

**AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL PLAYER & OFFICIAL NATIONAL
DEREGISTRATION POLICY**



March 2016

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This Deregistration policy has been developed to provide a risk management framework and policy basis for community football administrators to recognise a duty of care with respect to Players and Officials who could pose an unacceptable risk to other Players and Officials.

It is imperative that all Leagues and State Bodies adopt this policy to ensure that a consistent approach is applied to the Deregistration of Players and Officials.

1.2 Definitions

Club means an Australian football club entitled to field a team in a Competition.

Competition means an Australian football competition conducted or administered by a State Body, League or State Body affiliate (e.g. Region Commission).

Deregistration means the withdrawal of a Player's permit to play or an Official's capacity to officiate in any Competition.

League means a league associated with a State Body via an affiliation agreement or a Competition.

Official means without limitation coaches, assistant coaches, officers, trainers, runners, employees or any person performing any duties (paid or unpaid) for or on behalf of a Club, League or State Body at any Australian Football match administered by a Competition.

Player means a player who participates in any Australian football match administered by a Competition.

Reportable Offence means any reportable offence identified in the Laws of Australian Football, as amended from time to time.

State Body means the governing State and Territory Australian football bodies affiliated to the AFL as follows:

- (a) AFL NSW/ACT;
- (b) AFL Queensland;
- (c) AFL Northern Territory;
- (d) AFL Tasmania;
- (e) AFL Victoria;
- (f) South Australian National Football League; and
- (g) West Australian Football Commission.

Suspension means a period during which a Player or Official is not allowed to play or officiate in a match of Australian football.

1.3 Application

- (a) This Deregistration policy applies to all State Bodies and their affiliated Leagues and Clubs.
- (b) Headings and indexes are only included for ease of reference and do not affect interpretation.

1.4 Variation

The AFL may from time to time, and in consultation with State Bodies where necessary, alter the procedures for Deregistration in its absolute discretion.

2. POLICY AIMS

The policy aims to:

- (a) deregister a Player who is found guilty of a Reportable Offence(s) where such offence or offences cause the Suspension history of such Player to fall beyond an acceptable level for Australian football;
- (b) deregister an Official who is found guilty of a Reportable Offence(s) (at any level) where such offence or offences are deemed to fall beyond an acceptable level for Australian football;
- (c) apply the Deregistration of a Player/Official to both roles so that a deregistered Player cannot officiate in any capacity and a deregistered Official cannot participate as a Player in any Competition;
- (d) prevent a Player from transferring between Leagues with the view to creating a “clean slate” with the new League. The Suspension history shall follow the Player to allow the new League to make an informed judgement regarding registration taking into account past and current Suspensions.

3. DEREGISTRATION PROCEDURES

3.1 General

- (a) The full Suspension history of a Player is to be forwarded to the new League from the previous League upon a Player being cleared from one League to another (as per the National Player Transfer Regulations, as amended from time to time). For the avoidance of doubt, **all Suspensions** determined by a League or State Body (tribunal, investigation, appeal or similar process) shall be forwarded to the new League for their records together with the clearance / transfer details.
- (b) The full Suspension history of a Player (including tribunal record at all previous League/s) shall be considered when determining penalties for Reportable Offences in the assessment of a Suspension. However, in determining a Suspension, the appointed tribunal body or nominated decision maker should not have regard to the effect of the Suspension on Deregistration. In other words, each Reportable Offence should be determined on its merits.
- (c) A League that suspects that an Official may have a Suspension history is to seek information from the Official's previous League/s.
- (d) Club imposed penalties will not be considered on the permanent record for a Player or Official.
- (e) Information regarding suspended sentences will be transferred between Leagues and Leagues will only consider such sentences relevant to calculating the combined Suspension for Deregistration if and when the Suspension from such suspended sentence is served.
- (f) For the avoidance of doubt and unless otherwise agreed by the relevant State Body:

- i) if a Player is deregistered pursuant to this policy, that Player will also be prohibited from acting as an Official, that being a coach, assistant coach, trainer, runner, or other match official in relation to a Competition; and
- ii) if an Official is deregistered pursuant to this policy, that Official will also be prohibited from participating as a Player in any Australian football Competition.

3.2 Deregistration Process

3.2.1 Notification

(a) Leagues

- i) Leagues must advise all Clubs of the details of the policy and make the policy readily available to their Clubs, Players and Officials.
- ii) Once a Player/Official has accumulated a Suspension history of ten (10) weeks or more, the League must advise the Player/Official and their Club in writing that the Player/Official faces the risk of Deregistration should the Player/Official incur further Suspension(s) that results in him/her reaching or exceeding the sixteen (16) week total Suspension history.
- iii) Notification of Deregistration shall be made in writing to the Player/Official and their Club.
- iv) State Bodies shall be notified in writing of all decisions to deregister a Player/Official, by the Player's/Official's Club. A central database of all deregistered Players/Officials will be kept by all State Bodies.
- v) Should a Player/Official's Suspension history already have reached or exceed a combined total of sixteen (16) weeks Suspension at the time of implementing this policy, the League is to formally advise the Player/Official and the Player's/Official's club that the Player/Official faces Deregistration should the Player/Official incur another Suspension.

(b) Clubs

- i) Clubs must advise all of their Players/Officials in relation to this policy.
- ii) Clubs must at all times strive to ensure their Players and Officials do not get themselves into a position of potentially being deregistered. Anger management training is seen as a critical component of this prevention for Clubs to arrange and implement.
- iii) Clubs must use all best endeavours to inform their Player/Official of any notification provided by the League pursuant to section 3.2.1(a) and must promptly confirm and acknowledge to the League the steps taken by the Club to ensure that the Player/Official has received the notification.

(c) Commencement of Deregistration

For the avoidance of doubt, Deregistration will commence on the date on which the most recent Suspension of the Player/Official (being the Suspension which resulted in that Player/Official exceeding the total of sixteen (16) weeks Suspension) ends.

3.2.2 Criteria for Deregistration

(a) Players

- i) Players shall be deregistered and not allowed further registration with the same or another League if the Player has **accumulated a combined total of sixteen (16) weeks Suspension (or greater) as a Player or Official** (including as a Player during the Player's AFL Career, subject to section 3.2.2(b) below) as a result of Reportable Offences only. For the avoidance of doubt, a Player who is deregistered will also not be allowed to act as an Official in the same or another League or in any Competition.
- ii) For the avoidance of doubt:
 - a. the sixteen (16) weeks accumulated Suspension relates to Suspensions imposed as a result of Reportable Offences under the Laws of Australian Football;
 - b. match ineligibility or sanctions received by a Player in relation to breaches of the AFL Anti- Doping Code (as amended from time to time) are not to be counted in determining accumulated Suspensions under this Deregistration policy; and
 - c. only Suspension periods served by a Player after attaining the age of 16 years will count for the purposes of this Deregistration policy.

(b) AFL Career

Any Suspension period served by a Player during his AFL Career shall carry over to community football Competitions. However any such Suspension period shall be halved for the purposes of this Deregistration policy. For example, if a Player receives a total of six (6) weeks Suspension whilst playing in the AFL, only three (3) weeks shall carry over for the purposes of this Deregistration policy.

(c) Officials

Officials shall be deregistered and not allowed to officiate or play in any form in the same or another League or Competition if they have accumulated a combined total of sixteen (16) weeks Suspension (or greater) as a Player or Official throughout their whole Australian football career (i.e. not limited to age of the Official at the time of a Suspension).

(d) First Offence

Should a Player or Official receive sixteen (16) weeks or more Suspension as a "first offence" it shall be at the State Body's discretion (in consultation with the relevant League) as to whether or not that Player/Official will be deregistered following his/her Suspension.

3.3 Appeal of Deregistration and Re-registration

- (a) A Player/Official who has been deregistered in accordance with section 3.2 may not appeal their Deregistration until at least 12 months after the date on which they were deregistered (such date being determined in accordance with section 3.2.1(c)).

- (b) Subject to clause 3.3 (a), a deregistered Player/Official can appeal the decision of their State Body and apply for re-registration in accordance with their State Body's rules, regulations, by-laws and/or guidelines regulating tribunal and appeals procedures, as amended from time to time (**Appeal**).
- (c) An Appeal will be heard at a time and place to be determined by the State Body.
- (d) An Appeal may only be brought by a Player or Official if that Player or Official can demonstrate to the Appeal tribunal exceptional circumstances that warrant re-registration as follows:
 - i) that the Player or Official is genuinely rehabilitated or committed to ongoing rehabilitation;
 - ii) that the Player or Official is unlikely to re-offend; or
 - iii) any other exceptional circumstances as determined by the Appeal tribunal in its discretion.
- (e) To the extent permitted by law, the decision of the Appeal tribunal shall be final and binding on all parties.
- (f) A Player or Official may only submit one (1) Appeal in any one Australian football year.
- (g) For the avoidance of doubt:
 - i) a deregistered Player or Official cannot participate in a Competition as a Player or as an Official unless he/she is re-registered following a successful Appeal in accordance with this clause 3; and
 - ii) if a Player or Official is re-registered in accordance with this clause 3, and subsequently receives a Suspension as a result of a Reportable Offence, that Player or Official will be deregistered and prohibited from participating in any Competition as a Player or Official with no further rights of appeal.