

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



**Certification Renewal Recommendation Report for USA Bobsled & Skeleton
November 13, 2024**



**UNITED STATES
OLYMPIC & PARALYMPIC
COMMITTEE**

USA Bobsled & Skeleton Certification Renewal Executive Summary

In September, 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 USA Bobsled & Skeleton (USABS).¹ The CRG evaluated USABS and, based on input from CRG members, as well as the results of the NGB Audit department's 2023 compliance audit,² recommends a certification status of Renewal in Good Standing.

The CRG's review of USABS found that the organization is meeting 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. USABS is actively working to resolve one remaining open audit finding that the CRG determined does not affect the NGB's certification status at this time.

CRG members agreed that USABS meets the requirements and expectations for an NGB. In its discussions regarding USABS' interactions with the USOPC, the CRG did not identify any unaddressed operational concerns that would prevent the organization's continued certification. The CRG acknowledged USABS' continued work to foster a safe environment for its athletes and will continue to follow its progress in facilitating a culture of excellence. Overall, in the areas in which the CRG members interacted with USABS, the CRG was satisfied with USABS' operations.

As a result of this review, the CRG recommends that USABS be granted a certification status of Renewal in Good Standing for a four-year certification term ending in 2028.

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

² [*NGB Compliance Audit – USABS*](#), May 17, 2024.

Organizational Overview

USABS is the USOPC-certified NGB for the sports of bobsled and skeleton, included on the Olympic Winter Games program. The mission of USABS is to “empower United States athletes to achieve sustained competitive success in bobsled and skeleton and pursue personal excellence and well-being.”³ USABS is the United States’ representative to the International Bobsleigh & Skeleton Federation,. USABS is operated by 19 staff members, and has a physical office in Lake Placid, NY.⁴

Certification History

USABS was originally certified in January 2021.⁵ This is the first time USABS has undergone a certification review.

Certification Exceptions⁶

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

Athlete Representation Approval and Exceptions⁷

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

Certification Review⁸

Governance and Compliance

The CRG determined that USABS is fulfilling the Governance and Compliance-related responsibilities of an NGB. USABS has adopted and enforces key ethics and compliance-related policies; has made these policies publicly available on its website; and has defined procedures to address violations of these policies. As a result of the 2023 compliance audit, USABS ensured appropriate tracking of athlete voting eligibility to elect its athlete representatives in compliance with the NGB Compliance Standards. Within the last four years, USABS was the subject of one formal complaint filed with the USOPC’s Dispute Resolution Unit, specifically pertaining to an athlete’s opportunity to participate at a World Championships. Ultimately, the athlete did not pursue arbitration.

Within the certification review period, USABS has been the subject of multiple concerns reported to the USOPC’s Compliance department. As a result of a 2022 compliance review, the Compliance department determined that USABS did not follow its procedures for reviewing complaints involving alleged violations of its athlete code of conduct and COVID-19 protocols. As such, the Compliance department required USABS to draft and publish revised grievance procedures, a

³ [About USABS](#), USABS website.

⁴ [Contact Us](#), USABS website.

⁵ Refer to the Appendix for details about the initial certification of NGBs.

⁶ Refer to the Appendix for details on exception requests to the NGB Compliance Standards.

⁷ Refer to the Appendix for details on athlete representation exception requests.

⁸ Refer to the Appendix for details on the review standards and process for information related to the compliance audit.

code of conduct and a whistleblower policy to comply with the NGB Compliance Standards. USABS revised these policies in accordance with the required reforms.

Separately, in 2022, the Compliance department engaged outside counsel to review concerns regarding bias and lack of responsiveness to athlete concerns, lack of clarity regarding staff roles and responsibilities, allocation of athlete resources, and execution of selection procedures. Many of the concerns were substantiated and the USOPC sent a letter requiring several reforms, including greater accountability in the CEO evaluation process, clarity regarding staff roles and responsibilities, and regular reporting to USABS' board of directors regarding metrics and progress to resolve complaints. USABS has implemented these requirements and there are no outstanding compliance requirements.

The CRG received positive athlete feedback regarding USABS' progress within governance operations, noting an increased effort to facilitate communication between athletes and the board of directors. Further, they noted the CEO's active communication with USABS' internal AAC, which is engaged, involved, and brought in to assist with routine governance issues. While athletes felt that the organization is serving the athlete community well overall, athletes expressed that the organization's staff is spread thin, impacting timely communication among other challenges. Overall, athletes expressed their perspective that the NGB is heading in the right direction.

Financial Standards and Reporting Practices

USABS 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

USABS 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, USABS updated both its athlete safety policy and its background check process to ensure all required background checks are completed and verified accordingly.

The USOPC is not aware of any cases it has received in the past four years, concerning USABS, 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 USABS that the USOPC was required to report.

The Center conducted its most recent event audit of USABS virtually on July 25, 2023.⁹ The event audit resulted in implemented ratings, but also included directions for corrective actions. On September 11, 2023, the Center confirmed that USABS completed all corrective actions.¹⁰

Sport Performance

USABS is fulfilling its obligations in Sport Performance. The organization's recent reforms strengthened the maintenance and execution of USABS' strategic plan to support athletes in

⁹ [US Center for SafeSport Event Audit Report](#) – USABS, July 25, 2023.

¹⁰ [US Center for SafeSport Corrective Actions Update](#) – USABS, September 11, 2023.

achieving sustained competitive excellence and to grow the sport. Within the certification review period, USABS established selection procedures and executed them to name and train Team USA athletes for Delegation Events. USABS submitted a high performance plan in accordance with the Sport Performance department's deadline, and operates timely with all high performance-related requests and submissions. Overall, USABS and the Sport Performance department work collaboratively to ensure USABS is addressing issues with which athletes previously expressed concern.

Operational Performance

The CRG determined that USABS meets most Operational Performance standards. The organization demonstrates managerial capability to administer its sport and keeps current insurance policies. The NGB Audit department will review USABS' most recent financial statements to ensure the organization meets revenue diversification requirements to demonstrate financial sustainability, but the CRG determined that this open audit finding would not affect USABS' certification at this time.

USABS developed a 2021-2024 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Action Plan aimed to create an environment that is diverse and inclusive on all levels, including but not limited to teams, officials, staff, coaches, board, committees and spectators. USABS submitted its action plan to the USOPC with sufficient detail to meet the NGB Compliance Standards. The action plan includes three objectives with details relating to specific initiatives, target groups, timelines, and success measures. Objectives include recruiting and retaining a diverse pool of athletes for its sports; identifying a diverse pool of candidates to serve on the board of directors and all committees; and identifying a diverse pool of candidates for open staff and coach positions. USABS' target groups include people of color, women, people with disabilities, veterans, and athletes with a variety of prior sports experience. In alignment with its DE&I action plan, and given the allegations reviewed during the investigation,¹¹ USABS demonstrated its commitment to facilitating a more inclusive culture by the board of director's recent engagement in a substantive DE&I training, facilitated by the USOPC's DE&I department.

Conclusion

The CRG concluded that USABS is performing satisfactorily based on input from the CRG members and the results of the NGB Audit department's 2023 compliance audit. There are no outstanding areas of concern affecting the NGB's certification status at this time. Accordingly, the CRG recommends that USABS' certification as a member organization of the USOPC be renewed with a rating of Renewal in Good Standing for a four-year certification term ending in 2028.

¹¹ See Governance and Compliance section for additional details.

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.¹² 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.¹³

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.¹⁴ 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.

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

¹³ NGB Certification Policy, Section 1.

¹⁴ The CRG uses a four-year lookback period during this review process.