



# Code of Ethical Conduct



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## Introduction

Every USA Gymnastics (“USAG” or “USA Gymnastics”) member has the power and the responsibility to shape the culture within our sport. By practicing our shared values, and staying focused on our highest priority – the safety and well-being of our athletes – we can promote an environment that empowers and supports all members of our community especially our athletes, and makes participation in the sport a positive and rewarding experience for all members.

The USA Gymnastics Code of Ethical Conduct (the “Code”) is our collective commitment to work ethically in all instances. It offers a tangible way to put our values into practice, and guidance in situations that have potential or actual ethical implications. Ultimately, the effectiveness of the Code depends on a personal commitment from every member of the gymnastics community.

This Code is divided into three sections: (1) the Athlete Bill of Rights; (2) Ethical Obligations; and (3) Resolution of Ethical Issues. The Code does not address misconduct or abusive behaviors. Instead, the *USA Gymnastics Safe Sport Policy* provides the definitions and mandatory reporting requirements for misconduct and abuse.

All members including, without limitation, athletes, coaches, gym club owners, employees, volunteers, board members, committee and task force members of USA Gymnastics and contractors (collectively, “members of USA Gymnastics” or “members”), are required to implement and adhere to this Code.

Members of USA Gymnastics are also required to accept the requirements of and comport themselves in accordance with (a) the rules, policies, and procedures of USA Gymnastics and the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (“USOPC”); (b) the Olympic Movement Code on the Prevention of the Manipulation of Competitions; and (c) all applicable state and local laws.

## **I. Athlete Bill of Rights [here](#)**

All members of USA Gymnastics are committed to ensuring that athletes have a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment in which to train and compete, and that each athlete has the ability to:

### **1. Participate in gymnastics**

Gymnastics is inclusive and open to everyone. All athletes have the right to participate, regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental or physical disability, national origin, religion, or any other basis proscribed by law. Athletes have the right to participate at a level commensurate with their maturity and ability and will be given an equal opportunity to strive for success.

### **2. Train and compete safely**

Safety is paramount. All athletes have the right to:

- Participate in an environment that is free from emotional, sexual, or physical abuse;
- Train and compete in a safe environment, free from inappropriate physical hazards, bullying, hazing, harassment, stalking, violence, or similar threats; and
- Train and compete on equipment that is clean, appropriately fitted, and properly maintained.

### **3. Have their personal health and wellness prioritized**

Athletes have the right to pursue a healthy lifestyle that includes proper nutrition, mental health support, injury prevention and care, and necessary rest and recuperation, especially when healing from injury.

### **4. To be treated with dignity and respect**

Athletes have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity and respect. They have the right to make mistakes and fail without fear. They have the right to be respected, encouraged and supported appropriately by other athletes, parents, coaches, judges, spectators, event officials and those in positions of authority.

### **5. Receive proper instruction**

Athletes have the right to:

- Be coached by individuals who are knowledgeable and have received appropriate training.
- Be properly prepared for participation by those in positions of authority, including coaches, club owners, and administrators.
- Question or report improper behavior or violations of the Safe Sport Code, including of coaches or club owners, without fear that doing so will negatively impact their participation or success.
- All athletes (and particularly minor athletes) are entitled to have their parents observe coach/athlete interactions.

### **6. Provide input on matters that directly affect them**

Athletes have the right to provide input, and have their voices respected, in matters that directly affect them.

## **7. Voice opinions on issues that affect the gymnastics community**

Athletes have the right to respectfully express themselves on issues that impact the gymnastics community, with the confidence that doing so will not jeopardize their ability to participate and/or negatively impact their success.

The foundational philosophies of this Bill of Rights are separate from, but intended to guide, the responsibilities of each individual member included in the Ethical Obligations of Members (below), the [Safe Sport Policy](#), and the [Speak Up Policy](#). Ethical Obligations should be interpreted with these principles in mind.

## **8. Integrity and Transparency**

Athletes have the right to fair and transparent procedures and policies within their discipline – including selection procedures – that demonstrate integrity and are free from conflicts of interest, impropriety, and favoritism.

# **II. Ethical Obligations of Members**

## **1. Promotion of a Safe, Positive and Healthy Environment for All**

Members including athletes, coaches, gym club owners, employees, volunteers, board members, committee and task force members of USA Gymnastics and contractors have an ongoing obligation and commitment to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all gymnastics participants. Consistent with this obligation, members must:

- Make decisions in the best interest of athletes.
- Maintain a safe training and competing environment.
- Promote a culture of trust and empowerment.
- Respect the fundamental rights, dignity, and worth of all participants.
- Encourage a healthy lifestyle and support nutritional well-being.
- Promote and respect all Safe Sport principles.

## **2. Commitment to Integrity**

Members have a responsibility to uphold the integrity of the sport and to act honestly, openly, fairly, and competently. Members must:

- Be knowledgeable of, understand, and follow USA Gymnastics rules and policies, and refrain from knowingly misrepresenting or misinterpreting such.
- Promote fair play.
- Maintain respect on the floor and refrain from intimidating, embarrassing or improperly influencing any individual responsible for participating in, judging, or administering a competition.
- Follow the established procedures for challenging a competitive result.
- Make honest certifications regarding compliance with USA Gymnastics' policies, procedures or

membership requirements.

- Avoid engaging in business practices directed toward another Member that are known to be or are determined by a court or similar adjudicatory body to be, unethical, illegal or a breach of contract.

### **3. Participation and Inclusion**

Members have the right to participate in any USA Gymnastics activity or event for which the member is properly qualified under the rules of that activity or event and may participate to the best of his/her abilities at his/her discretion:

- Members may not knowingly participate in, or cause others to participate in, any activity or event where that individual is inadequately prepared or unable to participate safely.
- Members must promote positive participation and avoid behavior that is likely to interfere with the orderly conduct of the activity or other members' participation in, or enjoyment of, an activity or event.
- Members must respect the rights and opinions of others.
- Members must facilitate cooperation in order to serve athletes and other participants effectively and appropriately.
- Members must promote inclusion and an environment free of discrimination. Members may not:
  - Restrict the ability of a member to qualify for or participate in competition because of the member's association with a particular organization or individual or because of that Member's race, sex, creed, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, national origin, mental or physical disability, or any other basis proscribed by law.
  - Discriminate in the allocation of resources or opportunities to any member or prospective member on the basis of race, sex, creed, sexual orientation, age, national origin, mental or physical disability, or any other basis proscribed by law.

### **4. Communication**

Members of USA Gymnastics have a duty to communicate honestly and openly and must:

- Respect the voice of athletes, particularly in matters that affect them.
- Strive to promote the sport and athletes.
- Provide all information and resources necessary to enhance a gymnast's enjoyment of the sport or reduce their risk of injury or illness.
- Refrain from unsportsmanlike comments or behavior.
- Address differences in a calm and respectful manner.
- Clearly communicate roles, responsibilities and expectations.
- Avoid making false or misleading claims; or, falsify, or omit any information, record or document or other evidence for any purpose.
- Accurately represent competitive achievements, professional qualifications, education, experience, eligibility, criminal record and other misconduct, and/or affiliations.

### **5. Concern for the Welfare of Others**

Members shall seek to contribute to the welfare of gymnastics participants and must:

- Promote a culture of empowerment with a focus on athlete health and safety.

- Comply with mandatory reporting requirements established by federal law, the U.S. Center for SafeSport and USA Gymnastics Safe Sport Policy.
- Proactively address potentially harmful behavior or an unsafe environment.
- Be sensitive to any imbalance of power.
- Resolve conflicts in a professional manner.

No individual who is an employee, contractor, or agent of USA Gymnastics may assist a member or former member of USA Gymnastics in obtaining a new job (excluding the routine transmission of administrative or personnel files) if the individual knows that the member or former member (a) violated the policies or procedures of the U.S. Center for SafeSport related to sexual misconduct; and/or (b) was convicted of a crime involving sexual misconduct with a minor in violation of applicable law or the policies and procedures of the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

## **6. Professional Responsibility**

Members have the responsibility to aspire to the highest possible standards of conduct and must:

- Prioritize athlete welfare.
- Faithfully complete and comply with USA Gymnastics membership requirements.
- Strive to maintain high standards and excellence.
- Seek to increase proficiency levels through continuing education and in consultation with other professionals.
- Participate only at a level of the sport in which an individual is qualified and prepared for.
- Accept appropriate responsibility for one's own behavior and report any unlawful or other inappropriate conduct of others in accordance with Section II below.

## **7. Alcohol and Drug Free Environment**

Members of USA Gymnastics must ensure that the sport is conducted in an environment free of drug or alcohol abuse. Members may not:

- Use or provide to a third party any illegal (scheduled) drug pursuant to applicable federal, state or municipal law.
- Assist or condone any competing athlete's use of a drug banned by any applicable governing body, or, in the case of athletes, to use such drugs or refuse to submit to properly conducted drug tests administered by any governing body.
- Provide alcohol to or condone the use of alcohol by minors; consume alcohol while engaging in USA Gymnastics activities, including coaching and/or training and/or competing; consume excessive alcohol in the presence of athletes or at USA Gymnastics' events; or consume alcoholic beverages while a minor.

## **III. Reporting and Resolving Ethical Issues**

All members of USA Gymnastics have an obligation to be familiar with the principles outlined within this Code.

Members should be alert and sensitive to situations that could result in unethical, illegal or improper actions. Members may report potential or actual violations of this Code to the USA Gymnastics Ethics Hotline: (833) 844-SAFE.

If you choose to make your report to the USA Gymnastic Ethics Hotline, please be aware that all calls to the Ethics Hotline are confidential and callers may remain anonymous.

The specific methods, requirements, and procedures for reporting and resolving possible ethical violations of the Code are found in the Administrative and Ethical Grievance Procedures (“Grievance Procedures”) [here](#).

The Grievance Procedures provide for informal resolution of ethical violations, the reporting of possible ethical violations (including anonymous reporting) and formal dispute resolution procedures for violations of the Code. The Grievance Procedures outline, among other things, who can submit a complaint, the requirements for a complaint, the process for responding to a complaint, the rights and responsibilities of the parties involved in the process, and the formal hearing process for resolution of complaint.

The Opportunity to Participate Grievance Procedures [here](#) apply to violations of the Code that may affect a member’s opportunity to participate in an amateur athletic competition sanctioned by USAG or protected by the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act (Ted Stevens Act) or the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee’s bylaws.

#### **IV. Anti-Retaliation and Additional Resources**

**Anti-Retaliation.** Under no circumstances will any individual or any member be subject to any disciplinary or retaliatory action for filing, in good faith, a report of a violation or potential violation of the Code. However, filing known false or malicious reports will not be tolerated, and anyone including without limitation any member filing such reports will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

**Additional Resources.** The Office of the Athlete Ombuds and its staff (the Athlete Ombuds) offers independent, confidential advice to athletes regarding their rights and responsibilities in the Olympic and Paralympic Movement, and assists athletes with a broad range of questions, disputes, complaints and concerns. The Athlete Ombuds’ focus is to serve athletes who represent the U.S. in international competition. The Athlete Ombuds operates on the core principles of confidentiality and privacy, independence, and impartiality.

Additional information about, and contact information for, the Athlete Ombuds can be found online at <https://www.teamusa.org/athlete-ombuds>.

[The contact information and additional resources also may be found on the USOPC Integrity Portal at https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/53006/index.html or phone at \(877\) 404-9935.](#)

[Any questions regarding USA Gymnastics policies, procedures or rules, please contact USA Gymnastics Legal Department at \[legal@usagym.org\]\(mailto:legal@usagym.org\).](#)