

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

Accordingly, these pregnancy guidelines have been developed by WN to provide information and guidance for all those participating in netball at international level (including, in particular, players, umpires, bench officials and team officials).

WN is committed to providing a safe and enjoyable environment for all who participate in netball at international events, including those who are pregnant.

However, netball (particularly at international level) is a physically demanding game which requires a high level of agility. It also involves a degree of contact and carries an inherent risk of accident and injury, both to the participant and the unborn child. Accordingly, participation in netball during pregnancy is at the risk of the participant.

Whilst the decision as to whether or not to participate rests solely with the relevant participant:

1. the participant's own health and the health of the unborn child are of paramount importance;
2. WN strongly recommends that the participant: (i) consults with their own appropriately qualified medical practitioner to inform them, on a voluntary basis, of their pregnancy and to obtain individual and specific professional medical advice before participating in netball (both during and following pregnancy), in particular regarding the risks of such participation; (ii) acts in accordance with the medical advice received; and (iii) attends regular check-ups with their medical practitioner throughout and following their pregnancy regarding their participation in netball, adjusting participation accordingly;
3. the participant will be responsible for ensuring she has appropriate insurance cover (it may be possible to obtain such cover through their National Association) for participating in netball during and following pregnancy; and
4. by participating when pregnant, the participant will be deemed to have consented to any risks (including any risk of injury to the participant and/or the unborn child) that may arise from such participation. Aside from liability for death or personal injury resulting from negligence, the participant will also be deemed to have waived any and all claims, causes and rights of action against WN, national associations, event organisers, players and match officials, whether at law or in equity, of whatever nature and in any jurisdiction or forum, that she may have as a result of such participation.

Member Countries should:

1. use reasonable endeavours to ensure that the playing environment is safe for all participants, including those who are pregnant;

2. develop protocols for communicating with players and other persons regarding participating in netball during pregnancy, including providing players with the opportunity to voluntarily advise of their pregnancy;
3. be aware of relevant anti-discrimination legislation and its application to netball; and
4. ensure that their insurance (including public liability and player/umpire injury insurance) is up- to-date and provides adequate cover.

WN Pregnancy Guidelines

Coaches should:

1. be aware of these guidelines and of the possible risks of participating in netball when pregnant;
2. take reasonable steps to ensure that players are aware of these guidelines and of the possible risks of participating in netball when pregnant; and
3. respect and support the player's right to make her own informed decisions in relation to her participation or non-participation in netball when pregnant.

Team Medical Personnel should:

1. be aware of these guidelines and of the current medical advice in relation to exercise participation during pregnancy;
2. develop protocols for communicating with players regarding their participation in netball during pregnancy;
3. create an environment where players are comfortable in voluntarily informing them of their pregnancy;
4. take reasonable steps to ensure that players are aware of these guidelines and of the risks of participating in netball when pregnant;
5. strongly recommend to pregnant players that they have regular medical checkups and follow medical advice; and
6. respect and support the player's right to make her own informed decisions on whether or not to participate in netball when pregnant.

Umpires at international events should:

1. be aware of these guidelines, which also apply to them;
2. prioritise the safety of all participants during the game;
3. apply the rules of netball accurately, consistently and fairly to all participants;
4. ensure the game is played under safe conditions; and
5. stop play at any time in the event of an emergency.

Approved by the WN Board

5th December 2021