

SECTION VI | REPORTING ABUSE, MISCONDUCT AND POLICY VIOLATIONS

A reporting policy clarifies to all participants, staff, volunteers, responsible parties and members of the public that the organization understands its duty and responsibility to create a safe and positive environment for athletes. This statement also further reinforces the organization's commitment to athlete safety.

An effective reporting policy that results in reports of suspected abuse and misconduct, and does not in any way deter victims or witnesses from reporting abuse and misconduct, is a key element to preventing abuse and misconduct from occurring. Potential abusers will avoid involvement in a program where there is a likelihood that suspected abuse will be reported. When sport stakeholders are untrained about how and when to report suspected abuse, they may feel ill-prepared, powerless and lost when it comes to responding to and reporting misconduct. By providing this guidance on when and how to report suspected misconduct, U.S. Figure Skating seeks to remove barriers to disclosing misconduct, including child physical and sexual abuse.

It is also critical that all members understand that they should not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of child physical or sexual abuse allegations as a condition for reporting to U.S. Figure Skating or to appropriate law enforcement officials.

Reporting Abuse, Misconduct and Policy Violations is:

- The obligation of U.S. Figure Skating on members and member clubs to report suspicions or allegations of abuse or misconduct;
- The importance of maintaining confidentiality with respect to the complaint, complainant, victim, accused and other information related to the report and incident(s) until "notice" must be given about a suspension or the outcome of any proceedings;
- The circumstances in which an immediate or "summary" suspension is appropriate and the procedures following a summary suspension;
- A general summary of the procedures for a hearing under Grievance Procedures outlined in the U.S. Figure Skating rulebook.

Upon a report or other notice of credible information or allegations that a person who is subject to the jurisdiction of U.S. Figure Skating:

1. May have violated any of the provisions of the U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Program Handbook
2. Violated any of the sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, bullying, threats and harassment, hazing policies or willful tolerance policies
3. Is subject to allegations of actual or suspected child physical or sexual abuse

U.S. Figure Skating will conduct an inquiry and/or initiate a disciplinary proceeding pursuant to Article XXV, section 3B, to determine the appropriate discipline that may be imposed.

Importance of Confidentially

Any investigation and/or disciplinary proceedings must be kept confidential. An investigator shall not discuss the investigation with anyone except for the purposes of conducting the investigation, except as requested by law enforcement or child protection authorities. Hearings should be closed and confidential, to the extent possible, other than for notification of the outcome. Participants in the hearing, including the hearing committee, complainant, victim, and witnesses (if any are permitted), should be requested and encouraged to keep the proceedings confidential, except as requested by law enforcement or child protection authorities.

The hearing panel shall not discuss the testimony with anyone and shall deliberate among themselves until final resolution of the complaint, except as requested by law enforcement or child protection authorities.

Reporting Process

If you are aware of or suspect abuse of an athlete, you should do all of the following:

1. Report the abuse to authorities.

In most states, you are obligated to bring this matter to the attention of local law enforcement or public child welfare organization and make a report. In fact, not reporting incidents in some states is against the law and the coach

or witness could be liable. Some states have a “Mandated Reporter Status.” Be aware of your state laws and specific reporting requirements. If you do not know which authorities to contact in your state, call the National Domestic Violence / Abuse Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE | 1-800-799-7233 | 1-800-787-3224 TDD. All calls to the hotline are confidential, and callers may remain anonymous if they wish. You may also call Victims Assistance Ministry at (800) 355-2545 or seek help directly by contacting one of the Child Protective Services or one of the Law Enforcement Agencies in your area.

2. Report the abuse to U.S. Figure Skating. Notify the U.S. Figure Skating vice chair for SafeSport or safesport@usfigureskating.org (see U.S. Figure Skating Rule GR 1.03) about the abuse situation. Rule GR 1.03 states:

GR 1.03 U.S. Figure Skating will not tolerate or condone any form of harassment (including sexual harassment), misconduct (including sexual, physical and emotional misconduct), bullying or hazing of any of its members including coaches, officials, directors, employees, parents, athletes and volunteers — or any other persons — while they are participating in or preparing for a figure skating activity or event conducted under the auspices of U.S. Figure Skating. The U.S. Figure Skating Policy Statement on Harassment and Abuse may be found in its entirety online at usfigureskating.org. Harassment of such nature between or among U.S. Figure Skating members shall be reported to the chair of the Ethics or Grievance Committee as soon as is practicably possible, per ECR 2.00 and GCR 2.00.

A. If any form of child abuse is observed or suspected, the observer should immediately contact either local law enforcement or a public child welfare agency and make a report.

B. Any person who violates this rule, who fails to appropriately report or who makes a false report or otherwise violates U.S. Figure Skating’s Policy on Harassment and Abuse will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Article XXIV, Section 3, of U.S. Figure Skating bylaws.

3. Alert the rink management, if appropriate, and,

4. Alert at least one of the following: the Club President, Club SafeSport Compliance Chair or other appropriate board member.