


WHY DO TEAM USA ATHLETES NEED AN INDEPENDENT ATHLETES' COMMISSION?

Current Problem: Athletes have **NO** leverage.

- In the absence of a truly independent organization, athletes are left disempowered and marginalized
 - Unlike the USOPC and NGBs, the Ted Stevens Act does not provide any powers or duties to Team USA AC
 - The USOPC and NGBs have a variety of interest to account for and cannot solely operate in the best interest of athletes
 - Athletes have no organization with the authority to negotiate on behalf of them with the USOPC, NGBs, U.S. Center for SafeSport and USADA
- While funding of the Team USA AC is at the goodwill of the USOPC, Team USA AC cannot fully earn the trust of the athletes we serve and cannot be an effective voice for athletes if funding is 100% dependent and decided by the USOPC
- There is no group empowered to advocate for athletes. The Athlete Ombuds is not an effective alternative to an independent entity advocating solely on behalf of Team USA Athletes
- Team USA AC is routinely barred from contact with the athletes we are tasked to represent. The right to communication and in-person access needs to be enshrined.

Reality for Team USA Athletes

	Players' Association Athletes	Team USA Athletes
Athletes have an independent organization representing their interests		
Ability to negotiate athlete contracts with the league or sports org		
Ability to negotiate for services and resources provided		
Provided legal representation and advocate through grievance procedures		

Solution: An Independent Team USA AC, that would still be the official Athletes' Commission of Team USA and be recognized as such by domestic and international stakeholders (i.e. USOPC, IOC, IPC, U.S. Center for Safesport, USADA)



WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?

Any **Agreement** between the USOPC or NGB and an athlete(s), as well as USOPC Policies that directly impact athletes would be **negotiated jointly** between the USOPC and Team USA AC. Agreements and policies include, but are not limited to:

- Participation and National Team Agreements
- Commercial Agreements
- Delegation Rules
- High-Performance Plans
- Code of Conduct

Additional Protections for athletes in the **grievance process**

- All procedures and policies for all USOPC Athlete grievances must be jointly agreed upon between USOPC and Team USA AC.
- In any disciplinary hearing concerning an alleged violation of the Code of Conduct, an Athlete shall be entitled to be accompanied by counsel of the athlete's choice and/or a representative/designee of the Team USA AC.
- Team USA AC shall be permitted to create and manage a legal aid program to assist eligible athletes who are without sufficient financial means to seek adequate legal representation in a disciplinary hearing

- All **athlete education or programs** designated by the USOPC for athletes would be **jointly** created, agreed too and administered by the USOPC and the Team USA AC.
 - For example: NIL education, agent selection education, transition programming
- Protected rights for Team USA AC to have **access** to athletes at Team Camps, Trials, Delegation Events, DC Week, etc.
- Additional governance and **athlete representation protections**
 - Team USA AC would have autonomy over its representation structure and elections
 - Team USA AC would have an audit function

Frequently Asked Questions

How is it different than a union?

Unlike a union where athletes have the ability to strike to get leverage, the leverage here would come from outlining the duties and powers of Team USA AC in the Ted Stevens Act.

Who would run athlete elections?

Team USA AC would be empowered to run its own athlete representation elections, but NGBs and the USOPC still facilitate its own athlete elections. i.e. NGB AAC elections, USOPC Board elections, or NGB Athlete Director positions

