

**United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee  
Certification Review Group**



**Certification Renewal Recommendation Report for U.S. Ski & Snowboard  
November 13, 2024**



**UNITED STATES  
OLYMPIC & PARALYMPIC  
COMMITTEE**

## **U.S. Ski & Snowboard Certification Renewal Executive Summary**

In April 2024, the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) Certification Review Group (CRG), in accordance with the USOPC's NGB Certification Policy, began a certification renewal review of U.S. Ski & Snowboard (USSS).<sup>1</sup> The CRG evaluated USSS and, based on input from CRG members, as well as the results of the NGB Audit department's 2023 compliance audit,<sup>2</sup> recommends a certification status of Renewal with Conditions.

The CRG's review of USSS found that the organization is meeting most of the USOPC's NGB Compliance Standards in the five core areas of evaluation for certification: Governance and Compliance, Financial Standards and Reporting Practices, Athlete Protections and Rights, Sport Performance, and Operational Performance. A compliance audit, conducted by the USOPC's NGB Audit department in 2023, identified several areas where USSS was not fully meeting the USOPC's NGB Compliance Standards, including findings related to the management of conflicts of interest, athlete agreements, as well as to policies that did not comply with all requirements.

During the CRG's review period, USSS remediated several of its audit findings, including those pertaining to athlete agreements, by the time of the CRG's recommendation. Moreover, USSS demonstrated its commitment to inclusivity by adopting the management of Paralympic disciplines in May 2023.<sup>3</sup> However, the NGB Audit department identified the remaining open audit findings to be considered conditions of USSS' certification. The conditions include:

- USSS must follow its conflicts of interest policy and require conflict disclosures from all staff members and other individuals to whom the policy applies.
- USSS must provide evidence that all conflict disclosures have been reviewed and that direction letters include sufficient information to make clear the steps an individual must take to mitigate any conflicts.
- USSS must update its grievance procedures to fully comply with Standard E.4 a & b of the Implementation Guide for NGB Compliance Standards.
- USSS must update its Whistleblower and Anti-Retaliation Policy to fully comply with Standard E.5 a of the Implementation Guide for NGB Compliance Standards.

As a result of this review, the CRG recommends that USSS be granted a certification status of Renewal with Conditions with a deadline of December 31, 2024, to fulfill the conditions of certification. In accordance with the NGB Certification Policy, if the CRG determines that USSS has successfully addressed these issues by the deadline, the CRG will recommend that its certification status be upgraded to Renewal in Good Standing. If USSS does not resolve these issues to the CRG's satisfaction by the deadline, its certification rating may be downgraded to Probationary Renewal and the CRG will discuss whether accountability measures are appropriate to address USSS' delayed action.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix for more information about the certification process, including a link to the NGB Certification Policy.

<sup>2</sup> [NGB Compliance Audit – U.S. Ski & Snowboard](#), July 25, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> The NGB Audit department did not assess compliance with Standard D.3 c Paralympic Classification at the onset of the audit process given, at that time, the NGB did not manage Paralympic disciplines. The published audit report indicates "N/A" for this Standard, but since the adopted oversight of Paralympic disciplines, USSS must fulfill all provisions of Standard D.3 c.

## **Organizational Overview**

USSS is the USOPC-certified NGB for skiing, snowboarding, and, as of May 2023, Paralympic alpine skiing and snowboarding. The mission of USSS is to “champion competitive snowsports and develop U.S. champions.”<sup>4</sup> USSS is the United States’ representative to the International Ski and Snowboard Federation, the international federation that governs skiing, snowboarding, and para snowsports. USSS’ national office is located in Park City, Utah.<sup>5</sup>

## **Certification History**

USSS was originally certified in January 2021.<sup>6</sup> This is the first time USSS has undergone a certification review.

## **Certification Exceptions<sup>7</sup>**

USSS did not request any exceptions from the NGB Compliance Standards during its certification review.

## **Athlete Representation Approval and Exceptions<sup>8</sup>**

USSS did not request any exceptions or alterations to the athlete representation requirements or athlete representative definitions.

## **Certification Review<sup>9</sup>**

### ***Governance and Compliance***

The CRG determined that USSS is fulfilling many of the governance and compliance-related responsibilities of an NGB, including adopting and enforcing key ethics and compliance-related policies, making the policies publicly available on its website, and defining procedures to address violations of these policies. Additionally, USSS has not been the subject of any formal complaints filed with the USOPC’s Dispute Resolution Unit in the last four years.

In 2021, the USOPC engaged outside counsel to determine whether USSS was exercising the necessary oversight of ski jumping and Nordic combined disciplines. Some of the allegations were substantiated, while others were determined to be perceptions. As a result of the investigation, the USOPC issued several required reforms, which USSS promptly addressed and completed as of May 2023.

To address 2023 compliance audit findings, USSS updated its bylaws and policies, as well as worked closely with its Athlete’s Council to ensure adequate athlete representation on committees and to clarify its elections processes. Although an audit finding pertaining to missing some required bylaws elements remains open, the NGB Audit department has reviewed draft bylaws that USSS’ board is set to adopt in Q4 2024 that meet the NGB Compliance Standards. As this

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<sup>4</sup> [About](#), U.S. Ski & Snowboard website.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> Refer to the Appendix for details about the initial certification of NGBs.

<sup>7</sup> Refer to the Appendix for details on exception requests to the NGB Compliance Standards.

<sup>8</sup> Refer to the Appendix for details on athlete representation exception requests.

<sup>9</sup> Refer to the Appendix for details on the review standards and process for information related to the Compliance Audit.

approval is imminent and the missing elements were not considered significant by the NGB Audit department, the CRG determined that this open issue should not be a condition of certification.

While USSS has made significant progress in Governance and Compliance, the organization must make further improvements before the CRG considers recommending a Renewal in Good Standing rating. The NGB Audit department found that USSS' management of actual, potential, and perceived conflicts of interest did not meet the NGB Compliance Standards and determined that USSS must follow its conflicts of interest policy and require conflict disclosures from all staff members and other individuals to whom the policy applies to resolve the finding. In addition, USSS must also provide evidence that all conflict disclosures have been reviewed and that direction letters include sufficient information to make clear the steps an individual must take to mitigate any conflicts. While USSS has made progress toward resolving this finding, it has not yet fully completed remediation and the CRG determined that fully resolving the finding would be a condition of its certification.

The CRG received positive athlete feedback regarding USSS' governance. Athletes expressed that the organization is effective at communicating with the athlete community. While athletes felt that the organization was serving the athlete community well overall, athletes expressed that additional information from USSS about funding allocations would be appreciated. Specifically, athletes expressed appreciation for the leadership of the organization's CEO and Chief of Sport.

### ***Financial Standards and Reporting Practices***

USSS meets the requirements for an NGB's Financial Standards and Reporting Practices. The organization demonstrates financial operational capability to administer its sport and is financially and operationally transparent with its membership by publishing its audited financial statements and tax forms.

### ***Athlete Protection and Rights***

USSS maintains and enforces an athlete safety program consistent with the requirements of relevant federal law, as well as with the policies and standards of the USOPC and the U.S. Center for SafeSport (the Center). The NGB maintains an anti-doping program consistent with the requirements of the USOPC and the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency.

To resolve 2023 compliance audit findings, USSS implemented a written process to report all applicable allegations and measures to the USOPC Office of Athlete Safety when required. USSS also made updates to its athlete agreements to comply with all provisions of the USOPC's NGB Athlete Agreement Policy as they relate to commercial terms.

The USOPC is not aware of any cases it has received in the past four years concerning USSS that should have been reported to the Center but were not reported in accordance with the Center's reporting requirements. For its part, the USOPC has reported all matters to the Center relating to USSS that the USOPC was required to report.

In December 2023, the Center conducted its most recent event audit<sup>10</sup> at the Toyota U.S. Grand Prix / Visa Big Air competition at Copper Mountain Resort in Frisco, Colorado. The event audit resulted in fully implemented ratings in all areas of the Center's evaluation but did include

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<sup>10</sup> [US Center for SafeSport Event Audit Report](#) – US Ski & Snowboard, December 11, 2023.

required corrective actions pertaining to findings. In March 2024, the Center confirmed that USSS took action to address the findings, as noted in its corrective actions update<sup>11</sup> report.

### ***Sport Performance***

USSS is fulfilling its obligations in Sport Performance. The organization maintains and executes a strategic plan that supports athletes in achieving sustained competitive excellence and grows the sport. USSS established selection procedures and executed them effectively to name and train Team USA athletes for Delegation Events, where its Olympic teams have been highly successful. Looking ahead to the 2026 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, USSS has been proactively engaged with the USOPC on its plan for its team selection process.

The NGB Audit department's review of USSS did not include a review of the NGB Compliance Standards related to the management of Paralympic disciplines because USSS took those disciplines on after the audit began. The USOPC's Paralympics department worked with USSS throughout the transition to ensure that certain key elements are in place, and USSS' continued adherence to the NGB Compliance Standards will be assessed before its next quadrennial audit through the USOPC's compliance monitoring program.

### ***Operational Performance***

The CRG determined that USSS meets most Operational Performance standards. The organization demonstrates managerial capability to administer its sport, keeps current insurance policies, and demonstrates financial sustainability.

The NGB Audit department found that USSS' grievance procedures and whistleblower policies were missing significant elements required by the NGB Compliance Standards. USSS updated these policies and provided draft versions to the NGB Audit department, which determined the draft revisions are sufficient to meet all requirements. However, the policies have yet to be approved by USSS' board of directors. USSS' board of directors must approve the now-compliant draft grievance procedures and whistleblower and anti-retaliation policies to fully comply with Standards E.4 a and b and E.5 a, respectively, of the NGB Compliance Standards as conditions of this certification.

USSS developed a 2021-2024 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Action Plan to reflect the NGB's vision to attract and build a diverse and inclusive membership and organization that supports intentional and on-going engagement within all communities. USSS submitted its action plan to the USOPC with sufficient detail to meet the NGB Compliance Standards. The action plan includes seven overall objectives targeting specific groups and measurements of success. USSS' goals include advancing DE&I data collection to inform USSS policies and best practices; increasing representation of underrepresented groups across all levels of sport and staff; establishing programs to recruit, develop, and retain more people of color and women in coaching; and facilitating support to grassroots DE&I partner organizations. Despite delays in advancing data collection, USSS has made progress in executing its action plan, specifically with a focus on adaptive inclusion.

### **Conclusion**

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<sup>11</sup> [Corrective Action Update](#) – US Ski & Snowboard, March 14, 2024.

Considering the importance of managing conflicts of interest consistent with the USOPC's compliance requirements, as well as maintaining robust, board-approved grievance procedures and whistleblower and anti-retaliation policies, USSS must address these areas of concern before its certification status is upgraded. As such, the CRG recommends that USSS' certification as a member organization of the USOPC be renewed with a rating of Renewal with Conditions.

As part of this Renewal with Conditions rating, USSS will have until December 31, 2024, as ratified by the USOPC Board of Directors, to correct the outstanding issues. If USSS successfully meets these conditions, the CRG will recommend that its certification rating be upgraded to Renewal in Good Standing. If USSS does not take satisfactory action to meet the conditions of this certification by the deadline, its certification rating may be downgraded to Probationary Renewal and the CRG will discuss whether accountability measures are appropriate to address USSS' delayed action.

## Appendix

### Certification Renewal Process

The USOPC believes in a culture of strong governance, ethics, and compliance among the NGBs that, as member organizations of the USOPC, make up the Olympic and Paralympic movement. Recent amendments to the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, which became effective in late 2020, require the USOPC to certify NGBs.<sup>12</sup> The USOPC determined that as of January 1, 2021, all member organizations would be certified, and their certifications would be reviewed for renewal on a rolling basis every four years.<sup>13</sup>

Governed by the USOPC's [NGB Certification Policy](#), the NGB certification review process is supported by a cross-functional body of professionals at the USOPC, the Certification Review Group (CRG), who interact with NGBs in their day-to-day work. These professionals evaluate an NGB's operations across multiple functional areas to provide a holistic review of an NGB's performance and culture.<sup>14</sup> In addition to enumerated standards for NGB performance described in the Act, the Bylaws, and the USOPC's [NGB Compliance Standards](#), the CRG considers departmental observations about an NGB's operations that may not be identified in a formal audit scenario but are relevant to consider when evaluating an NGB's overall performance.

### Certification Standards, Exceptions, and Review Components

As described in Section 8.4.1 of the [USOPC Bylaws](#), NGBs must satisfy certification requirements in five core areas: Governance and Compliance, Financial Standards and Reporting Practices, Athlete Safety, Sport Performance, and Operational Performance. The USOPC Implementation Guide for NGB Compliance Standards provides NGBs with specific guidance for how they will be evaluated in each of these core areas.

Section 8.4.2 of the USOPC Bylaws permits an NGB to submit a request for limited exceptions to any of the NGB Compliance Standards which, as a result of its overall structure or other extenuating circumstances, cannot or need not be reasonably met. The CRG evaluates all requests received and grants or denies such limited exceptions.

Various provisions of Section 8.5 of the USOPC Bylaws permit NGBs to seek exceptions related to minimum athlete representation requirements on boards and designated committees as well as exceptions or additions to which of its committees are considered designated committees. The Athlete Representation Review Working Group evaluates and approves or denies all requests made under Section 8.5.

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<sup>12</sup> See §220521(a) of the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act.

<sup>13</sup> NGB Certification Policy, Section 1.

<sup>14</sup> The CRG uses a four-year lookback period during this review process.