

OFFICIAL



HUNTER VALLEY
FOOTBALL



Newcastle
Football

Football Members
Protection Policies

R
u
l
e
s

a
n
d



REGULATION H: 3.1

Alcohol and Prohibited Drugs Policy

R
e
g
u
l
a
t
i
o
n
s

Summary

This Policy provide information about:

➤ **Regulation H – 3.1 Alcohol and Prohibited Drugs**

that the Joint Zone Associations Competitions will operate under.

The Regulations, Procedures and Policies in conjunction with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Zone Association shall, with the approval of NSW Football and duly Registered with FA, apply from the date of approval and shall take precedence over any previous Regulations of the Zone Association.

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

Issued: **February 2024**

Review: **January 2025**

Contents		Page
	Preamble	3
1	Definitions	4
2	Effects	4
3	Excess	7
4	Comparison	9
5	Policy	9
6	Testing	10
7	Action	10
8	Driving Under The Influence Of Alcohol Or Prohibited Drugs	12
9	Medically Prescribed Drugs	12
10	Member Club Functions	12
11	Penalties	12
12	Contact Information, Support And Treatment Services	12

POLICY ON ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Preamble:

The Joint Zones Associations (Hunter Valley, Macquarie, and Newcastle Football) are committed to providing a safe, supportive healthy, family friendly and successful sport environment that protects all members from a range of health-related risks, including the misuse of alcohol and the use of illegal drugs.

All members of the Zone Associations have a responsibility to ensure that they take reasonable care to protect their own health and safety and that of others whilst in the football environment by not being affected by alcohol or other drugs to the extent that it impacts on their own or another person's recreational enjoyment or safety.

The Joint Zones Associations has an expectation that all Senior players (over the age of 18 years) will at all times project themselves as positive mentors and role models when in the presence of junior players (5 – 18 years of age) and when representing Zone Association, Member Club or Club Team in the broader community.

Alcohol and prohibited drugs at Joint Zones Associations Matches (Competition, Trial, or Practise, etc.) Reference is also made to Joint Zones Associations Rules and Regulations Regulation A23 which are applicable to all Junior matches:

“The sale, provision or consumption of alcohol is not permitted at any Junior (U/5 to U/18) fixture under the control of Joint Zones Associations”.

“Any club or associated person found guilty of the sale, provision or consumption of alcohol at any Junior Zone Associations fixture shall be subject to such disciplinary action, fine or penalty as may be imposed by the Competition Administrator - Disciplinary.”

We seek the co-operation of all our Member Clubs to ensure a responsible approach is taken at football venues for senior fixtures where alcohol is permitted.

It is our earnest desire to work with clubs.

We have an obligation to make sure alcohol does not become an issue in inappropriate or anti-social behaviour at senior level games.

The sale of alcohol should not take place at any junior fixture.

It is the intention of the Joint Zones Associations to be vigilant and proactive in relation to this policy.

All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure compliance with this policy and that the activities of the member clubs, players, officials, and supporters of the Joint Zones Associations comply with acceptable community standards and the law.

Alcohol intoxication and Illicit drug use by any member club officials, player, match official and/or supporter, in circumstances that fall within the scope of this Alcohol and Prohibited Drugs Policy, will not be tolerated.

Thank you in anticipation of your understanding and commitment in this area.

1. DEFINITIONS:

For the purpose of this Policy, the Joint Zones Associations defines alcohol and drugs as follows:

- “**Alcohol**” refers to any beverage, containing an alcoholic content that temporarily impairs a person’s physical or mental capacity.
- “**Drugs**” refers to a chemical substance, whether it is legal or illegal, which may have the ability to impair a person’s physical or mental capacity. These can include non-prescribed drugs, for example, but not limited to, speed, heroin, amphetamines, LSD, crack, cocaine, ecstasy, marijuana, etc.
- “**Member**” when not having the restricted meaning referred to in Regulation A 34. shall have the same meaning as in the Constitution, By-Laws, and Regulations of the Zone Association.

2. EFFECTS

Alcohol is a widely used psychoactive (mood-changing) drug in Australia, it is often part of relaxing with friends, celebrating or commiserating.

However, alcohol is also a significant cause of injury and ill health, violence, crime, family breakdown, road accidents, loss of productivity in workplaces and death in Australia.

Drugs can alter the way the body and brain work. Certain drugs are legal, and others are illegal. There is no safe level of drug use and use of any drug always carries some risk.

2.1 *EFFECTS ON REFLEXES*

Contrary to popular belief, alcohol is a depressant drug (definitely not a stimulant!) that dampens the body’s reflex mechanisms.

This results in a steadying of hand together with the psychological side-effect of boosting confidence by, in some cases, depressing fears and masking inhibitions.

Prohibited drugs basically fall into one of two categories – depressant (which dampens the body’s reflex mechanisms) and stimulant (which heightens the level of activity of the body).

2.2 **BODY EFFECTS**

Alcohol can affect a person's sporting performance and recovery afterwards.

The effect of alcohol on the body varies between each individual person and the circumstances.

The following immediate and short-term effects of alcohol are registered in all persons to a varying extent depending on the volume consumed, the physiology and the circumstances at the time.

- **Hangovers:** If a person drank a lot at night, they may still have a high concentration of alcohol in their bloodstream the following day.
They may experience a range of symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, shakiness, nausea, and vomiting.
- **Slower reflexes and reduced coordination in varying degrees:** Drinking even a small amount of alcohol before, or during, a game can affect a person's reaction time, reflexes, balance, hand-eye coordination, and motor skills.
This can affect a person's speed and performance and increase the risk of injury.
- **Dehydration:** After exercising, the body needs to be rehydrated. Alcohol can cause further dehydration by suppressing a hormone that affects the efficiency of the kidneys to reabsorb water.
- **Reduced performance and stamina:** To perform at its peak, the body undergoes a number of processes, including releasing glucose into the blood stream for energy and removing waste products generated by muscles.
If a person has consumed alcohol their body also needs to break down the ethanol, this process combined with dehydration can decrease a person's performance and stamina.
- **Increased risk of inappropriate behaviour:** Alcohol can cause people to become more relaxed, make them feel more confident and lose inhibitions.
This can increase the likelihood that they may respond to a situation in an inappropriate way during a match.
For example, they may become aggressive or violent towards other players/competitors, officials, or spectators.
- **Soft tissue injuries take longer to repair:** Treating a soft tissue injury involves reducing blood flow to the area, however alcohol increases blood flow and swelling to the area and as a result can increase recovery time.

- **Impact on general recovery:** Drinking alcoholic drinks before, during or after a game can affect a person's ability to make decisions.

For example, a person may not carry out the appropriate recovery strategies to help their body refuel, rehydrate, and repair itself after exercise.

Injury management strategies and rehabilitation may also be neglected.

- **Other affects:** Drinking alcoholic drinks before, during or after a game can cause general impairment of brain and nervous system functions, Flushing, Dizziness and Aggression.

The following long-term effects of alcohol are registered in all persons to a varying extent depending on the volume consumed, the physiology and the circumstances at the time.

Over the longer term, alcohol can cause a number of health and social problems that can impact on a person and their sporting performance

- **General Health:** Heavy consumption of alcoholic drinks over time can cause many health problems and damage many parts of the body.

For example, it can cause heart and liver disease and increase the risk of various types of cancers.

There is also evidence that heavy alcohol consumption can cause muscle weakness and loss of muscle tissue.

- **Weight management:** Not only is alcohol high in kilojoules it is also associated with poor food choices.

There is also evidence that if a person eats high-fat foods while drinking alcohol, the fat in these foods is unlikely to be used or stored properly in the body as the body prioritises the metabolisation of alcohol.

- **Social problems:** Alcohol can affect relationships.

There may be conflict among teammates if a person continuously misses training, turns up with a hangover, performs poorly or embarrasses the team/sport through poor behaviour.

- **Mental health issues:** There is a relationship between alcohol and poor mental health.

Some people may use alcohol in an attempt to cope with their mental health issues; however, there is evidence that for some people, alcohol can increase the risk of mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety.

The effects of prohibited drugs on the body have been widely documented for some drugs but are not well established for others; however, since the use of these drugs is illegal, no further information needs to be provided here.

3. EXCESS

The Zone Association is acquainted with the potential danger of accidental injury in the sport of football occurring.

In extreme circumstances a football player who is under the influence of excessive alcohol (intoxicated) and/or prohibited drugs could place not only himself/herself at risk but also jeopardizes other participating player's safety.

3.1 **MINIMISING THE RISKS**

To help people make informed decisions about their drinking and the risks to their health, the National Health, and Medical Research Council of Australia (NHMRC) has developed a set of guidelines.

In general, the guidelines state that there is no safe level of drinking and the more a person drinks, the greater the risk of harms.

More specifically, the guidelines provide the following recommendations:

- ***For healthy men and women, drinking no more than two standard drinks on any day reduces the risk of an alcohol-related disease or injury during their lifetime.***

With every drink above this guideline, the risk increases substantially.

- ***For healthy men and women, drinking no more than four standard drinks on a single occasion reduces the risk of alcohol-related injury arising from that occasion.***

With every drink above this guideline, the risk of injury increases dramatically.

- ***For children and young people under 18 years of age, not drinking alcohol is the safest option.***

Young drinkers are at a greater risk of alcohol related harm as the brain continues to develop and undergoes many changes throughout adolescence.

Drinking alcohol can affect brain development and may lead to alcohol-related harms later in life.

- ***For women who are pregnant, planning a pregnancy or breastfeeding, not drinking is the safest option.***

Alcohol crosses the placenta to the unborn baby, this can affect the development of the baby and may also cause problems such as bleeding, miscarriage, stillbirth, and premature birth.

Alcohol can reduce milk supply and also passes through the blood stream into breastmilk, affecting the baby's feeding and sleeping patterns, and development.

3.2 *SOME HELPFUL STRATEGIES TO MANAGE CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL*

Whether having a quiet drink with teammates or celebrating a win, there are a range of practical strategies that can help people manage their alcohol consumption.

Some examples are outlined below.

- **Look out for each other:** Let your teammates know if they've had enough to drink.
- **Plan ahead:** For example, how will you get home safely? Who will you call if you need help?
- **Set limits for yourself and stick to them:** Be aware of how alcohol affects you as an individual and don't let other people pressure you into drinking more than you want.
- **Alternate an alcoholic drink with water:** This a good tactic to avoid drinking too much too soon, it also keeps you hydrated and can help you avoid an unwanted hangover the next day.
- **Eat before and while you are drinking:** If you have a full stomach, alcoholic drinks will be absorbed more slowly. Try to avoid salty snacks, which will make you thirsty.
- **Pace yourself and have one drink at a time:** Don't let people top up your drinks as it can make it hard to keep track of how much alcohol you have consumed.
- **Know what you are drinking:** Not all drinks contain the same concentration of alcohol. Some drinks, such as the sweet flavoured ready-to-drink or pre-mixed spirits/wine, can be quite strong, even though they don't taste like it. If you are not sure, read the label.
- **Try the low-alcohol alternative:** A wide range of light beers as well as some non-alcoholic beers are available.
Low-alcohol or non-alcoholic wines are also becoming more available. Most bars or pubs that serve cocktails also serve non-alcoholic versions (mocktails).
- **Avoid "shouts":** Drink at your own pace—not someone else's. If you do get stuck in a shout, consider a non-alcoholic drink for yourself when it's your turn.
- **Stay busy:** If you have something to do (such as playing pool, games, dancing or listening to music) it can take the focus away from drinking.

4. COMPARISON

It is accepted that the sensible and moderate consumption of alcohol, by persons 18 years of age or older, can be an appropriate part of the social culture of a football club.

It has been clearly established that reactions and judgment of a driver of a motor vehicle are seriously impaired to the point of being dangerous if driving with a blood alcohol level in excess of 0.05%.

Having considered all of the research, players and/or officials, whilst involved in a game of football, ***are to have a blood alcohol level and prohibited drug blood level of zero.***

5. POLICY

The effects of intoxication and the regular use of or dependence on alcohol or other drugs are associated with impaired judgement and skills, reduced concentration, erratic behaviour, aggression and violence, absenteeism, and increased accidents.

These behaviours and activities may seriously affect member safety and ethical standards within the Joint Zone Associations.

It shall be the Policy of the Joint Zone Associations and all their Members that:

- individual players whilst playing on the field or on the bench,
- individual coaches and individual Team officials whilst coaching and attending to the players playing on that field or on the bench,
- Match Officials officiating on that field.

when participating in a match sanctioned by the Joint Zone Association or one of its Members ***shall have a blood alcohol level and a prohibited drugs blood level of zero.***

Team Officials, Players and Match Officials are prohibited from arriving to a match or returning to a match from any break under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

The right of members to consume alcohol or take other drugs socially is acknowledged, however it is inappropriate to do so at the Joint Zone Associations Club Members venues as it places others at risk of harm and brings the Zone Association and Member Club and it's 'family friendly' environment into disrepute.

Therefore, the Joint Zone Associations and Member Club reserves the right to act if a member is:

- affected by alcohol or other drugs, so as to endanger their own safety or the safety of any other person in the during the course of a match or social club function.
- found in the possession of drugs or unauthorised drug use equipment on the Member Club premises; or

- affected by alcohol or other drugs, so that the member's performance is affected
- known to be acknowledging significant use or involvement in production of illegal drugs or alcohol via friendship groups, social media, playing groups or family.

6. TESTING

A player or official shall be deemed to have a blood alcohol level in excess of zero if a reading in excess of this level is registered on a Breathalyzer instrument of the type and function approved by the NSW Police Department.

A player or official shall be deemed to have a prohibited drugs blood level in excess of zero if a saliva, urine, or blood test shows a positive result to the testing.

Should these issues be brought to the attention of any of the Member Club Officials of the Joint Zone Associations they may take the following action, contact the President, Secretary or Member Protection Information Officer so that they will be able to enact by the appropriate and confidential discussion:

- Immediately approach the member to discuss the issue and its implications
- suspend the player/member from matches or club functions where appropriate until the matter is resolved to the satisfaction of the Member Club's committee and associated Team Officials
- remove the member from club functions if they pose a risk to themselves or others.
- Immediately contact emergency services if there is suspicion of a drug overdose at any club function
- Direct the member/player towards seeking counselling regarding their use of alcohol or prohibited drugs
- refer the member/player to appropriate organisations to address the misuse or abuse of alcohol and/or illicit substances.

7. ACTION

It is the intention of Joint Zone Associations to be vigilant and proactive in relation to this policy.

All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure compliance with this policy and that the activities of the members, players, officials, and supporters of all Joint Zone Associations Completions Member Clubs comply with acceptable community standards and the law.

7.1 Any player or official who gives cause for the belief that he/she is under the influence of alcohol and/or prohibited drugs shall not be permitted entry to the playing field.

7.2 If a Match Official has cause to believe that a player is under the influence of alcohol and/or prohibited drugs, he/she shall report this to the team management and the ground Duty Officer who will take steps to remove such player from the playing field and bench before the match starts/resumes.

Such player shall be the subject of a Match Official's report and will be cited to appear before the Disciplinary Committee.

7.3 Any person(s) on the bench either under the influence of alcohol/prohibited drugs or consuming same shall be removed from the playing area by the ground Duty Officer acting on the report of the referee or of his/her own volition.

The match *may not* start/resume until such person has left the playing area.

Such person shall be the subject of a match report and will be cited to appear before Disciplinary Committee.

7.4 Member Clubs are encouraged and urged to take steps to attempt to moderate the excessive intake of alcohol by spectators in an effort to minimize unruly crowd behaviour and abuse which detract from the purpose of the sporting event.

7.5 Member Clubs are reminded that alcohol and/or prohibited drugs must not be available or consumed at any junior (18 and under) football event.

- persons under 18 years of age will not be served or supplied alcohol/drugs, nor will they bring their own alcohol/drugs onto the premises for consumption (premises includes clubhouse, car park, and any area within the Member Club's facilities boundaries),
- a zero-tolerance policy applies to the serving or supply of alcohol/drugs to any person(s) under 18 years.

7.6 Members of the Joint Zones Associations Member Clubs who have concerns about playing or associating with any other playing or social member due to possible alcohol or other drug use should consult with the Member Protection Information Officer, President and/or Secretary of the Member Club immediately.

7.7 Member Clubs are reminded that a Function Liquor Licence must be held if the Club is involved in selling alcohol at grounds involving senior matches only.

Such licence must be sought, renewed as required and the very strict conditions applied to it must be met in full if the Member Club is not to be in breach of the NSW Liquor Act 2007 No. 90 and New South Wales law.

The harm minimization and responsible service provisions must be fully addressed.

Full details on licensing are available from [NSW Government Liquor and Gaming](#).

8. DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL OR PROHIBITED DRUGS

In accordance with the Liquor Act 2007 No. 90 and New South Wales law, all members of the Joint Zone Associations are not permitted to drive a vehicle, whether their own or not, when that person has consumed alcohol or other drugs.

The Joint Zone Associations and their Member Clubs will accept no liability for any damage to a vehicle, injury to any person, or damage or injury to any third party, incurred while the driver of a vehicle is in breach of this Act or the law.

All liabilities will rest with the driver concerned.

9. MEDICALLY PRESCRIBED DRUGS

In circumstances in the Joint Zone Associations where a player(s) is taking medically prescribed drugs to manage a specific condition that may interfere with their playing performance, they are required to notify their coach.

The coach, in consultation with the player (s), may make some adjustments to the training and/or match requirements of the player(s) concerned.

10. MEMBER CLUB FUNCTIONS

It is recognised that after match, weekend functions and social functions organised by the Joint Zones Associations Member Club may involve the consumption of alcohol.

It is expected that club members consume alcohol responsibly at these times.

Use of drugs at these functions is prohibited by the Joint Zones Associations and Member Club.

Should it come to the attention of any members that drugs are being consumed at these times, action will be taken as previously described.

Should players or members be significantly intoxicated due to alcohol use at club functions, the Member Club reserves the right to refuse the service of alcohol in accordance with the Liquor Licensing Act 2007 No.90.

11. PENALTIES

The penalty to be imposed for any breach of alcohol/prohibited drugs policy shall be determined by the Zone Association Competition Administrator - Disciplinary.

Any such matter will be dealt with by the Disciplinary Regulations of the Association.

12. CONTACT INFORMATION, SUPPORT AND TREATMENT SERVICES

Alcohol and other drug information, support and treatment are available through publicly funded and private services across New South Wales.

These services are not emergency services.

- If urgent medical attention is required, contact, or attend the local hospital or a general practitioner, or call 000 for ambulance.

- Alcohol and Other Drugs Information Service (ADIS) telephone services.

Phone: 1800 250 015

ADIS provides 24-hour/7 day a week telephone counselling, support, referrals, and information for those affected by alcohol or other drugs. ADIS counsellors are trained to work with people who are concerned about their own alcohol and drug use, as well as callers who are concerned about their family or friends.

ADIS is a free service which is available to all residents of NSW.

- Drug and Alcohol Clinical Services (DACS) For information, referral, and advice,

Phone: 1300 660 059 Monday to Friday 8.30 am to 4 pm (closed public holidays)

- Family Drug Support (FDS)

Phone: 1300 368 186

FDS provides 24 hours a day, 7 days a week telephone support to families and carers in crisis due to alcohol and other drug use issues.

FDS is staffed by volunteers who have experience of family members with alcohol and other drug use.

FDS also provide face-to-face support meetings and resources for family members.

- Drug and Alcohol Specialist Advisory Service (DASAS)

Regional and rural NSW: 1800 023 687

The **DASAS Helpline** assists health professionals seeking advice about the diagnosis and treatment of patients with alcohol or drug issues.

The DASAS is a free service available to NSW health professionals 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.

Approved and Issued: February 2024

Assessment/Review: **January 2025**