

Our Code of Ethics



We commit to:

- Prioritize athlete physical, mental, and emotional safety, health and well-being.
- Ensure a positive, holistic, athlete-centered sport experience for every athlete.
- Prevent all types of abuse (sneaky/covert emotional abuse, as well as obvious/overt emotional, physical, and sexual abuse).

To fulfill our commitments, we do the following:

1. Screen and Train Coaches and Staff

- Complete background checks for all coaches and staff as part of the hiring process, and once a year thereafter.
- Check national and international SafeSport and sex offender databases (to prevent abusers from moving from one age group, gender, club, or country to another).
- Require that all staff be licensed/credentialed by the relevant governing body.
- Require that all staff be SafeSport I, II, and III certified.
- Obtain references from at least two previous employers for any potential hire.
- Ask three verified former athletes to complete the [anonymous athlete experience survey](#) for any potential hire.
- Be thorough during the [hiring process](#), and insist on specifics if we are told anything along the lines of “We had a parting of the ways.” “We didn’t share the same coaching philosophy.” “The coach left for personal reasons.” When in doubt, investigate further.
- Ask [screening questions](#) designed to detect abusers.
- Require all new hires to read and sign a [conduct agreement](#) form.
- Train all staff regarding all types of prohibited conduct as part of the hiring process, and once a year thereafter.
- Offer training to enhance [positive, holistic, athlete-centered coaching](#) as part of the hiring process and once a year thereafter.
- Promote coaches and staff who prioritize athletes’ physical, mental, and emotional health and well-being.

2. Educate Athletes, Parents, Coaches, and Staff to See and Stop All Forms of Abuse

- Recognize the inherent power imbalance in the coach-athlete relationship, the vulnerability of athletes, and the high risk for abuse.
- Recognize that (non-coaching) staff, and teammates may be abusive.
- Recognize that covert emotional abuse is as harmful as overt emotional, physical, and sexual abuse.
- Use simple, age-appropriate examples to teach athletes of all ages (and their parents) how to spot sneaky (covert) emotional abuse, which is often a gateway to physical and sexual abuse.
- Promote “How to Spot Spider” viewings (or equivalent training) for all new athletes and parents and offer training to all athletes and parents at least once a year.

3. Establish Systems of Accountability for All Coaches and Staff

- Implement and conduct an ongoing review process, including third party observation of all coaches and staff.
- Distribute decision-making and prevent situations in which athletes feel they must please one specific coach. (This includes having at least three independent decision-makers recommend/select athletes for regional, national, or Olympic teams.)

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- Require that all staff (e.g., management, front office personnel, coaches, trainers, equipment managers) act as legally mandated reporters.
- Empower athletes, parents, coaches, and staff to report all types of abuse.
- Create simple, clear, well-publicized, anonymous, safe reporting systems for victims and whistleblowers.
- Establish an Athlete Safety Committee (ASC) that includes a trauma-sensitive health care professional and at least two athletes (or parents if athletes are under 18).
- Schedule ASC meetings at least twice a year, and within one week when any concern is raised.
- Proactively and anonymously [survey](#) athletes about what they see and how they feel in their sporting environment, at least once a year.
- Use clear, specific language when asking athletes about their experiences with coaches and staff.
- Ensure that an athlete never has to directly interact with a person of concern.
- Ensure an athlete has an advocate of their choosing to support them and/or speak on their behalf in all conversations regarding potential abuse.
- Provide an independent, trauma-sensitive health care professional to support and/or speak on the athlete's behalf in all conversations regarding potential abuse.

4. Promptly investigate all complaints of abuse

- Initiate an investigation within one week of receiving a complaint of any type of abuse.
- Engage a truly independent, trauma-sensitive third party to respond compassionately and comprehensively to every report of abuse.
- Unless initial findings unambiguously determine no wrongdoing, suspend the accused person until the full investigation is completed.
- Complete each investigation within one month of receiving the complaint.
- Complete each investigation even if the accused “steps down,” “retires,” “moves,” or “is released”

5. Act to Protect Our Athletes and All Athletes

- When an investigation determines that abuse has occurred, hold ourselves to a standard of timely personal and institutional transparency, responsibility, public apologies, and all-inclusive amends (emotional, procedural, and financial).
- Maintain a zero-tolerance policy and fire coaches and staff who emotionally, physically, or sexually abuse athletes.
- Promptly report abuse to the appropriate sport and legal authorities.
- Enforce professional consequences for any adult (coaches, staff, owners) who fails to be proactive, responsible, and responsive in addressing athlete safety, health, and well-being (including covering up or failing to report abuse of any type).
- Forbid retaliation (demoting, cutting, firing, blacklisting) against athletes, parents, and staff who report abuse.

6. Consistently adhere to ALL SafeSport policies