

## **PREGNANCY & PONY CLUB**

### **AUSTRALIAN SPORTS COMMISSION – PREGNANCY IN SPORT GUIDELINES**

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC), with Sport Industry Australia, hosted the National Forum on Pregnancy in Sport in Sydney on 1st August 2001. Participants from all aspects of sport in Australia, including government, non-government, health, legal and industry sectors, took part. Updated Pregnancy in Sport Guidelines were developed based on the conclusions of the forum, and on other expert contributions.

These guidelines are intended as a practical checklist for all those concerned with pregnancy in sport. However, because each person, each pregnancy, each legal case and each sport is different, these guidelines can only assist in a general way with making decisions about this issue.

#### ***Administrators***

- Be aware of relevant federal, and state or territory anti-discrimination legislation and how it affects your organisation and sport. The Victorian Equal Opportunity Act of 1995 came into effect as of Monday January 1, 1996. Under the Act, using pregnancy as a basis for discrimination is prohibited. This means that any person, including a mother, has the right to participate in her chosen sport.
- Evaluate the measures you should take to limit the likelihood of pregnant participants being harmed and take reasonable care to ensure that such measures are carried out.
- Respect and support the rights of women who wish to continue exercising while pregnant.
- Ensure that policies are in place to outline the organisation's commitment to equal opportunity and avoiding discrimination, particularly where pregnant women are concerned, and review the rules and regulations, and the organisation's constitution, with this in mind. Ensure that everyone in your organisation understands these policies and commitments. It is important that the policies are continually
- Develop practices that minimise the risk of injury to all participants.
- Seek professional medical or legal advice when necessary and ensure that this advice is available to coaches and officials when required.
- Avoid giving advice that you are not qualified to give, and encourage pregnant athletes to obtain and act on professional medical advice, particularly about the risks of continuing to play and when to stop.
- Provide a clear statement containing this advice in the registration form for competition, or in similar documents, and display a similar notice in a prominent place where all will see it.
- Ensure that coaches select participants on the basis of merit and capability.
- Encourage athletes to obtain and act on professional medical advice with regard to pregnancy and sport.
- Respect and support the rights of women who wish to continue exercising while pregnant.
- Avoid giving advice that you are not qualified to give.
- Select participants by merit and capability, without discriminating on the basis of pregnancy.

#### ***The Official***

- Apply the rules of the competition equitably at all times.
- Place the safety and welfare of all participants above all else.
- Respect and support the rights of women who wish to continue exercising while pregnant.
- Avoid giving advice that you are not qualified to give.
- Ensure that insurance policies are up to date and provide appropriate cover.

### ***The Pregnant Participant***

- Before making the decision about whether to continue to participate in sport, obtain expert medical advice, and obtain a clear understanding of the risks, particularly in regard to your sport.
- Regularly review your training and performance program with your medical adviser.
- Consider discussing the implications of your pregnancy with coaches, officials and administrators.
- Use common sense and do not take unnecessary risks.
- Take into account the changes in your physical condition.
- Do not increase the intensity of your sporting program while you are pregnant, and always work at less than 75 per cent of your maximum heart rate.
- Watch for warning signs, such as bleeding or abdominal pain, and see a doctor immediately if these occur.

### ***The Pregnant Official/Instructor/Volunteer***

- Before making the decision about whether to continue to participate in your sport, obtain expert medical advice, and obtain a clear understanding of the risks, particularly in regard to your participation in the sport.
- Regularly review your current medical status with your medical adviser.
- Use common sense and do not take unnecessary risks.
- Take into account the changes in your physical condition.
- Watch for warning signs, such as bleeding or abdominal pain, and see a doctor immediately if these occur.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO ZONES AND CLUBS**

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As part of Pony Club Victoria Risk Management Plan the following is recommended:

- Display a copy of Sport Medicine Australia's Exercise in Pregnancy - Women in Sport Fact Sheet 2 and this Statement on your noticeboard.
- Remove any reference to pregnancy from your By-Laws.
- Provide a safe environment for all Pony Club Members.

## **INSURANCE AND THE PREGNANT PONY CLUBBER**

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The pregnant participant is provided with the same personal accident policy that is provided for all registered members of Pony Club Victoria. However, the participant is not covered if the resultant injury is found to be due to the pregnancy. No cover is provided for the unborn baby.

## **INSURANCE AND THE PONY CLUB VOLUNTEER/OFFICIAL**

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The pregnant volunteer/official is provided with the same personal accident policy that is provided for all registered members of Pony Club Victoria. However, the participant is not covered if the resultant injury is found to be due to the pregnancy. No cover is provided for the unborn baby.

## **INSURANCE AND THE ASSOCIATION**

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Associations (their committee members) are covered for legal liability for all amounts that they may become legally liable to pay, as per the limits of the policy whether arising out of statute, contract or common law for the compensation, as a result of bodily injury or property damage caused by an occurrence and arising out of the activities of Pony Club.

## **EQUESTRIAN IS CLASSIFIED AS A SPECIFICALLY EXCLUDED SPORT**

“This is a mixed group of sports which carry a high risk from falls, physical trauma or other risks and should not be undertaken once the sportswoman knows or suspects that she is pregnant”. Sports Medicine Australia recommends that pregnant women avoid sports such as scuba diving, parachuting, waterskiing, martial arts, gymnastics, horseriding and trampolining.

## **SPORTS MEDICINE AUSTRALIA**

Sports Medicine Australia has developed guidelines entitled “Participation of the Pregnant Athlete in Contact and Collision Sports.” The guidelines are intended to provide recommendations to the pregnant athlete and sporting organisations on safe participation in contact and collision sports during pregnancy. A summary of the guidelines follows.

## **SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES ISSUED BY SPORTS MEDICINE AUSTRALIA**

- Pregnant women are advised not to commence a new competitive sport during their pregnancy.
- Pregnant sportswomen should consult closely with their doctors whilst continuing with sporting participation especially if playing high risk contact or collision sports.
- The pregnant sportswomen should advise her coach, trainer or fitness leader of their pregnancy so that training can be modified accordingly.
- Pregnant sportswomen need to be aware that participation in contact or collision sports carries risks for herself and the unborn child.
- Under the supervision of her doctor the pregnant sportswoman with high levels of fitness and a normal pregnancy may continue participation into the second trimester in non-contact and limited contact sports.
- Pregnant sportswomen should avoid overheating (body core temp>38C) especially in the first trimester.
- If any medical or obstetric complication should occur, the sportswomen should cease participation and contact her doctor immediately.
- If maintaining fitness is the goal of sports participation, the pregnant sportswomen should consider changing to lower risk activities eg non contact sports like swimming and walking as the pregnancy advances.
- Pregnant sportswomen should not attempt to increase their level of training or exercise at any stage during pregnancy.
- Pregnant sportswomen need to pay special attention to:
  - A thorough warm up and cool down
  - Consumption of adequate fluids before, during and after participation
  - Regulation of intensity (heart rate) at times of maximal exertion so that it does not exceed 140 beats per minute for more than 15 minutes.

This information is taken from “Participation of The Pregnant Athlete in Contact and Collision Sports” issued by the Medicine and Science for Women in Sport Committee of the Australian Sports Medicine Federation. 1994. More recently, Sports Medicine Australia has issued a series of Women in Sport Fact Sheets, one of which is related to “Exercise in Pregnancy”. This fact sheet covers the various anatomical and physiological changes during pregnancy that will affect performance, risks to the mother and foetus whilst exercising, appropriate precautions and the importance of developing an exercise program during pregnancy in consultation with your doctor. The above information and guidelines are available from the Sports Medicine Australia website [www.sma.org.au](http://www.sma.org.au) or by

## **Policy Version Table**

<b>VERSION</b>	<b>Version No.</b>	<b>Version Date</b>
Implementation version	VDEC2008	5 DEC 2008