



**DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS AND GRIEVANCE
POLICY EFFECTIVE DATE: MAY 18, 2022**

1.1 Designation of Complaints.

The following kinds of grievances may be filed by USA Wrestling or with USA Wrestling under Article XII of the USA Wrestling Bylaws (a "Complaint"):

- a) Administrative. An "Administrative Complaint" is one pertaining to any matter within the cognizance of USA Wrestling, including, but not limited to, any alleged violation of or grievance concerning: (i) any of USA Wrestling's rules, regulations, or policies; or (ii) any provision of USA Wrestling Bylaws; or (iii) noncompliance of United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee ("USOPC") Bylaws or the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act (the "Sports Act").
- b) Opportunity to Participate. An "Opportunity to Participate Complaint" is one pertaining to any alleged denial, or alleged threat to deny, any member, who is an athlete, coach, trainer, manager, administrator or official, the opportunity to compete or participate in a USA Wrestling sanctioned competition or a competition protected by the provisions of the Sports Act or the USOPC Bylaws; or
- c) Misconduct. A "Misconduct Complaint" is one pertaining to Misconduct other than a Safe Sport Policy violation complaint.

Safe Sport Policy violations will be handled pursuant to Article XIII of the USA Wrestling Bylaws.

1.2 Filing a Complaint.

Any current member, current or former athlete member, or USA Wrestling (the "Complainant") who believes themselves/itself to be aggrieved by any action of USA Wrestling or by one of its members, may file a Complaint with USA Wrestling. If the Complainant is a minor, the Complaint may be initiated by such minor's parent or legal guardian. To be considered for resolution through these procedures, the Complaint must:

- a) Be submitted in writing to the President and Executive Director at USA Wrestling's principal place of business at 6155 Lehman Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80918;
- b) Include the full name and identifying membership information of the Complainant;

- c) Be signed by the Complainant (and the signature of their parent or legal guardian if they are under eighteen (18) years of age); and
- d) Include a short and plain statement of the facts giving rise to the Complaint, including the action at issue, the Bylaws or official written policies or procedures adopted by the Board which are alleged to have been violated by the action, the parties involved in the action, the harm to the Complainant as a result of such action, and the relief sought. The Complaint may include supporting evidence and documentation to support the allegation.

A Complaint that is not filed in accordance with this Section shall render the filing ineffective.

1.3 Filing Fee.

An Administrative Complaint which is filed by a Complainant other than an athlete or USA Wrestling shall be accompanied with a *\$250 filing fee. *A complainant may request a waiver of the filing fee by emailing the USA Wrestling General Counsel at lpeeters@usawrestling.org. There are no filing fees for Opportunity to Compete Complaints, Misconduct Complaints or Safe Sport Complaints.

1.4 Time Bar.

Unless the Complaint is filed by USA Wrestling or involves allegations which are Safe Sport Policy violations, a Complaint must be filed within one (1) year of the occurrence of the alleged incident, violation, grievance, denial, or threat to deny.

1.5 Processing the Complaint.

- a) Upon receipt of a Complaint, the President and/or Executive Director shall immediately forward the Complaint to the chair of the Ethics & Membership Committee.
- b) The Ethics & Membership Committee shall send to the Complainant a notice acknowledging the receipt of the Complaint (the "Notice to Complainant"). The Notice to Complainant shall include a copy of these procedures.
- c) The Ethics & Membership Committee shall send to any individual and organization whose conduct is the subject of the Complaint (a "Respondent") a notice of the alleged violation of the Complaint and a copy of the Complaint (including any supporting documentation and remedy requested if the allegations are found to true) (collectively, the "Notice to Respondent") within a reasonable time after receipt by the Ethics & Membership Committee not to exceed fourteen (14) business days, without just cause for delay. No Notice to Respondent need be sent when the only Respondent is USA Wrestling. The Notice to Respondent shall include: (i) An invitation to respond in writing to the Complaint (which will be shared with the Complainant), including reasons why the matter should not be taken on by the Ethics & Membership Committee, or, a reasonable time for the Respondent to prepare

a defense; and (ii) A copy of these procedures. The Committee will also send the Complainant any response in writing provided by the Respondent.

- d) Within fourteen (14) business days after receipt of the Complaint the Ethics & Membership Committee will determine: (i) whether the Complaint complies with the requirements specified in Section 1.2 and 1.3; and (ii) whether the Complaint is time barred pursuant to Section 1.4. If they determine that the Complaint does not satisfy the criteria specified herein, the chair of the Ethics & Membership Committee shall so advise the Complainant, and the Complaint shall be dismissed, and no further processing of the Complaint shall be required pursuant to this policy.
- e) If Section 1.5(d)(i) and (ii) are met, the chair of the Ethics and Membership Committee will then appoint at least three (3) unbiased, impartial, and disinterested individuals to serve as the hearing panel that will hear the matter (the "Hearing Panel"). These appointments shall be subject to the following:
 - (1) The chair of the Ethics and Membership Committee may appoint themselves or any other member of the Ethics and Membership Committee to the Hearing Panel.
 - (2) The appointment of the Hearing Panel will include the designation of a chair.
 - (3) The Hearing Panel shall have at least thirty-three percent (33.33 %) athlete representation. All athlete members of the Hearing Panel must meet the standards specified for an athlete representative to a board of directors of a National Governing Body or a "Designated Committee," as that term is defined in the Bylaws of the USOPC.
 - (4) The chair of the Ethics and Membership Committee is responsible for confirming the availability of each appointee to serve on the Hearing Panel.
 - (5) The chair of the Ethics and Membership Committee shall disclose the identity of the Hearing Panel members to the Complainant and Adverse Part(ies).
 - (6) All Hearing Panel members should immediately disclose any conflict that they have (and that may arise during the process).
 - (7) In the event any party or Hearing Panel member raises a conflict of interest, the chair of the Hearing Panel will consider the issue and replace the member if necessary.

1.6 Decisions Made at Competitions.

If the incident which is the subject of the Complaint occurs at an event or competition sanctioned by USA Wrestling, and the subject matter of the Complaint could have been the subject of protest procedures described in any applicable governing rules and policies, then those protest procedures must be exhausted prior to the filing of a Complaint. The failure to exhaust those protest procedures precludes the processing of a Complaint pursuant to this policy. Furthermore, the final decision of an official during a competition regarding a field of play decision (a matter set forth in the rules of the competition to be within the discretion of the official) shall not be reviewable through these procedures for, or the subject of, an Administrative Complaint or an Opportunity to Participate Complaint unless the decision is: (i) outside the authority of the official to make, or (ii) the product of fraud, corruption, partiality or

other misconduct of the official. For purposes of this Section, the term “official” shall include any judge or other individual with discretion to make field of play decisions.

1.7 Complaints Involving an Opportunity to Participate in a Competition.

With respect to an Opportunity to Participate Complaint, the Complainant shall include with the Complaint a list of all other individuals, together with their contact information, that may be adversely affected by a decision rendered upon the Complaint. The Hearing Panel shall determine which additional individuals should receive notice of the Complaint and shall provide appropriate notice to these individuals. Any individual so notified then shall have the right to participate in the proceeding as a party. If an individual is notified of the Complaint, then that individual shall be bound by the decision of the Hearing Panel even though the individual chose not to participate as a party.

1.8 Conduct of the Hearing.

- a) The chair of the Hearing Panel will select the time and place for the hearing so as to have the hearing occur at the earliest convenient date for all parties not to exceed ninety (90) days after the last filing with USA Wrestling, without just cause for delay. The chair may choose to conduct the hearing by conference call or other similar electronic means.
- b) The chair will communicate the information about the hearing schedule along with the identity of the other members of the Hearing Panel to the parties.
- c) Not less than fifteen (15) days prior to the hearing, the chair of the Hearing Panel shall cause to be sent to the parties a written copy of the procedures to be followed at the hearing. Those procedures shall include the opportunity for each party to be represented by counsel, to present and examine oral or written evidence, to cross-examine witnesses and to present such factual or legal claims and argument as desired, unless such exhibits pertain solely to possible impeachment matters. The Hearing Panel shall set such timelines and other rules regarding the proceeding and the conduct of the hearing as it deems necessary. Either upon its own initiative or at the request of a party, the Hearing Panel may direct the production of documents and other information within a reasonable time to prepare one’s position. Further, the Hearing Panel will require that the parties (i) identify any witnesses the parties intend to call at the hearing and (ii) exchange copies of all exhibits the parties intend to submit at the hearing. The Hearing Panel shall set due dates for the exchange of such information. The Hearing Panel is authorized to resolve any dispute concerning the exchange of information. No party and no one acting on behalf of any party shall communicate ex parte with a Hearing Panel member. The hearing shall be informal, except that testimony shall be taken under oath. Members of the Hearing Panel shall have the right to question witnesses or the parties to the proceeding at any time. Any party may have a record made of the hearing. A court reporter may be present at the hearing at the request of a party. The court reporter shall be paid for by the party requesting the court reporter, or if mutually agreed, the cost may be equally divided. Any transcript shall be paid for by the party requesting the transcript.

- d) All procedural and evidentiary decisions shall be made by the Hearing Panel. The rules of evidence shall not be strictly enforced; instead, the rules of evidence generally accepted in administrative proceedings shall be applicable. The Hearing Panel shall determine the admissibility, relevance and materiality of the evidence offered and may exclude evidence deemed by the Hearing Panel to be inadmissible, cumulative, or irrelevant.
- e) The Hearing Panel shall be responsible for determining: (i) whether the underlying facts and circumstances referenced in the Complaint give rise to an issue that is appropriate or inappropriate for resolution under these procedures; (ii) whether the Complainant has standing to file the Complaint; (iii) whether USA Wrestling has jurisdiction over the matter; and (iv) whether the Complaint involves matters which USA Wrestling has the authority or ability to remedy.
- f) If the Complaint is not dismissed, decisions about the merits of the Complaint and the form of any sanction shall be made by majority vote of the Hearing Panel. The Hearing Panel shall report its decision on the merits in the form of written findings of fact and conclusions. The decision shall be sent to the parties. Subject only to any right to arbitration as is specified in Section 1.14, the decision of the Hearing Panel shall be final and binding upon all parties.

1.9 Discipline.

The Hearing Panel may impose discipline, including but not limited to the following with regard to Misconduct Complaints:

- a) Reprimand. A communication, either public or private, of USA Wrestling Wrestling's decision to impose a reprimand regarding the Complaint. Any reprimand may be combined with probation or suspension.
- b) Probation. A ruling that, for a specified time, the subject's continued participation in USA Wrestling Wrestling's activities, sanctioned competitions. The Hearing Panel may order that notice of probation be given to appropriate authorities, such as meet directors.
- c) Conditional Membership. A ruling that, for a specified time, the subject's membership programs are conditioned upon the satisfaction of certain conditions. These conditions shall be described specifically, as shall the consequences of failing to meet them. The Hearing Panel may order that notice of certain conditions be given to appropriate authorities, such as meet directors.
- d) Suspension or Expulsion. A ruling that (i) either permanently or for a specified period of time or subject to certain conditions, the subject is prohibited from participating in sanctioned competitions or other of USA Wrestling activities, or (ii) in the case where the subject has applied for membership, membership is not allowed, and the subject is placed on the permanently ineligible list. The Hearing Panel may limit the effect of a suspension to certain activities or competitions, and may establish conditions that, if

satisfied, will result in the lifting of a suspension. The Hearing Panel may order that notice of suspension, expulsion, or permanent ineligibility be given to appropriate authorities, such as meet directors.

- e) Other. The Hearing Panel may order such other relief as it deems appropriate (e.g., letter of apology or restitution, including, for example, the payment for damaging equipment or the recovery of any financial benefit improperly derived by a Respondent).

1.10 Expedited Procedure.

With respect to an Opportunity to Participate Complaints ONLY, every effort will be made to expedite the proceedings, including, but not limited to, modifications made by the chair of the Hearing Panel to the procedures set forth above in order to resolve the Complaint prior to the start of the event.

1.11 Hearing Panel Administration.

The Ethics and Membership Committee shall be responsible to ensure that all Complaints proceeding to a Hearing Panel are heard in a timely, fair, and impartial manner and may promulgate procedures in addition to those set forth in this policy for the effective administration of Complaints filed with USA Wrestling.

1.12 General.

All notices, reports and decisions under this policy shall be made within thirty (30) days after the completion of the hearing in writing and delivered in electronic mail creating a record of receipt. Participation in these procedures shall be deemed to constitute agreement to be bound by the provisions of this policy. If, in the course of a hearing conducted pursuant to this policy, the Hearing Panel discovers that a Respondent has engaged in a Safe Sport Policy violation, those issues will be resolved as set forth in Article XIII of the USA Wrestling Bylaws.

1.13 Publication of Permanently Ineligible Members.

Where a final decision has been rendered in a matter where the discipline imposed is permanent expulsion, or permanent ineligibility for membership USA Wrestling shall publish the following information in one or more of its publications and on USA Wrestling Wrestling's website:

- a) the name of the individual;
- b) the state of residence of the individual where the violation occurred and/or where the individual resides at the time the discipline is imposed; and
- c) with respect to decisions rendered after the adoption of this Section 1.13, which of USA Wrestling Bylaws, rules, regulations, or policies was violated.

1.14 Arbitration.

USA Wrestling agrees to submit to binding arbitration conducted under the commercial rules of the American Arbitration Association, any controversy involving: (i) an Opportunity to Participate Complaint or (ii) its recognition as a National Governing Body, as is provided in the Sports Act.

1.15 Retaliation.

USA Wrestling prohibits retaliation against anyone who reports misconduct or provides information about misconduct as more fully detailed in USA Wrestling's Whistleblower Policy. Retaliation means any adverse or discriminatory action, or the threat of an adverse or discriminatory action, including threatening, intimidating, harassing, coercing, removing from training or competition, or any other conduct that would discourage a reasonable person from engaging or participating in the complaint processes when the action is reasonably related to the report or engagement with the process. Retaliation may be present even where there is a finding that no violation occurred.

1.16 Ombuds Office

For athletes seeking information on filing a grievance, contact the USOPC Athlete Ombuds Office at (719) 866-5000, or ombudsman@usathlete.org, or visit <https://www.teamusa.org/athlete-ombuds>.