



USA Gymnastics Code of Ethical Conduct

I. Introduction

The mission of USA Gymnastics is to encourage participation and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of gymnastics. USA Gymnastics grants the privilege of membership to individuals and organizations committed to that mission. USA Gymnastics may, therefore, withdraw the privilege of membership or discipline a member where USA Gymnastics determines that an individual or organization's conduct is inconsistent with the mission of USA Gymnastics or the best interest of the sport and those who participate in it.

To better serve the interests of those who participate in gymnastics, USA Gymnastics has adopted the Code which follows. This Code is not intended to establish a set of rules that will, by inclusion or exclusion, prescribe the appropriate behavior for members in every aspect of their participation in the sport. Rather, the Code offers general principles to guide the conduct, and the judicious appraisal of conduct, of all USA Gymnastics members (individuals, organizations and clubs/businesses, which are collectively referred to as "Members" and individually as a "Member") in situations that have ethical implications.

This Code cannot further ethical conduct in the sport of gymnastics; that can only come from the personal commitment of the participants in the sport to behave ethically. This Code is offered instead to guide and to affirm the commitment of all Members to safeguard the best interests of the sport by acting ethically at all times.

II. Elements of the Code

A. Participant Relationships.

Members of USA Gymnastics are charged with the responsibility for contributing to an environment that makes participation in the sport a positive and rewarding experience. To achieve that result, each professional and club/business Member has a special obligation to make decisions based on the best interest of the athlete. It is inconsistent with this obligation for any Member to:

1. Fail to follow the safety guidelines established by USA Gymnastics, or otherwise knowingly subject a participant to unreasonable physical or emotional risk.
2. Engage in conduct that is unfair including, in particular, attempting to injure, disable or intentionally interfere with the preparation of a competitor.
3. Engage in conduct toward another participant in the sport that is abusive. USA Gymnastics recognizes that the process for training and motivating athletes varies with each coach and each athlete, but it is nevertheless incumbent on everyone involved in the sport to support the development and use of motivational and training methods that avoid conduct that is, or is likely to be perceived as being, abusive.
4. Attempt to intimidate, embarrass or improperly influence any individual responsible for judging or administering a competition.

B. Non-Discrimination.

Any USA Gymnastics activity or event should be open to any Member properly qualified under the rules of that activity or event. It is inconsistent with this obligation for any Member to:

1. 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, age, national origin or mental or physical disability.
2. Discriminate in the provision of resources or opportunities to any Member or prospective Member on the basis of race, sex, creed, sexual orientation, age, national origin or mental or physical disability.

C. Participation.

Every Member participating in a USA Gymnastics activity or event has an obligation to participate to the best of his/her abilities. It is inconsistent with this obligation for any Member to:

1. Knowingly participate as a judge, coach, athlete or administrator in any activity or event where that judge, coach, athlete or administrator is inadequately prepared, unable to participate or fails to participate to the best of his or her ability.
2. Engage in behavior that is so disorderly or inappropriate as to interfere with the orderly conduct of the activity or other Members' participation in, or enjoyment of, the activity or event.

D. Commitment to Integrity.

A Member of USA Gymnastics has a responsibility to uphold the integrity of the sport of gymnastics and the rules and regulations that govern it, and to act honestly, openly, fairly and competently. It is inconsistent with this obligation for any Member to:

1. Knowingly misrepresent the policies or actions of USA Gymnastics or its authorized representatives.
2. Act on behalf of USA Gymnastics or a Member without appropriate authorization.
3. Alter, falsify, or omit any information, record or document to intentionally make a false or exaggerated claim or statement or to mislead.
4. Fail to resort in the first instance to the established procedures for challenging a competitive result, contesting a team selection decision, complaining about the conduct of another Member, or attempting to alter or reverse a policy adopted by USA Gymnastics.
5. Breach the duty to maintain appropriately established confidences of USA Gymnastics or any Member.
6. Knowingly make false certifications on membership or event sanction applications or otherwise regarding the involvement of any person permanently ineligible for USA Gymnastics membership, or any person who is listed on a federal or state sex-offender registry, with regard to club/business, event, or advertised activities.
7. Engage in business practices directed toward another Member that are determined by a court, or other similar adjudicatory body, to be unethical, illegal or a breach of contract.

8. Incur expenses in furtherance of USA Gymnastics' business that are unreasonable, unnecessary, or unsubstantiated.
9. Fail to avoid both actual and perceived conflicts of interest in the conduct of business.
10. Participate in the deliberation or decision-making process about any issue for which the Member has a direct financial interest, unless full disclosure of that interest and meaningful consent is obtained prior to participation.

E. Communication.

Members of USA Gymnastics have a duty to communicate honestly and openly with USA Gymnastics and Members. It is inconsistent with this obligation for any Member to:

1. Misrepresent competitive achievements, professional qualifications, education, experience, eligibility, criminal record or affiliations.
2. Knowingly disseminate false or misleading information about another Member.
3. Misrepresent actions taken or not taken in an effort to show compliance with USA Gymnastics' policies or procedures.
4. Withhold from athletes information or resources likely to enhance the athletes' enjoyment of the sport or reduce their risk of injury or illness.
5. Fail to consult with or inform fully the athlete or the athlete's parents about opportunities made available to the athlete involving competitions, commercial activities or recognition.
6. Misrepresent the nature or extent of an injury in order to decline an invitation to participate in or withdraw from a competition, training camp or other similar activity.
7. Misrepresent the nature or extent of an injury in order to participate in (or cause an athlete to participate in) a competition, training camp or other similar activity when such participation is inconsistent with the appropriate medical response to the injury.

This section applies to all forms of communication, including social media.

F. Alcohol and Drug Abuse.

Members of USA Gymnastics must ensure that the sport is conducted in an environment free of drug or alcohol abuse. It is inconsistent with this obligation for any Member to:

1. Use or provide to a third party any drug proscribed by applicable federal, state or municipal law.
2. Assist or condone any competing athlete's use of a drug banned by the International Olympic Committee, United States Olympic Committee, Federation Internationale de Gymnastique, World Anti-Doping Agency, United States Anti-Doping Agency, USA Gymnastics, or National Collegiate Athletic Association, or, in the case of athletes, to use such drugs or refuse to submit to properly conducted drug tests administered by any of those organizations.
3. Provide alcohol to, or condone the use of alcohol by, minors; abuse alcohol in the presence of athletes or at USA Gymnastics' activities; or consume alcoholic beverages while a minor.

G. Criminal Conduct.

Members of USA Gymnastics are expected to comply with all applicable criminal codes. This obligation is violated by any Member who:

1. Has been listed on any State or Federal sexual offender list or registry.
2. Has been declared a sex offender in any applicable State or Federal jurisdiction.
3. Has been convicted of or has entered a plea of guilty or no contest to a criminal charge or indictment directly or indirectly involving or relating to sexual misconduct, child abuse, or conduct that is a violation of a law or regulation specifically designed to protect minors.

Depending on the nature of the crime, this obligation may be violated by any Member who has been convicted of or has entered a plea of guilty or no contest to any felony charge or indictment involving conduct other than that specifically described above.

H. Sexual Misconduct.

Members of USA Gymnastics are expected to promote a safe environment for participants, coaches, officials, volunteers and staff in all gymnastics disciplines, which includes an environment free from sexual misconduct. It is inconsistent with this obligation for any Member to:

1. Solicit or engage in sexual relations with any minor.
2. Engage in any behavior that utilizes the influence of a professional Member's position as coach, judge, official or administrator to encourage sexual relations with an athlete or participant.
3. Engage in sexual harassment by making unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

I. Sexual Relationships.

Professional Members of USA Gymnastics must protect the integrity of the sport and the interests of the athletes they serve by avoiding sexual relationships with athletes except where the capacity and quality of the athlete's consent to enter that relationship is beyond question.

III. Enforcement of Code

Compliance with this Code depends primarily upon understanding and voluntary compliance, secondarily upon reinforcement by peers, and, when necessary, upon enforcement through disciplinary action.

Any Member ('Complainant') who believes that another Member of USA Gymnastics has failed to meet such Member's obligations under this Code is, under all but the most egregious circumstances, encouraged to first address that concern directly to that Member. If that action does not result in a satisfactory resolution, the Complainant may file a written complaint with the President, program director or other appropriate staff member of USA Gymnastics. That complaint must be signed and state specifically the nature of the alleged misconduct. Upon review of the complaint and, where appropriate, additional discussions with the Complainant and/or Member who is the subject of the complaint, the President may:

1. Determine that the complaint does not merit further action,
2. Counsel the Member who is the subject of the complaint and record both the complaint and the nature of the counseling in the Member's permanent record,
3. Refer the complaint, as appropriate, to the state or regional chairs/committees or affiliated organization, or
4. Process the complaint under Article 9 and/or 10 of USA Gymnastics' Bylaws.