

MACQUARIE FOOTBALL LIMITED A.C.N. 050 293 153

NEWCASTLE FOOTBALL LIMITED A.C.N. 052 054 163

HUNTER VALLEY FOOTBALL INCORPORATED

EQUIPMENT AND FACILITY SAFETY POLICY

Issued by the Joint Board of Directors of Macquarie Football Limited, Newcastle Football Limited and Hunter Valley Football Incorporated.

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SPORTING EQUIPMENT AND FACILITY SAFETY POLICY

1.0 APPLICATION

The Zone Association has a concern for safety that is reflected in administration policies and procedures; it is committed to safety of sporting equipment and facilities.

This policy has two aspects as its foci – preventative measures and accident procedures.

2.0 PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

2.01 DOCUMENTATION AND RECORD KEEPING SYSTEM

An effective documentation and record keeping system is crucial in any risk management system. This documentation serves a dual function:

2.01.01 it is an important part of a well-organised and planned sport that can lead to the development and delivery of safer activities;

2.01.02 it provides, if regularly maintained, a written record of procedures followed and action taken, that can be relied upon at a later date and may serve as factual evidence in the event of a legal action.

2.02 MAINTENANCE AND INSPECTION REPORTS

Maintenance and inspection reports for both facilities and equipment provide written confirmation of continuing efforts to maintain a reasonable level of safety and function that is required by the legal standard of care.

2.03 ACCIDENT REPORTS

Detailed, comprehensive and accurate reports of accidents provide documentary evidence regarding the exact circumstances of an injury and the emergency procedures followed.

2.04 CONSENT FORMS

Informed consent forms provide documentary evidence that the participant understood and accepted the inherent risk of the sport of football and of the participant's obligation to exercise reasonable care.

2.05 HEALTH/FITNESS EXAMINATION FORMS

The information that is provided in these forms will allow the Zone Association and/or Member Clubs to evaluate a player's medical eligibility for participation.

2.06 PLAYER QUESTIONNAIRES

The issue and collection of a carefully constructed questionnaire can provide the Zone Association/Member Club with valuable information about the individual player's:

2.06.01 skill level;

2.06.02 physical and mental preparedness for the sporting activity;

2.06.03 medical insurance coverage.

2.07 PUBLIC RELATIONS

Strong public relations is an extremely valuable tool for the Zone Association /Member Club to utilize – players accept the safety issue when they know that the Zone Association/Member Club is genuinely concerned for their safety and general well-being.

2.08 PERSONNEL FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Zone Association/Member Club must have competent personnel to properly implement the risk management system at all levels; otherwise the best risk management system can be in place but will be of little value.

2.09 MAINTENANCE AND INSPECTION

One of the most important elements in a risk management system of facilities and equipment is the maintenance and inspection of the facilities and equipment. A system of inspection with accompanying written records is essential. There are three types of inspection required:

2.09.01 Informal inspection – members of the Zone Association/Member Club shall be encouraged to identify and report any sub-standard conditions of equipment and/or facilities.

2.09.02 General inspection – the responsibility for this general inspection shall be assigned to the Zone Association's/Member Club's grounds committee. The purpose of this general inspection is to systematize the identification of normal wear and tear and general deterioration of all equipment and facilities, leading to a systematic program of reconditioning or replacement before any player injury occurs.

2.09.03 External inspection – this involves bringing in qualified external inspectors who are competent and familiar with facilities and equipment for football.

2.10 WARNINGS

Warnings may be either a verbal warning or in the form of a warning sign. The real essence of warnings is effective communication so that the player/user is knowledgeable about the nature of the risk involved.

For a warning to be effective it must be:

2.10.01 obvious and direct;

2.10.02 specific as to the risk, with a clear indication of the risk;

2.10.03 clear and comprehensible, in a language that can be clearly understood;

2.10.04 highly visible, sufficiently large to be easily noticed and located at the point of the hazard where the potential risk exists.

3.0 ACCIDENT PROCEDURES

3.01 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Advance preparation is crucial in the area of emergency procedures. The Zone Association/Member Clubs shall identify all the potential emergencies to which the Zone Association/Member Club may have to respond and work out in advance the action plan for each type of emergency. The Zone Association/Member Club must ensure that all personnel involved are made aware of the appropriate procedures and provided with the necessary training to carry out these procedures as given in the action plan.

3.02 EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

All required emergency equipment, such as stretcher, neck brace, cold packs, filled (and continually updated) medical kit etc, shall be purchased, clearly labelled and located where it can be used in an emergency. Notwithstanding the provision of this equipment, it shall be used only to deal with an emergency situation by suitably qualified personnel pending the arrival of medical or ambulance assistance summoned to deal with the emergency.

3.03 INSURANCE

The Zone Association/Member Club shall ensure that adequate insurance cover is provided for all of the sporting activities and should have a clear understanding of what are the terms of the insurance policy and the coverage of all reason of risk by the insurance policy.

3.04 DAMAGE CONTROL

The manner in which the Zone Association/Member Club responds to player injury is crucial as the speed, efficiency and correctness of action can directly influence the amount of damage suffered. For personnel on the spot, knowing what to do in an emergency can be difficult; this is why the advanced planning, production, publication and dissemination of the action plan is essential.

3.05 FIRST AID

It is recommended that the Zone Association/Member Club provides first aid (Sports Medicine or St Johns trained) personnel at grounds during regular fixture matches in order that rapid response, pending the arrival of medical or ambulance assistance, can be made.

4.0 PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR EQUIPMENT SAFETY

4.01 GENERAL

The list of sound guidelines shall be utilized by the Zone Association/Member Club responsible for the provision of safe sporting equipment. The guidelines are not intended to be inclusive of all those considered to be necessary in providing and maintaining safe sporting equipment but are intended as a general set of principles in providing and maintaining safe sporting equipment.

4.02 EQUIPMENT

The Zone Association/Member Club shall, with respect to sporting equipment required for the sport of football:

4.02.01 provide adequate safety equipment that meets the standards considered adequate and usual in football;

4.02.02 recognise that a player is only expected to act in such a way that a reasonable person of the same age, intelligence and experience would act;

4.02.03 instigate immediate corrective action after notice of dangerous or defective conditions of equipment has been given;

4.02.04 only use equipment in accordance with its intended purpose;

4.02.05 provide adequate storage facilities for the storage of sporting equipment when not in use;

4.02.06 purchase quality football sporting equipment from reputable dealers who will guarantee their product;

4.02.07 designate a person to be responsible for the regular inspection of and reporting on football sporting equipment and for the removal of defective and/or worn equipment from further usage;

4.02.08 keep detailed written records of all injuries related to defective football sporting equipment;

- 4.02.09 withhold the issue of second-hand football sporting equipment to junior or lower grade teams when that equipment has become worn and defective unless that equipment has been inspected and fully restored to proper usable condition;
- 4.02.10 avoid purchasing experimental football sporting equipment unless such equipment has been thoroughly tested and safety approved;
- 4.02.11 keep up to date in the latest developments of safety equipment available;
- 4.02.12 ensure that the football sporting equipment fits the players;
- 4.02.13 not modify sporting equipment unless such modification is in accordance with the manufacturer's express instructions;
- 4.02.14 not let unprofessional persons repair football sporting equipment;
- 4.02.15 periodically evaluate all football sporting equipment, with particular reference to its rate of wear and tear and its usefulness;
- 4.02.16 try to purchase the best quality football sporting equipment that can be afforded;
- 4.02.17 encourage players to check for common safety measures involving their football sporting equipment;
- 4.02.18 maintain all pieces of football sporting equipment according to the manufacturer's guidelines.

5.0 PRECAUTIONS FOR FACILITY SAFETY

5.01 GENERAL FACILITY SAFETY

The Zone Association/Member Club shall give careful attention to all sections in order to provide adequate and safe sporting facilities and shall:

- 5.01.01 if involved in the designing of a facility, use recommended standards in the design stage; and have the plans reviewed by a safety officer and sports facility design consultant for potential safety danger spots;
- 5.01.02 not place glass surfaces, wires, poles, sprinklers, sharp or blind corners near areas where football activities will take place;
- 5.01.03 maintain facilities at national or state standards in relation to facilities of a similar size or focus;
- 5.01.04 maintain facilities in good condition;
- 5.01.05 inspect facilities regularly, periodically and thoroughly for any dangerous or potentially dangerous conditions and complete necessary repairs or modifications before the facility is used again;

- 5.01.06 recognise that, whilst acknowledging that both players and spectators assume the risks inherent in football activity, they do not assume the risk of dangerous or defective conditions of facilities;
- 5.01.07 seek to provide protective screening behind the goal nets since these are the areas that provide the greatest danger of being struck by the ball;
- 5.01.08 keep playing fields free from all obstacles such as broken glass, holes, debris etc that could endanger the safety of players;
- 5.01.09 require that players themselves be made to check for common safety hazards involving facilities or field surfaces;
- 5.01.10 ensure that all appropriate goal nets, goal posts, team benches and covers, corner flags (FIFA approved) and referee accommodation are maintained in a safe condition;
- 5.01.11 limit the number of personnel on fields to prevent overcrowding;
- 5.01.12 ensure reasonable medical care is available or easily accessible to deal with any injuries to players or spectators

5.02 CHANGING ROOMS

The Zone Association/Member Club shall give careful attention to changing room facilities in order to maintain a safe environment and shall:

- 5.02.01 ensure that adequate player space and seating facilities are provided;
- 5.02.02 provide adequate space so that equipment can be laid out and trainers can assist players;
- 5.02.03 if involved in the designing of a facility, seek to have a separate medical room containing appropriate medical equipment, storage facilities, wash basin and treatment couch(s);
- 5.02.04 have showers and toilets designed appropriately giving clear and easy access to change and medical rooms;
- 5.02.05 ensure that all areas are regularly cleaned, with a priority for cleaning immediately after use.

5.03 SURROUNDS OF THE PLAYING AREA

The Zone Association/Member Club shall ensure that the surrounds of the playing area are maintained as a safe environment and shall:

- 5.03.01 make emergency information kits easily accessible;
- 5.03.02 provide for organized car parking in order to ensure no inconvenience to players or spectators;
- 5.03.03 locate all equipment not required for the playing of football at a safe distance away from the playing area;
- 5.03.04 provide, as a high priority, unobstructed access for emergency vehicles to the ground and the playing area.

5.04 PORTABLE GOALS

The Zone Association/Member Club that utilizes portable goals (PG) ie any goal structure that is not permanently fixed in the ground, whether regulation size or smaller size for SSF, must ensure the safety of that PG and the avoidance of injury or death for any person interacting with the PG in any way by:

- 5.04.01 following the design brief and using the materials recommended by Standards Australia in the construction of any PG;
- 5.04.02 having the anchoring equipment, including brackets and staking pegs, permanently and securely attached to the PG frame so that these are readily available for use whenever the PG is relocated;
- 5.04.03 ensuring that the PG is securely anchored at all times to prevent overbalancing even when put under stress; the anchoring method shall be the appropriate one, for the prevailing conditions, of the types listed in the Standards Australia document on PG;
- 5.04.04 showing safety warnings on the frame of the PG, either by label or by direct painting on the frame, in contrasting colours to the frame itself.
- 5.04.05 The wording in upper case lettering shall be a minimum of 2.5 cm high and in lower case lettering shall be a minimum of 1.25 cm high; graphic symbols may be used in addition to the wording. The wording shall read:
“WARNING – ALWAYS ANCHOR GOAL - NEVER CLIMB ON GOAL OR HANG ON CROSSBAR. Unanchored goals can tip over causing serious injury or death.”
- 5.04.05 storing PGs either by disassembling and storing under cover if multi-piece PGs or by chaining and locking together face to face and/or face to an immovable object if one-piece PGs;
- 5.04.06 inspecting PGs before use and carrying out any maintenance or repair work needed to keep the PGs in safe condition;
- 5.04.07 utilising Document HB227 – 2000/2003 ‘Portable Soccer Goalposts – manufacture, use and storage’ jointly published by Standards Australia and NSW Department of Fair Trading and issued by the Minister as the authoritative ‘guidelines’ on the use of PGs for football activities.

6.0 APPENDIX 1 - DOCUMENT – “PGs – MANUFACTURE, USE AND STORAGE’

Document HB 227-2003 (re-issued from 2000) attached.

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