

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



FEBRUARY 2015

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/officials who could pose an unacceptable risk to other Players/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/Officials.

1.2 Definitions

Club means an Australian football club entitled to field a team in a competition conducted by a League.

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

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

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

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 a Club, League or State Body.

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

State Body means the governing State and Territory 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 game 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;
- (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 initial registration taking into account past and current tribunal sentences.

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). 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 Suspension history of a Player (including tribunal record at all previous league/s) shall be considered when determining penalties for offences and also potential Deregistration.
- (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 would only consider such sentences relevant to possible 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 League:
 - a. if a Player is deregistered pursuant to this policy, that Player will also be prohibited from being a coach, assistant coach, trainer, runner, or other match official in any form of Australian football; and
 - b. if an Official is deregistered pursuant to this policy, that Official will also be prohibited from participating in any Australian football match administered by a League.

3.2 Deregistration Process

3.2.1 Notification

(a) Leagues

- i) State 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 automatic 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 automatic 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.
- iii) Clubs must use reasonable 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 automatically 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)** in a football career (including AFL career, subject to section 3.2.2(a)(ii) below). For the avoidance of doubt, a Player who is

automatically deregistered will also not be allowed to act as an official in the same or another League.

- ii) For the avoidance of doubt, the sixteen (16) weeks accumulated suspension relate to suspensions imposed as a result of Reportable Offences under the Laws of Australian Football.
- iii) For the avoidance of doubt, only Suspension periods served by a Player after attaining the age of 16 years will count for the purposes of this Deregistration policy.
- iv) Any Suspension period served by a Player during his AFL career shall carry over, however 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.

(b) Officials

Officials shall be automatically deregistered and not allowed to officiate or play in any form in the same or another League if they have accumulated a combined total of sixteen (16) weeks Suspension (or greater) throughout their whole Australian football career.

(c) Players / Officials

- i) A combined total of sixteen (16) weeks or greater as a Player and/or Official shall result in automatic Deregistration.
- ii) For the avoidance of doubt, the sixteen (16) weeks accumulated suspension relate to suspensions imposed as a result of Reportable Offences under the Laws of Australian Football.
- iii) Should a Player or Official receive sixteen (16) weeks or more Suspension as a "first offence" it shall be at the League's discretion as to whether or not that Player/Official will be deregistered following his/her Suspension.

3.3 Appeal of League Decision to Deregister

- (a) After a Player/Official has been automatically deregistered in accordance with section 3.2 above, that Player/Official may appeal their automatic Deregistration to their State body in accordance with the rules set out in this section 3.3 below where such Player/Official can demonstrate exceptional circumstances (as explained in section 3.4) as to why he/she should not have been deregistered.
- (b) A Player/Official who has been deregistered in accordance with section 3.2 may not appeal their automatic 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)).
- (c) Subject to paragraph (b), a deregistered Player/Official can appeal the decision of their State Body 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.
- (d) It is the obligation of the Player/Official to present their case with all necessary witnesses and relevant documents to the State Body and show cause why he/she should be reregistered.
- (e) Such appeal shall be heard within a period determined by the State Body.

- (f) Notwithstanding any provision within a State Body's rules, regulations, by-laws and/or guidelines, the State Body reserves the right, in its absolute discretion, to impose any time limits relating to appeals as it deems appropriate.
- (g) The decision of the State Body shall be final and binding on all parties.

4. DEREGISTERED PLAYERS/OFFICIALS SEEKING REREGISTRATION

- (a) A Player/Official shall not be eligible for reregistration unless the Player/Official gains an exemption from the relevant State Body. Such exemption shall only be granted under exceptional circumstances (which will require the Player/Official to, amongst other things, satisfy the relevant State Body that the Player/Official is genuinely rehabilitated or committed to ongoing rehabilitation and unlikely to re-offend).
- (b) Subject to sections 3.3(b) and 4(e), a Player/Official may only submit one (1) application for Reregistration in any one Australian football year.
- (c) A deregistered Player cannot officiate in or at any Australian football match unless an exemption is given by the relevant State Body.
- (d) A deregistered Official cannot participate as a Player or officiate in or at any Australian football match.
- (e) A deregistered Player/Official who is successful in gaining an exemption to play/officiate and who subsequently receives a Suspension will automatically be deregistered with no further right to apply for an exemption or to appeal.