

UNITED STATES OLYMPIC & PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE TRIALS AND DELEGATION RULES FOR ATHLETE EXPRESSION AND DEMONSTRATIONS

SECTION 1. OVERVIEW

The United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC) values the expression of Team USA athletes and believes their right to advocate for racial and social justice, and to be a positive force for change, absolutely aligns with the fundamental values of equality that defines Team USA and the Olympic and Paralympic movements. Racial and Social Demonstrations (as defined below) will not be punished or undermined by the USOPC, nor will they affect an athlete's participation rights at a U.S. Olympic or Paralympic Trials and/or Delegation Events.

During Team USA Delegation Events, such as the Pan American Games, Parapan American Games, the Olympic and Paralympic Games, all Games participants (including members of Team USA delegations ("Participants")) will be subject to IOC or IPC rules and local laws (and perhaps applicable International Federation ("IF") and Pan American Sports rules) that may address Demonstrations in certain areas (the "International Rules"). For example, the International Rules include Rule 50 of the IOC Olympic Charter and IPC Handbook Section 1 Chapter 3 subsection 2.2.¹ Team USA delegation members should make themselves familiar with these rules and the guidance issued with them.

Team USA delegation members at the Games and U.S. Trials events are also subject to the USOPC Delegation Rules, including these rules on Demonstrations (the "USOPC Rules").

SECTION 2. KEY TERMS USED IN THESE USOPC RULES

- (a) **Racial & Social Justice Demonstration ("R&S Demonstration"):** A Demonstration, which does not include any Impermissible Elements, that is explicitly aimed at (1) advancing racial and social justice; or (2) promoting the human dignity of individuals or groups that have historically been underrepresented, minoritized, or marginalized in their respective societal context. **These are examples of conduct that will be considered an R&S Demonstration:**
- Wearing a hat or face mask with phrases such as "Black Lives Matter" or "Trans Lives Matter" or words such "equality," "justice," "peace," "respect," "solidarity, or "inclusion."
 - Orally advocating for equity/equal rights for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) individuals, or other historically underrepresented, marginalized or minoritized populations.
 - Holding up one's fist at the start line or on the podium.
 - Kneeling on the podium or at the start line during the national anthem.
 - Advocating for equal treatment of underrepresented, marginalized, or minoritized groups around the world, or against systemic barriers to such equal treatment.
 - Advocating for communities free from police violence, or against systemic police discrimination against Black individuals or other marginalized populations.
- (b) **Impermissible Elements:** Any element of a Demonstration that (a) advocates specifically against other people, their dignity, or their rights, which may include Hate Speech, Racist Propaganda, or threatening, abusive, or Discriminatory Remarks; (b) physically impedes or discourages Games or medal ceremony

¹ See Section 12. Reference Links for information on the IOC Olympic Charter, IPC Handbook, and PanAm Sports Constitution.

participation by another Participant; (c) causes physical harm to others or to property; or (d) violates applicable laws. Impermissible Elements include, for example, the use of slurs, discriminatory remarks or gestures that denigrate, ridicule, or mock a person or persons based upon their race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, economic status, nationality, or country of origin.

These are further examples of conduct that will be considered an Impermissible Element:

- Wearing a hat or face mask with a hate symbol or hate speech on it.²
- Using language expressing hatred or Discriminatory Remarks towards a historically minoritized or marginalized group, including but not limited to Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), LGBTQ+ individuals, and individuals with disabilities.
- Making hand gestures affiliated with hate groups, like white supremacist or terrorist signs.
- Violent protests or acts that damage property at the Games Venue or physically threaten or harm other people.
- Actions/behaviors physically impeding athletes' right to compete, such as blocking lanes by laying on a track or otherwise interfering with a competition.
- Display of historically discriminatory signs or flags, such as the Confederate flag.
- Defacing, distorting, or causing physical harm to a national flag.
- Protests aimed explicitly against a specific country, organization, person, or group of people.

(c) Demonstration: Any verbal or non-verbal communication that involves expression of views or grievances, engaged in by one or more persons; for example, speech, hand gestures, the posting or wearing of signs, flags or banners, messages communicated via clothing, or body tattoos, that express or communicate a point of view or grievance.

(d) Discriminatory Remarks: Acts, behaviors, or speech that jeopardize the equitable treatment of individuals and groups, with particular focus on those that have historically been underrepresented, minoritized, or marginalized in their respective societal setting.

(e) Hate groups: Any group that promotes hatred, hostility, and/or violence towards a historically underrepresented, minoritized, or marginalized population.

(f) Hate Speech: Any kind of communication in speech, writing, or behavior that attacks or uses pejorative language or Discriminatory Remarks with reference to a person or a group on the basis of their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, color, descent, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, ability, or other identity factor.

(g) Historically underrepresented, minoritized, and/or marginalized groups: Groups in a given societal context that have been the target of systematic injustice, inequitable treatment, and limited access to societal representation.

(h) Other Demonstrations: A Demonstration other than an R&S Demonstration, whether or not it includes Impermissible Elements (e.g., supporting or opposing a political group).

² A list of recognized hate symbols can be found at <https://www.adl.org/hate-symbols>.

(i) Participants: Any athlete, staff, support personnel, or other person who has access to athletes or athlete areas during the Olympic or Paralympic Games.

(j) Racial justice: Intentional actions for the equitable treatment of racially minoritized individuals and groups with the goal of eliminating racial inequities, deconstructing systemic racism, and counteracting racist narratives that target racially minoritized individuals, including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

(k) Racist Propaganda: Acts, behaviors, or speech relying on racist beliefs and ideas that promote racial injustice, cultivate racist narratives, disguise systemic racism, and/or target the human dignity of racially minoritized individuals or populations.

(l) Social justice: Intentional actions for the equitable treatment of individuals and groups that have historically been underrepresented, minoritized, or marginalized in their respective societal setting.

(m) Games Venue: On the podium, field of play, Opening and Closing Ceremonies, areas requiring an official athlete-participant credential, or other publicly visible and restricted area at a venue designated by the IOC, IPC, or the Organizing Committee as an Olympic or Paralympic Trials or Games venue. “Games Venue” does not include the Athletes Village. “Organizing Committee” can include an NGB, USOPC, and local organizing group for trials events.

(n) Games Village (the Athletes Village): The official Olympic and Paralympic Athletes Villages, and all satellite locations considered by the IOC or IPC to constitute an Olympic or Paralympic Athletes Village.

SECTION 3. STATEMENT OF USOPC RULES

The USOPC will not sanction Participants who engage in R&S Demonstrations at U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Trials, and Games Venues. Impermissible Elements and Other Demonstrations will be subject to USOPC enforcement and possible sanctions as provided in these Rules³. If a Participant engages in a Demonstration that includes Impermissible Elements at a Games or Trials Venue, then the USOPC will determine a proportionate consequence for the violation of these Rules based on the severity of the violation. The USOPC will also determine, on a case-by-case basis, proportionate consequences for Other Demonstrations.

For the purposes of the USOPC Rules, in addition to engaging in R&S Demonstrations at Games or Trials Venues Participants may of course use their voice and expressions in other forums, like the press, social media, and areas outside of the Games and Trials Venues such as the Athletes Village, and are encouraged to use their voices and expressions for causes they believe in. The USOPC will continue to publicly support Participants’ right to engage in R&S Demonstrations under these Rules and will not make any public statement intended to undercut or indicate a lack of support for a Participant’s R&S Demonstration.

Reminder: Third Parties. Participants should be aware of the possibility that third parties may react to a R&S Demonstration themselves, that some of these reactions may be negative, that the USOPC will not

³No rule can provide specific or definitive guidance for every possible demonstration. If a Participant has a question about a particular demonstration or element of these Rules, they can reach out to USOPC Athlete Services at athleteservices@usopc.org to obtain guidance. They also can reach out to the Athlete Ombuds at: ombudsman@usathlete.org or 719-866-5000.

be able to prevent those third parties from making statements or taking actions of their own, and that each Participant must make their own personal decision about the risks and benefits that may be involved. The USOPC has resources available through Athlete Services to support athletes (e.g., mental health, security). Refer to Section 10. RESOURCES for information regarding access to Athlete Services.

Reminder: International Rules. These USOPC Rules are not the same as the International Rules. The International Rules are set out and communicated by the IOC and IPC and local authorities (and possibly the IF). The USOPC has no control over those rules or their enforcement. You should be aware of and familiar with the International Rules, which may include restrictions on Demonstrations at Games Venues or other areas. Nothing in these USOPC Rules can replace or limit the International Rules. The USOPC Rules set out what the USOPC itself will support or restrict, and how.

SECTION 4. RULES ENFORCEMENT

The USOPC is responsible for the enforcement of the USOPC Rules and will have designated personnel on-site at each Games and Trials Venue to enforce these Rules using procedures developed in advance. The IOC/IPC/IF will enforce the International Rules. In all cases, the USOPC will coordinate with the IOC/IPC/IF so that review of any violation of either or both sets of rules will be handled for Participants as simply and clearly as possible. USOPC representatives will communicate directly with Participants, NGBs, and Participants' representatives to help understand outcomes and rights of review, and the USOPC Sport & Athlete Services team will be available to provide further support for athletes under all scenarios. The Team USA Athletes' Commission is available to provide support around athlete rights, and the team USA Office of Athlete Ombuds is available for independent, confidential advice. The USOPC encourages NGBs to adopt similar rules to govern their own events.

The USOPC carries out its decisions and enforcement under the USOPC Rules this way:

(a) Real-Time Enforcement On Impermissible Elements and Other Demonstration

If a USOPC representative observes a Demonstration or receives a report that a Demonstration is underway at a Games Venue, it will be reviewed promptly, in accordance with the established procedures, to determine if the Demonstration includes Impermissible Elements or constitutes an Other Demonstration.⁴

Participants who engage in a Demonstration may be notified that the Demonstration is subject to review by the USOPC and may result in sanctioning if it is determined to be in violation of the USOPC Rules. The USOPC, however, will not prohibit a demonstrating athlete participating in the event or future events unless:

- The Demonstration could cause imminent physical harm to people and/or property or,
- Is a violation of local laws, or ⁵

⁴ The USOPC may review an athlete's apparel and equipment before an athlete enters the Games Venue to determine if any logos, markings, or other physical Demonstrations include Impermissible Elements or are Other Demonstrations.

⁵ Information regarding freedom of speech and demonstrations local to Chile/France. Add link as footnote and in final section for reference link

- The USOPC enforcement process (including opportunity for a hearing before the Games Hearing Panel) has been conducted and the final determination was to remove the athlete from the competition.

Reminder: International Real-Time Enforcement. The IOC or IPC (and/or the IF) will be enforcing the International Rules, and they will make their own decision on whether to prevent a Demonstrating Participant from participating in their event. The USOPC cannot control this process or their decisions.

(b) Post-Demonstration Enforcement of Ban on Impermissible Elements and Other Demonstrations

If a real-time determination cannot be made regarding whether a Demonstration includes Impermissible Elements or constitutes an Other Demonstration, then a USOPC representative will gather available information regarding the nature of the completed Demonstration to be reviewed, in accordance with the established procedures, to determine if the Demonstration includes Impermissible Elements or constitutes an Other Demonstration.

SECTION 5. POTENTIAL SANCTIONS FOR VIOLATION OF THE USOPC RULES

The USOPC may impose a proportionate consequence on a Participant who violates these USOPC Rules, including, but not limited to:

- (a) A warning;
- (b) Limitations on further access to Games Venues or the Athletes Village;
- (c) Expulsion from the sporting event, including trials, continental Games, Olympic and Paralympic Games;
- (d) Loss of the privilege to participate with a US delegation in future Olympic, Paralympic, Pan American, Parapan American, and Youth Olympic Games, as well as other USOPC-sponsored events;
- (e) Denial of funding from the USOPC Athlete Support Programs or access to other USOPC sponsored programs for which the Team member may be eligible; or
- (f) Performance of a specified task or tasks, such as a formal written and/or oral apology or completion of training or education on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Reminder: International Rules Sanctions. Any sanctions under the International Rules will be determined by the IOC/IPC (and/or the IF), not the USOPC. The USOPC will not participate in imposing any sanctions on R&S Demonstrations. In imposing any sanctions, itself, the USOPC will take into account any IOC/IPC/IF sanctions also being imposed.

SECTION 6. SANCTIONS REVIEW

After a USOPC representative obtains information related to the occurrence of alleged Impermissible Elements or Other Demonstration, a rules application panel comprised of external DE&I experts and USOPC staff will convene to determine if a violation occurred and decide the appropriate sanction to be recommended within 48-72 hours. The USOPC will notify the Participant of its recommendation and the opportunity to voluntarily accept the sanction or to request a hearing before a relevant Trials or Games Hearing Panel. If a Participant does not request a hearing within the time period allowed, the sanction

will be deemed accepted and will go into effect. Hearing details are set forth in the Dispute Resolution Policy and Procedure.

Reminder: International Rules Procedures. The IOC and IPC set their own disciplinary and review procedures that apply to all Participants. The USOPC does not have control over these. The USOPC will work to help Participants understand any rights they may have under the International Rules. Refer to Section 12. RESOURCES for information on the USOPC teams available for support.

SECTION 7. REPORTING VIOLATION

Any individual may report an alleged violation of these Rules to a USOPC representative on site at the Trials or Delegation Event, or by contacting trialsconduct@usopc.org at any time before completion of the Trials event or Delegation Event.

SECTION 8. DISSEMINATION OF THESE RULES

Each NGB must provide a copy of these Rules to all anticipated Team USA Delegation members.

SECTION 9. USOPC RULES IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW

Beginning in 2022 and at least each Olympic and Paralympic quadrennium thereafter, the USOPC will commission a detailed review and report on these USOPC Rules and their implementation, to identify any areas for improvement or clarification. This review will include at least the language of the Rules themselves, and the specific decisions and outcomes of the decision making, and dispute resolution processes contemplated herein. This review and report will be sought from a group of athlete and independent individuals, including individuals with expertise and experience in the fields of racial and social justice and diversity, equity, and inclusion. The report may include recommendations from that group.

SECTION 10. RESOURCES

- **[Team USA Athletes' Commission](#):** Serves as the representative group and voice for Team USA Athletes. Advocates for the interest of Team USA Athletes, can help you navigate questions, concerns, or feedback
- **[Athlete Ombuds](#):** Offers independent, confidential advice to elite athletes regarding their rights and responsibilities and assists athletes with a broad range of questions, disputes, complaints and concerns.
- **[USOPC Sport & Athlete Services Team](#):** Helps navigate contacts at the USOPC and connects Team USA athletes to the right resources and benefits.
- **[USOPC Mental Health Services](#)**
The mental health services team can help prioritize your mental health and well-being. Visit TeamUSA.org/mentalhealth for information on available resources specific to Team USA athletes – including a mental health provider registry and 24/7 support line 719-866-CALL (or 2255). You can also reach out to our mental health services team at mentalhealth@usopc.org.

SECTION 11. REFERENCE LINKS

- [International Paralympic Committee \(IPC\) Handbook](#)
- [International Olympic Committee \(IOC\) Olympic Charter](#)
- [Pan American Sports Constitution](#)
- [ADL Hate Symbols](#)