

Pregnancy and participation in sport

The aim of this policy is to set guidelines for the participation of pregnant women in community football and netball at the Boronia Hawks Football Netball Club (BHFNC), in a manner that does not put the player or unborn child(ren) at risk.

The guidelines are informed by:

- AFL National Female Community Football Guidelines, 2019.
- Netball Australia, Member Protection Policy, 2017.
- Sports Medicine Australia Guidelines, Participation of the pregnant athlete in contact and collision sports.
- The American College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Physical activity and exercise during pregnancy and the postpartum period, Committee Opinion 804, 2020.

The BHFNC recognises the importance of community sport for maintaining good mental health through social and physical means and the provision of an inclusive environment, without discrimination. We respect the right for women who are pregnant to participate in community football and netball and are committed to providing support to assist them to do so with the health and wellbeing of the player and their unborn child(ren) paramount.

To protect the player and unborn child(ren) and to facilitate informed programming of participation, the guidelines below should be followed:

- Should a player be pregnant at the time of registration or become pregnant during the season, medical clearance is required before the player can participate in training or games. Given that as pregnancy progresses the body goes through significant changes such as increased laxity of joints, change in centre of gravity and increased resting heart rate, medical clearance must be provided each trimester, with ongoing review of exercise participation encouraged. The medical clearance must consider the player's individual circumstances and include any other information that the medical specialist considers important.
- The player should seek specialist medical advice to obtain a clear understanding of the high risks associated with training or playing football or netball including collisions, falls, sudden changes in direction, blows to the abdomen and contact with a projectile (football or netball).
- In case of any injury during training or games, it is advised that a pregnant player seeks immediate follow up with her specialist or emergency services, regardless of perceived severity.
- The Head Coach or appropriate point of contact may seek additional information from the player about a player's pregnancy as reasonably required.
- All information provided by a player to the Head Coach or appropriate point of contact about a pregnancy must be kept strictly confidential unless the express consent of the player is provided.
- A gradual return to training and playing is encouraged postpartum, as directed by medical specialist advice.

Inclusion and connection of a pregnant player to the playing team and the club is valued. BHFNC is committed to providing and funding development opportunities for pregnant players which may include coaching accreditation, mental health training or other as agreed by the Head Coach or appropriate point of contact.

Eastern Football Netball League (EFNL) insurance information

According to the Sportscover Insurance policy wording document, Sports Injury (For Sporting Bodies, Associations and Clubs) <https://www.eflinsurance.com.au/policy-documents/> Section 4.1, Event 14, up to 5% of non-Medicare medical expenses incurred following accidental miscarriage or premature childbirth up to a maximum of **26 weeks** pregnancy is eligible for cover. Cover is only provided if a miscarriage or childbirth was a direct result of playing or participating in the nominated sport.

It is recommended that the pregnant player has Emergency Ambulance Victoria cover and understands the conditions and exclusions of any private health insurance policy owned.

I have read and understood the policy and recommendations within.

Player Name:

Date:

This policy has been endorsed by the BHFNC Board

Date for review: February 2022