

Pregnancy Policy.

TYPE OF POLICY	Participation
EFFECTIVE DATE	1 st December 2019
POLICY OWNER	Australian Rugby League Commission
POLICY CONTACT	NRL General Manager – Game Development and Education

A. REASON FOR POLICY

The policy has been devised to:

- (i) inform athletes that participating in rugby league and related training activities during pregnancy poses potential health risks to themselves and their unborn child which must be managed by an appropriate, expert medical practitioner if the athlete wishes to continue to play rugby league or participate in associated training activities during pregnancy;
- (ii) advise pregnant athletes of the requirement to obtain expert medical advice as to their individual needs and risks for themselves and their unborn child if they wish to play rugby league; and
- (iii) provide a process for administrators and participants to ensure participants have obtained expert medical advice prior to playing rugby league or engaging in training activities during pregnancy.

B. POLICY STATEMENT

The NRL is committed to providing an inclusive, safe and enjoyable environment for all participants of rugby league.

The NRL respects a woman's right to safely participate in sporting activities and exercise while pregnant and prohibits any form of discrimination against an athlete because of her pregnancy, breastfeeding or status as a carer.



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Before playing rugby league and/or participating in training activities, a participant who is pregnant (or who becomes aware that she is pregnant) must obtain appropriate, expert medical advice to ensure she understands the risks to herself and to her unborn child of playing rugby league. This will include consideration of whether it is safe for her to play rugby league or participate in training activities, and if so, for how long she should continue to participate and whether any modifications or changes are required to the way she trains or plays.

C. SCOPE

The policy applies to all players who participate in women's rugby league competitions and/or women's rugby league carnivals, training camps or events organised by ARLC/NRL, States, Clubs, Districts, Divisions, Groups and Leagues.

For the purposes of the policy, 'Medical Doctor' means:

- (i) the Chief Medical Officer/Team Doctor of the NRL or player's State/Club/District/League; or if not applicable
- (ii) the player's personal Medical Doctor (ie, General Practitioner).

D. POLICY HISTORY

PARTICIPATION POLICY IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	VERSION	RELEASE DATE	AUTHOR
P015	1.0	1 st December 2019	National Participation Policy Committee

E. PREGNANCY AND SPORT

Every pregnant woman will have her own specific circumstances and medical history which will be relevant when considering an athlete's ability to continue participating in sport while pregnant. Appropriate exercise during pregnancy is generally considered beneficial but must be prescribed with medical input and clearance from the athlete's treating doctors, taking into



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account the athlete's changed physical condition and the nature of the sporting activities she wishes to undertake.

Rugby league is considered a high-risk contact sport due to possible abdominal and pelvic trauma and sudden deceleration events.

Ongoing participation in rugby league when pregnant should only be undertaken following expert medical consultation and with full awareness and thoughtful consideration of the potential risks to themselves, their unborn child and/or fellow players, should the athlete or her unborn child suffer an injury while playing rugby league or participating in training or associated activities while pregnant.

F. PREGNANCY POLICY

(i) Where an athlete wishes to play rugby league or undertake training while pregnant she must first obtain a written advice from her treating specialist obstetrician:

(a) which confirms that the player has provided her full written, informed consent that she is aware of and understands the risks associated with playing rugby league (and participating in the relevant rugby league competition and associated training or other events) while pregnant; and

(b) **which advises whether, taking into account the player's individual circumstances, it is safe for her to participate or continue play rugby league and/or engage in associated training activities and if so, for how long and in what manner the player's training program should be modified,**

(Specialist Medical Opinion).

(ii) A Specialist Medical Opinion must be obtained by the player as soon as possible after she becomes aware that she is pregnant and must be disclosed to the Medical Doctor or relevant State/Club/District/League official (as applicable) prior to a pregnant athlete continuing to play rugby league or engaging in associated training/training program activities.



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- (iii) A pregnant participant must undertake regular antenatal reviews with regards to her health and the health of her unborn child and provide updated medical advice to the Medical Doctor or relevant State/Club/District/League official (as applicable) in respect of the matters provided in the Specialist Medical Opinion. Such updates must be provided as prescribed by her treating specialist obstetrician or as otherwise requested by the Medical Doctor or relevant State/Club/District/League official (as applicable).
- (iv) If the Medical Doctor or relevant State/Club/District/League official (as applicable) is not reasonably satisfied that a player has received sufficient medical advice regarding the matters required in the Specialist Medical Opinion, the Medical Doctor or relevant State/Club/District/League official (as applicable) will consult with the player and may request that she agrees to participate in an independent medical examination conducted by a specialist obstetrician to seek independent advice regarding the matters outlined in paragraph F(i). Where an independent medical opinion is sought by the Medical Doctor, the NRL or State/Club/District/League (as applicable) will bear the costs associated with obtaining such advice. The player acknowledges and accepts that where a second specialist opinion is requested under this paragraph she may not be permitted to play rugby league or train until such advice has been obtained and the Medical Doctor or relevant State/Club/District/League official (as applicable) is satisfied that it meets the requirements of paragraph F(i).
- (v) A player must obtain formal written medical clearance from their Medical Doctor /specialist obstetrician prior to returning to training and/or playing rugby league if this is within 6 months of the player delivering her child or if she suffers a miscarriage. This clearance must be approved by the Medical Doctor or relevant State/Club/District/League official (as applicable).
- (vi) The Medical Doctor or relevant State/Club/District/League official (as applicable) must obtain the consent of the player before disclosing information of her pregnancy (other than that she is fit to play and/or train) to the NRL or State/Club/District/League (as the case may be) during a player's first trimester of pregnancy. After this time at the elite level, the Medical



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Doctor may disclose medical information to the NRL or State/Club/District/League in accordance with the terms of the NRLW Playing Contract and NRL Rules (as applicable).

- (vii) Any public announcements regarding a player's pregnancy will only be made following consultation between the player and the NRL or her State/Club/District/League (as applicable). Neither the NRL nor the State/Club/District/League (as applicable) will make an announcement regarding a player's pregnancy without her consent.

