

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) by doing the following

1. Screen and Train Coaches and Staff

- Check national and international SafeSport and sex offender databases for all coaches and staff as part of the hiring process and once a year thereafter. These checks 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.
- Obtain references from at least two previous employers for any potential hire.
- Have three verified former athletes complete the [anonymous athlete experience survey](#) for any potential coaching 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, we investigate further.
- Ask [screening questions](#) designed to detect potential abusers.
- Require all new hires to read and sign a [conduct agreement](#).
- Require that all staff be SafeSport I, II, and III certified.
- Train all staff regarding all types of prohibited conduct as part of the hiring process, and once a year thereafter.
- Educate coaches regarding [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 also may be abusive.
- Recognize that covert emotional abuse is as harmful as overt emotional, physical, and sexual abuse.
- Understand that covert emotional abuse is often a gateway to physical and sexual abuse.
- Use simple, age-appropriate examples to teach all new athletes (and their parents) how to spot sneaky (covert) emotional abuse (aka grooming), and obvious (overt) emotional, physical, and sexual abuse (using “How to Spot Spider” videos or equivalent training).
- Offer abuse prevention training to all athletes and parents at least once a year.

3. Establish Systems of Accountability for All Coaches and Staff

- Require informed consent in every athlete interaction (especially in sports like gymnastics that require physical adjustments or spotting).
- Implement and conduct an ongoing review process (including third party observation) of all coaches and staff.

- Require that all staff (e.g., management, front office personnel, coaches, trainers, equipment managers) act as legally mandated reporters.
- 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.
- Create simple, clear, well-publicized, anonymous, and safe reporting systems for victims and whistleblowers.
- Forbid retaliation (i.e., demoting, cutting, firing, blacklisting) against athletes, parents, and staff who report abuse.
- Distribute decision-making, to prevent situations in which athletes feel they must please one specific coach. (At the elite level, this includes having at least three independent decision-makers recommend/select athletes for regional, national, or Olympic teams.)
- Establish an Athlete Safety Committee (ASC) that includes a trauma-sensitive health care professional and at least two athletes (or parents if the athletes are under 18).
- Schedule ASC meetings at least twice a year, and within one week when any concern is raised.
- 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 (with expertise in grooming, covert emotional abuse, coercive control, and overt emotional, physical and sexual abuse) to respond compassionately and comprehensively to every report of abuse.
- Suspend the accused person until a 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. Be Accountable. Report Abuse. Make Amends.

- When an investigation determines that abuse has occurred, hold ourselves to a standard of timely personal and institutional transparency and responsibility.
- Maintain a zero-tolerance policy and fire coaches and staff who emotionally, physically, or sexually abuse athletes.
- Promptly report the abuser to the appropriate sport and legal authorities.
- Enforce professional consequences for any adult (coaches, staff, or owners) who failed to be proactive, responsible, and responsive in addressing athlete safety, health, and well-being. (This includes enforcing consequences for those who fail to report, or who cover up abuse of any type).
- Make public apologies, and all-inclusive amends (emotional, procedural, and financial).
- Report the abuser to the media to prevent them from moving from one age group, gender, club, or country to another.

6. Consistently Adhere to ALL SafeSport Policies