

# 03 Guide for regulatory changes



## PURPOSE

**After developing and leading the process of the creation of pregnancy and maternity protections for professional football players in the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, FIFPRO has reviewed the current protections together with players who have experienced pregnancy while playing and other professional experts.**

As such, FIFPRO has developed a Guide to assist players, clubs, leagues, federations and their entire entourage on the process of pregnancy, maternity and post-partum return to competition, in order to make it smoother, clearer, more efficient, and enjoyable for the mother-to-be.

During the process of the creation of the Guide some issues were highlighted as fundamental, and therefore requiring international and/or national mandatory regulation, as minimum standards. The aim of this regulatory section is to create basic standards that will be introduced and complied with all around the world, so that each and every player can have the basic protections (both pre-and post-partum) when deciding to start a family.

### EDUCATION ON PREGNANCY, MATERNITY AND RETURN TO COMPETITION POST-PARTUM

- » Every football club / league / Federation which employs or uses the services of professional women's football players shall organise annually a workshop for all players and club staff members on pregnancy, maternity and return to competition post-partum, making a clear reference to the rights of the players granted by the FIFA RSTP, national legislation and collective bargaining agreements (CBA), if applicable.
- » Should there be a FIFPRO member union in the country, clubs / leagues / federations are strongly advised to run this workshop in collaboration with the FIFPRO member, together with a club and/or FA physician.
- » Should there be no FIFPRO member in the country, clubs / leagues / federations are strongly advised to run this workshop in collaboration with FIFPRO Global.

### COMMUNICATION DURING PREGNANCY AND POST-PARTUM

- » The club / league / federation and the player may come to an agreement that the player can go through her pregnancy and/or maternity leave in a different country to the club / league / federation's country.
- » Should this agreement be reached, the club / league / federation shall have a duty to keep in regular contact with the player, checking in on her, and making sure that all the services that are to be mentioned in the following articles shall be provided and all her rights are duly respected.
- » Likewise, the player shall have the duty to communicate and update the club regularly on relevant developments.
- » The above shall not apply for the maternity leave, the period in which the player is off, and shall not be contacted, unless there is an express agreement to the contrary.



### PREGNANCY AND POST-PARTUM PLAN

- » Soon after, and in no case more than one month after the player decided to inform the club/ league / federation about her pregnancy, the player, the club/league/federation and the relevant Liaison Officer (see section liaison officer - page 46) shall convene for the creation of a plan on pregnancy, maternity leave and return to exercise, return to football and return to competition, for that specific player.
- » In this plan, the parties may, for example, agree to a longer maternity leave, nanny/daycare support, flexibility for companion during trips to travel with baby, provision of certain specialists, and shall agree on the way of communication forward. In no case shall this agreement be used to diminish/ elude the already granted rights to players by law, regulation or CBA.
- » The plan shall be mandatory, but may be reviewed periodically, to adjust to possible changes that had not been foreseen, in connection to the player's health and needs.



## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES PROVIDED

**It shall be recognised that professional players who are pregnant need to take good care of their body and mind, and that this shall be done with the guidance and funding of the club / league / federation.**

All clubs, leagues, federations who employ or use the services of professional players who become pregnant should provide the players with the services of the professionals mentioned below, regardless of whether the player continues to play or remains in the country of the club during her pregnancy and post-partum.

### PHYSIOTHERAPIST WITH PELVIC FLOOR SPECIALISATION

- » Federations, leagues and/or clubs shall provide the services of a Physiotherapist with certified pelvic floor specialisation, who will accompany the pregnant player all through pregnancy and post-partum, and in any case at least until the player has returned to competitive football.
- » If the player is abroad, she shall be responsible for looking for a Physiotherapist with pelvic floor specialisation, and the club shall reimburse her or directly pay for these services, up to the amount that the services would have cost in the country of the club, unless there is a health insurance coverage in place that covers said costs under better financial conditions.

### STRENGTH AND CONDITION COACH/ ATHLETIC TRAINER SPECIALISED ON PREGNANT ATHLETES

- » Federations, leagues and/or clubs shall provide with the services of a Strength and Conditioning Coach/ Athletic Trainer, with specific certified education on pregnant athletes, who will accompany the pregnant player all through pregnancy and post-partum, at least until the player has returned to competitive football.
- » If the player is abroad, she shall be responsible for looking for a Strength and Conditioning Coach / Athletic Trainer, and the club shall reimburse her or directly pay for these services, up to the amount that the services would have cost in the country of the club unless there is a health insurance coverage in place that covers said costs under better financial conditions.



### MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST

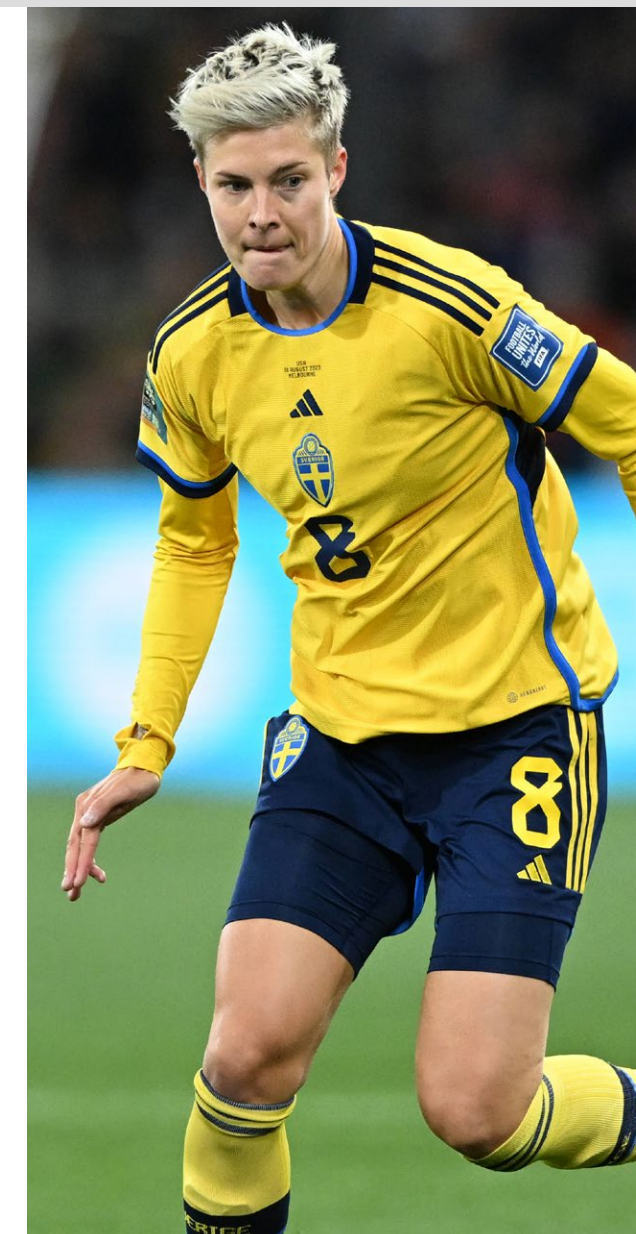
- » All through pregnancy and post-partum, the Federations, leagues and/or clubs shall make available, free of charge, mental health support to players.
- » The mental health support will be provided in the form of a professional who will be available to the player at least once per week, as well as during emergencies. If the player prefers this professional to be a woman, the club will make the relevant arrangements to this extent. When possible, the club shall have a list of at least five professionals in mental health, who are diverse, that could be accessed by players, so that there is a possibility to choose.
- » If the player is abroad, she may choose to:
  - » use the services of the mental health specialists provided by the club, online.
  - » look for a mental health specialist in the country where she is, so that she can have physical meetings. In this case, the club shall reimburse her or directly pay for these services, up to the amount that the services would have cost in the country of the club unless there is a health insurance coverage in place that covers said costs under better financial conditions.

### LIAISON OFFICER

- » The Club, league, Federation shall appoint a Maternity liaison officer to be the connecting person between all the club staff and the player, so that there is one designated point of contact for the player through her pregnancy and post-partum.
- » The player shall have the right to consent or not to the person appointed as Liaison Officer, as this person shall be a trusted individual to the player. The Federation, league, club shall provide further options for a designated contact point if the player does not consent to the suggested Liaison Officer.
- » The task of the liaison officer shall be to gather all the information regarding the player, make sure everyone is informed of the relevant matters, so that any action is coordinated, and centralise any matters where the decision of the player is needed, so that the player can focus on the return to competition. The Liaison Officer shall be in charge of the communication, logistics and advocacy of the player towards the club.

### NUTRITIONIST

- » If the Club, league, Federation does not have an inhouse nutritionist, they shall make available a nutritionist with certified sports specialisation, free of charge, from the moment the player informs that she is pregnant and until the player returns to competition, as a minimum.
- » The nutritionist shall have regular meetings with the player. These meetings shall be as a minimum every 2 weeks, unless otherwise agreed with the player.



- » If the player is abroad, she shall be responsible for looking for a nutritionist with sports specialisation, and the club shall reimburse her or directly pay for these services, up to the amount that the services would have cost in the country of the club unless there is a health insurance coverage in place that covers said costs under better financial conditions.

### PLAYER'S HEALTH ASSESSMENT

- » The Physiotherapist with certified pelvic floor specialisation together with the player's doctor shall provide with an expert assessment on the changes in the body of the player with specific focus on the pelvic floor and core stability between week 6 and 7 post-partum. This shall be done in the form of a Standardised Protocol.
- » The Player's health assessment shall be used as the basis for the planning of exercises and return to competition, and also as a basis for review of the post-partum plan, drafted during pregnancy between the player and the club (Pregnancy and post-partum plan - page 44).





## KEY TERMS

### CENTRAL COMMUNICATOR

A person within a player's support network that can collaborate with the rest of the team or 'entourage' to ensure that everyone is up to date on a player's journey, taking this responsibility off the shoulders of the player themselves.

### ENTOURAGE

This includes anyone who plays a supporting role in a player's pregnancy, including family members, friends, and technical staff.

### FOCUS GROUPS

There were multiple focus groups which invited players to share their own pregnancy and postpartum experiences. These conversations were collated and used to form the foundation of the PPRTP guide.

### PERFORMANCE LIFESTYLE ADVISER

An adviser that works on a one-to-one basis with players, analysing and adapting aspects of both their personal and professional lives in order to produce the optimum environment for athletic success.

### PPRTP

The Pregnancy and Postpartum Return to Play guide.

### RSTP

FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (RSTPs).

### TASK FORCE

The content and production of these guide has been led by a task force of four players who have become mothers during their careers, Sara Björk Gunnarsdóttir, Crystal Dunn, Cheyna Matthews and Almuth Schult



## TRAVEL

- » All clubs / leagues should aim to comply with the criteria below.
- » A supportive environment should be provided to any player who has a responsibility for the care of an infant, meaning:
  - » child who is less than 12 months old at the commencement of the relevant season; or
  - » any older child who is being breastfed by the player.
- » Subject to availability and an individual request from the player, the FA/club shall use its best endeavours to:
  - » arrange for the support person and the infant to travel on the same flight as the player; and
  - » arrange for the support person and the infant to be accommodated in the same hotel as the player.
- » The players may elect to be accommodated in the same hotel room as their support person and the infant or to sleep in the standard team accommodation.
- » The players are required to travel with the team at all times, unless approved by FA/club management.
- » The players' support person and infant may attend team activities or commitments, including meals, training and meetings provided this is agreed in advance with FA/club management.
- » While travelling, the players shall ensure that they are able to attend all team commitments and activities in the lead up to a game and otherwise perform their obligations in accordance with their player contract and the applicable CBA.
- » The players shall notify the FA/club between one (1) and four (4) weeks in advance if travel is required for an infant and a support person.
- » Any player who has a responsibility for the care of an infant who is required to travel for games, may travel with that infant, provided that a support person (e.g. partner, parent, nanny etc.) travels with the athlete and infant to assist in the care and supervision of the infant.
- » FA/club shall cover reasonable flights, accommodation and associated costs for a player's support person and infant to travel with them.
- » Transport to and from the airport for the support person and the infant and to and from games should be arranged by the FA/club.
- » The FA/club shall apply this policy in a flexible manner, to take account of individual circumstances.