



TECHNICAL BULLETIN

Issue Date: November 2004

TO: STATE DIRECTORS OF UMPIRING
SUBJECT: UNIFORMS – ALTERNATE HEAD WEAR FOR RELIGIOUS REASONS

Background

Australia is a diverse society. Many measures are in place for uniting and gathering the people of Australia as one. Australian values are about people sharing in the common goal of making Australia an even better place, building on their diverse heritages. Health and Sport issues play an important role in the life of most Australians and Softball has provided an exciting recreational activity for women in the Australian community for over fifty years and for men since the early 1980s.

Sikhs and Muslims within the Australian Community are showing an interest in the qualities that playing Softball has to offer. The playing rules concerning headwear is restricting their equal participation. There are reports that females wearing the Hijab have been prevented from participating in school sporting activities because the headdress contravenes "Uniform Rules" of the particular sport concerned.

Position Held by Softball Australia

Australian democracy guarantees us our civic freedoms with fundamental rights and equality. The institutions of Australian democracy enable diversity in our society to flourish. The Sport of Softball has provided an exciting recreational activity for women in the Australian community for over fifty years and for men since the early 1980s. The strong recreational base of female players has produced an elite team good enough to win Olympic Silver at the 2004 Games and our Men are currently ranked 3rd in the World after an outstanding performance at the 2004 World Championship.

Our community is culturally diverse and for Softball to continue to serve the entire Australian community Softball Australia recognizes that Softball must modify its uniform requirements to meet the needs of all cultures within the community. This includes allowing players to participate wearing traditional headdress such as the Turban and Hijab.

Implementation of Softball Australia's Position

Any player, male or female, in any division of our domestic programs, is to be permitted to wear traditional headdress, subject to complying with the safety requirements of our sport.

The support of all umpires in all divisions of our sport with regard to this issue is of paramount importance to ensure that no person, regardless of race or creed, is denied the opportunity to play softball in a friendly and healthy environment.

Alan McAuliffe
National Rules Interpreter
Softball Australia

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