



AFL VICTORIA

PLAYER AND OFFICIAL

DE-REGISTRATION POLICY

Current as at: September 2006

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The De-registration 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/officials who could pose an unacceptable risk to other players/officials.

Previous generations of league and club administrators were not subject to the same level of scrutiny in relation to their risk management requirements and particularly their attention to duty of care issues as they are today.

Whilst the concept of a permanent de-registration policy had been around for a while and different competitions had different policies and courses of action, it is imperative that all AFL Victoria (AFLV) Members adopt this policy to ensure that a consistent approach is applied to the de-registration of players/officials.

Examples of individuals taking legal action against other individuals and, more particularly action against those who potentially could have stopped such “dangerous” individuals from being able to cause harm, highlights the need for a uniform de-registration policy.

1.2 Definitions

Affiliated League – Leagues associated with AFLV via a Member or direct Membership Agreement.

De-registration – The withdrawal of a senior player’s permit to play or an official’s capacity to officiate in any form of Australian Rules football.

Football Offence – Refer to AFL Laws of the Game (Reportable Offences).

AFLV Member – A signatory to a Membership Agreement with AFLV.

League Executive – A person(s) with the responsibility of administering the league.

Official – Includes but not limited to coaches, assistant coaches, officers, trainers, runners, employees or any person performing any duties (paid or unpaid) for or on behalf of the club, team or league.

Senior Player – A player who participates in Australian Rules football in seniors, reserves, veterans, U/19, U/18 & Club XVIII games administered by an AFL Victoria Member or affiliated League.

Suspension – A period during which a player or official is not allowed to play or officiate in a game of Australian Rules football.

1.3 Application

The De-registration policy applies to all Members of AFLV and their affiliated leagues and clubs. Specifically in relation to:

Players: All senior players (seniors, reserves, veterans, U/19, U/18 & Club XVIII) who are Members of a league affiliated to AFLV or its Member.

Officials: All league and club officials.

1.4 Variation

Following Member input AFLV may from time to time, alter the procedures for de-registration in its absolute discretion.

2. POLICY AIMS

The policy aims to:

- a) De-register a senior player who is found guilty of football offences where such offences cause the tribunal history of such player to fall beyond an acceptable level for senior Australian football.
- b) De-register an official who is found guilty of football offences (at any level) where such offence or offences are deemed to fall beyond an acceptable level for Australian football.
- c) Apply the de-registration of a player/official to both roles so that a de-registered player can not officiate in any capacity and a de-registered official can not participate as a player.
- d) Prevent a player from transferring between leagues with the view to creating a “clean slate” with the new league. The tribunal history shall follow the player to allow the new league to make an informed judgement regarding initial registration taking into account past and current tribunal sentences.

3. DE-REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

3.1 General

- a) The full tribunal 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 AFL Victoria Regulations). It is noted that **all guilty verdicts** determined by a league (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 tribunal history of a player (including tribunal record at all previous league/s) shall be considered when determining penalties for offences and also potential de-registration.
- c) A league that suspects that an official may have a tribunal history is to seek information from the official’s previous league/s.
- d) The only penalties relevant to de-registration under this policy shall be penalties incurred by senior player’s (seniors, reserves, veterans, U/19, U/18 & Club XVIII).
- e) Club imposed penalties will not be considered on the permanent record for the player/official.
- f) Information regarding suspended sentences will be transferred between leagues and leagues would only consider such sentences relevant to possible de-registration if and when the suspension from such suspended sentence is served.

3.2 De-registration Process

3.2.1 Notification

a) Senior Leagues

- i) Senior 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 10 weeks or more, the league must advise the player/official and their club in writing that the player/official faces the risk of automatic de-registration should the player/official incur further suspension(s) that results in him/her reaching or exceeding the 16 week total suspension history.
- iii) Notification of de-registration shall be made in writing to the player/official and the club they are affiliated with.
- iv) AFLV shall be notified in writing of all decisions to de-register a player/official. A central database of all de-registered players/officials will be kept by AFLV.
- v) Should a player/official's tribunal history already have reached or exceed a combined total of 16 weeks suspension at the time of implementing this policy, the league is to formally advise the player/official and the club that the player/official faces automatic de-registration should the player/official incur another suspension.

b) Clubs

- i) Clubs must counsel all of their players/officials in relation to this policy.
- ii) Clubs must at all times strive to ensure their players or officials do not get themselves into a position of potentially being de-registered. Anger management training is seen as a critical component of this prevention for clubs to arrange.

3.2.2 Criteria for De-registration

a) Players

- i) Senior players shall be automatically de-registered and not allowed further registration with the same or another league if the player has **accumulated a combined total of 16 weeks suspension (or greater)** in a senior career (including AFL career).

First Offence

- ii) Should a player receive 16 weeks or more suspension as a "first offence" it shall be at the leagues discretion to de-register the player following such a first offence suspension.

b) Officials

- i) Officials shall be de-registered and not allowed to officiate in any form in the same or another league if they have accumulated a combined total of 16 weeks suspension (or greater) in a life time.

c) Players / Officials

- i) A combined total of 16 weeks or greater as a player and / or official shall result in automatic de-registration.

3.3 De-registered Players/Officials Seeking Re-registration

- a) A player/official shall not be eligible for re-registration unless the player or official gains an exemption to re-register from the AFLV Appeals Board. Such exemption shall only be granted under exceptional circumstances (i.e. where the relevant body is satisfied that the player/official is genuinely rehabilitated and unlikely to re offend).
- b) **Deregistered players seeking to officiate**
A de-registered player can not officiate in or at any game of Australian Rules football unless an exemption is given by the AFLV Appeals Board.
- c) **Deregistered officials seeking to play**
A de-registered official can not participate as a player or officiate in or at any game of Australian Rules football.
- d) **Re-registered players/officials who re-offend**
A de-registered player/official who is successful in gaining an exemption to play/officiate and subsequently re-offends will automatically be de-registered with no further right to apply for an exemption or to appeal.

3.4 Appeals

After having progressed through the stages detailed in section 3.2 and subsequently been de-registered, the affected player/official may:

3.4.1 Appeal to AFL Victoria

Players/officials can appeal to AFLV in accordance with the rules set out in 3.5.

3.5 Appeals to AFL Victoria

- a) In accordance with AFLV Regulations rule 5.4 a player/official can appeal a decision to the AFLV Appeals Board following a decision handed down by a league.
- b) The conduct of the AFLV Appeals Board shall be at the discretion of the Chairman and without limitation, shall be inquisitorial in nature and all available evidence as previously heard shall be made available to this AFLV Appeals Board as well as any further evidence the Chairman deems relevant.
- c) It is the obligation of the player/official to present their case with all necessary witnesses and relevant documents to the AFLV Appeals Board and show cause why he/she should be reregistered.

3.5.1 AFL Victoria Appeals Board Process

- a) A player/official of a club of a Member who has been de-registered may appeal to the AFLV Appeals Board against such refusal, by notice in writing lodged with AFLV.
- b) A player/official may only submit one (1) appeal in any one season.
- c) The player/official concerned shall be entitled to representation at the hearing.
- d) Such representation shall not be by any person who is legally qualified.
- e) Such appeal shall be heard within a period as determined by AFLV.
- f) AFLV shall inform each affected league of the appeal as soon as practical after lodgement by the player/official of his notice of appeal.
- g) A representative from the player's/official's league will be required to justify the league's decision to de-register the player/official.
- h) The player/official must lodge a bond of \$550 (inc. GST) made payable to "AFL Victoria" and such bond may be forfeited should the appeal be considered frivolous. A \$250 (inc. GST) administrative fee will be retained from the Appeal bond irrespective of the outcome of the appeal.
- i) The player/official must also lodge a completed Appeal Form together with a copy of any relevant documentation regarding the de-registration.
- j) The league who de-registered the player/official will be required to lodge the player/official's tribunal history and any other relevant information to the appeal with AFLV.
- k) Should the player/official fail to lodge a bond of \$550 (inc GST) within six (6) days of notifying AFLV, the de-registration shall stand and any right to appeal is forfeited.
- l) In all cases with reference to the applicable time lines, AFLV shall determine the date and time for lodgement of the Form or bond, as the case may be.
- m) The AFLV Appeal Board may regulate the proceedings before it as it deems fit and the decision of the AFLV Appeal Board shall be final and binding on all parties.