



# **PREGNANCY POLICY**

## **BYLAW 22**

***Effective from June 2009***

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## PREFACE

These Regulations are made under the powers provided under Rule 30 of the Association and set out Skate Australia's (SA) policy on pregnancy in roller sport.

These guidelines are drafted in the interests of the sport of roller sports, its Board of Management and Administrators, the athletes, and officials / referees and in particular athletes or officials / referees who are pregnant and their unborn children.

The guidelines are in response to the need for advice in relation to participation of pregnant women as athletes or officials / referees in competitions organised, conducted and/or under the control of SA ("SA Events").

In preparing this policy, SA has considered the Australian Sports Commission publication *Pregnancy in Sport – Guidelines for the Australian Sporting Industry*.

This policy is intended as a practical guide for SA members and participants. However, because each person, pregnancy, legal case and sport is different, these guidelines can only assist in a general way with making decisions about this issue.

SA's disciplines are activities that may involve increased risk of injury to the pregnant participant and her unborn child due to physiological changes in pregnancy and due to injury. In some disciplines contact may and can occur between athletes and between athletes and officials / referees, even though it is not an essential part of the game and is often illegal. In other disciplines, such as Roller Derby, Inline Hockey and Roller Hockey, legal contact is part of the game and the sports are considered high contact. An injury may occur as a result of either situation.

An athlete or official / referee who continues to participate in SA Events whilst pregnant must be aware that continued participation is not without risk to herself and her unborn child, particularly in the high contact sports.

SA has a responsibility to the athletes and officials / referees involved in SA Events to act without discrimination against participants on the basis of pregnancy and with reasonable care in relation to competition in all the circumstances.

Clubs should ensure that this policy and any relevant contractual provisions are drawn to the attention of athletes and other participants.

## 1.0 Policy Statement

- Skate Australia, its member State Associations, clubs, officers and members will respect and support the rights of women who wish to continue exercising when pregnant
- Skate Australia will encourage women to obtain and adhere to appropriate medical advice with regard to the level of participation during training and competition.
- Skate Australia informs pregnant participants that current insurance policies do not cover claims related to pregnancy and childbirth in any discipline of the sport..
- Skate Australia will ensure that playing areas are in a suitable condition to minimise risk to all participants, including pregnant participants
- Skate Australia will ensure adherence to the rules of the game to minimise risk to all participants, including pregnant participants
- Skate Australia will make this policy and supporting information, including risks and benefits of participation in Roller Sports while pregnant, available to all members.
- Continued participation in Roller Sports during pregnancy poses theoretical risks to a pregnant woman and to her unborn child.
- Pregnant women should seek advice from an appropriately qualified medical practitioner as to the risks involved in participating in that Roller Sport while pregnant and, if so, for how long they should continue to participate.

## 2.0 Pregnancy in Sport

The following information is general information on pregnancy in sport based on published guidelines and references that were current at the time the policy was adopted. We recommend reading the information provided in full and discussing any queries with your club administrator, facility manager, coach, or club representative. Please note the information is general information and all participants need to consider if the information is right for them. Please be aware that this is not a substitute for medical advice. Any medical advice must be discussed with your doctor.

The following information has been sourced from:-

- Sports Medicine Australia Women In Sport Fact Sheet No 2: Exercise in Pregnancy
- Sports Medicine Australia Statement: The benefits and risks of exercise during pregnancy
- Netball Australia Pregnancy Policy 2004
- Better Health Channel Fact Sheet: Pregnancy in Sport (State of Victoria, 2009)
- Pregnancy in Sport: Guidelines for the Australian Sporting Industry (Australian Sports Commission, 2002)

Pregnancy is a natural condition and generally the benefits of physical activity outweigh the risks. All participants are urged to seek appropriate medical advice before engaging in Roller Sport activities, both training and competition, and to have regular review of medical advice regarding participation as the pregnancy progresses.

### ***It is recommended that a pregnant player:***

- Be aware that her own health, and the well being of her unborn child, is of the utmost importance in her decision about whether to continue playing sport.
- Obtain expert medical advice regarding the risks associated with playing sport when pregnant. –The athlete should ensure that she understands the advice and, when necessary, questions the advice until she is sure she understands the risks taken in participating in the sport.
- Have regular antenatal reviews with her doctor, including ongoing review of her exercise participation
- Take into account any physical changes, use common sense and not take any unnecessary risks

**3.0 Guidelines for an Administrator or Facility Manager** (Australian Sports Commission, *Pregnancy in Sport – Guidelines for the Australian Sporting Industry, p.7*)

- Be aware of relevant federal and state or territory anti-discrimination legislation and how it affects your organisation and sport
- Evaluate the measures you should take to limit likelihood of pregnant players and 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 SA constitution, with this in mind.
- Ensure that everyone in SA understands the policy and its commitments and complies with the policy
- Ensure the policy is updated as necessary
- Ensure the insurance policies are up to date and provide appropriate cover for pregnant participants
- Develop practices to minimise the risk of injury to all participants
- Seek professional medical or legal advice when necessary and ensure that the 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 risks of continuing to play and when to stop
- Provide a clear statement containing this advice in the registration form for membership of SA and for competition, or in similar documents and display a similar notice in a prominent place in venues for all to see it
- Ensure coaches select participants on the basis of merit and capability

**4.0 Guidelines for the Coach** (Australian Sports Commission, *Pregnancy in Sport – Guidelines for the Australian Sporting Industry, p.8*)

- Encourage the athlete to obtain and act on professional medical advice with regard to pregnancy in sport
- Respect and support the rights of women who wish to continue participating while pregnant
- Avoid giving advice you are not qualified to give
- Select participants by merit and capability without discriminating on the basis of pregnancy
- Ensure that insurance policies are up to date and provide appropriate cover.

**5.0 Guidelines for the Official** (Australian Sports Commission, *Pregnancy in Sport – Guidelines for the Australian Sporting Industry, p.8*)

- Advise pregnant athletes that there may be risks involved in participating while pregnant and that they should obtain medical advice about whether to participate or not, the level of participation and for how long they should participate.
- Ensure that there is a clear statement containing this advice in the registration form for roller sports or the competition, or in similar documents and ensure that there is a similar notice displayed in the venue.
- Apply the rules of the sport or activity 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 participating while pregnant
- Avoid giving advice you are not qualified to give
- Ensure that insurance policies are up to date and provide appropriate cover

## **6.0 Guidelines for Participant** (Australian Sports Commission, *Pregnancy in Sport – Guidelines for the Australian Sporting Industry, p.9*)

- 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 with regard to your discipline and level of participation
- Regularly review your training and performance program with your medical adviser
- Consider discussing the implications of your pregnancy with coaches, officials and administrators
- Consider your insurance cover and ensure that it is adequate and relevant
- 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 programme while you are pregnant and always work at less than 75% of your maximum heart rate
- Watch for warning signs such as, but not limited to, bleeding or abdominal pain, decreased foetal movements, amniotic fluid leakage or uterine contractions and see a doctor immediately if these occur
- If you have a medical condition such as pre-eclampsia, or if you are carrying a high-risk pregnancy such as multiple foetuses you should consult your doctor.

### **6.0.1 Guidelines for other participants**

- Other participants should respect and support a pregnant athlete in the same way as they would any other participant.
- Other participants owe a pregnant athlete the same degree of duty of care as they would any other participant. They must take reasonable care not to cause harm to other participants.
- Participants may be liable for injuries that they cause by playing outside the rules of the game in a way that other players would not ordinarily and reasonable expect.

### **7.0 Insurance**

An athlete or official / referee who continues to participate in SA Events whilst pregnant will not be covered by any personal accident insurance or other type of insurance policy provided by SA as SA insurance policies contain an exclusion clause for injuries related to pregnancy and childbirth. Injuries sustained by participants who are pregnant, and that are not related to the pregnancy, may be covered under the current policy.

### **8.0 Indemnity**

An athlete or official /referee who continues to participate in SA Events whilst pregnant agrees that she will: -

- indemnify the SA, its officers, servants and agents and shall keep said persons indemnified against any and all costs, claims, damages and liabilities arising from any claim, action or proceeding made, brought or commenced by any person at some time in the future in relation to any bodily injury, loss or damage which may have been sustained by her or her unborn child in or while being present at any SA Event whilst pregnant; and
- release the SA, its officers, servants and agents from any and all claims, actions or proceedings made, brought or commenced by her in relation to any bodily injury, loss or damage which may have been sustained or incurred by her as a result of her participation at any SA Events conducted by the SA whilst pregnant.

### **9.0 Conclusion**

Overall, SA aims to have the safest training and events possible. SA considers this Policy goes a significant way towards achieving this objective. SA aims to respect and support a player's right to make her own decision in relation to their participation or non-participation in activities during pregnancy.

**SKATE AUSTRALIA PREGNANCY CLAUSE  
FOR INCLUSION IN PLAYER/OFFICIAL CONTRACT**

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**1. Pregnancy Clause**

I acknowledge and agree that:

- (a) as a registered member of SA, I am a competitor/official with SA and am bound by the rules and regulations of SA;
- (b) the rules and regulations of SA are made in the interest of the sport of roller sport, the players and officials and SA, including:
  - (i) safety and protection of all players and officials;
  - (ii) fair treatment of all players; and
  - (iii) encouragement of safe and fair competition;
- (c) roller sport's disciplines are activities in which contact occurs between players and between players and officials. Accordingly there is a risk to the health and wellbeing of myself and my unborn child by my participation in the sport whilst pregnant;
- (d) I will be bound by any rule or regulation of SA which is in operation from time to time in relation to pregnancy;
- (e) I am bound by the release and indemnity in clause \_\_ of this Agreement;
- (f) Sports Medicine Australia considers contact sports and collision sports safe **only in the first trimester of pregnancy**; and
- (g) **I acknowledge and confirm that I have been advised that any insurance policy held by Skate Australia includes an exclusion clause in relation to any injury associated with pregnancy and childbirth.**

**2. Severability**

If any part of this agreement is invalid, unenforceable, illegal, void or voidable for any reason, this agreement will be construed and be binding on the parties as if the invalid, unenforceable, illegal, void or voidable part had been deleted from this agreement or read down to the extent necessary to overcome the difficulty.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Where the person signing this agreement is under 18 years of age it must also be signed by his/her parent or legal guardian.

I, .....[insert name] of .....[insert address] am the parent or guardian of the person signing this agreement and agree that I and my child (or the child who I am guardian of) both agree to be bound by and to comply with the terms and conditions of this agreement.

Parent's signature: (where applicant under 18 y.o):

..... Date: .....

Parent's name: .....