH

The following guidelines may assist clubs when a pregnant player is involved. A Coach should:

- Be aware of the professional medical advice (refer to the above mentioned references).
- Take reasonable measure to ensure that all athletes are aware of the issues related to participation in lacrosse during pregnancy.
- Respect and support the player's right to make her own decisions in relation to her participation or non-participation in lacrosse whilst pregnant.
- With the agreement of the player, advise the pertinent team/ club that you are coaching a pregnant player.

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.

GUIDELINES: OFFICIAL

The following guidelines may assist clubs when a pregnant player is involved. An Official should:

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



GUIDELINES: OTHER PLAYERS

The following guidelines may assist clubs when a pregnant player is involved. Other players should:

- Respect and support a pregnant player in the same way as they would any other player.

Adopted by the board: *22 August 2016*

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