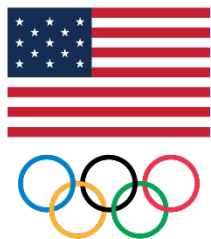


**United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee  
Certification Review Group**



**Certification Renewal Recommendation Report for USA Hockey  
June 19, 2024**



**UNITED STATES  
OLYMPIC & PARALYMPIC  
COMMITTEE**

## USA Hockey Certification Renewal Executive Summary

In March 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 USA Hockey.<sup>1</sup> The CRG evaluated USA Hockey 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 in Good Standing.

The CRG's review of USA Hockey 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. While NGB Audit provided some observations to help USA Hockey improve its operations, USA Hockey demonstrated compliance in all these areas during the Compliance Audit.

CRG members agreed that USA Hockey meets the requirements and expectations for an NGB. In its discussions regarding USA Hockey's interactions with the USOPC, the CRG did not identify any operational or cultural concerns that would prevent the organization's continued certification. Overall, in the areas in which the CRG members interacted with USA Hockey, the CRG had a favorable view of USA Hockey's operations.

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

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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 – USA Hockey](#), November 30, 2023.

## **Organizational Overview**

USA Hockey is the USOPC-certified NGB for the sports of ice hockey and sled hockey. The mission of USA Hockey is “to promote a safe and fun learning experience, supporting the growth of hockey with all of its participants and enthusiasts by encouraging, educating, developing and administering all aspects of the sport.”<sup>3</sup> USA Hockey is the United States’ representative to the International Ice Hockey Federation, the international federation that governs ice hockey, and World Para Ice Hockey, which oversees sled hockey. USA Hockey’s national office is located in Colorado Springs, Colorado.<sup>4</sup>

## **Certification History**

USA Hockey was originally certified in January 2021.<sup>5</sup> This is the first time USA Hockey has undergone a certification review.

## **Certification Exceptions<sup>6</sup>**

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

## **Athlete Representation Approval and Exceptions<sup>7</sup>**

USA Hockey has not requested any exceptions or alterations to the athlete representation requirements or athlete representative definitions.

## **Certification Review<sup>8</sup>**

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

The CRG determined that USA Hockey is fulfilling the Governance and Compliance-related responsibilities of an NGB. USA Hockey has adopted and enforces all policies required by the NGB Compliance Standards; has made these policies publicly available on its website; and has defined procedures to address violations of these policies. In addition, USA Hockey has not been the subject of any formal compliance-related complaints filed with the USOPC’s Dispute Resolution Unit in the last four years.

The CRG received positive athlete feedback regarding USA Hockey’s governance. Athletes shared feedback 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 USA Hockey about resource allocation decisions would be appreciated.

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<sup>3</sup> “USA Hockey Strategic Plan”, [USA Hockey 2023-2024 Annual Guide](#).

<sup>4</sup> [About Us](#), USA Hockey website.

<sup>5</sup> Refer to the Appendix for details about the initial certification of NGBs.

<sup>6</sup> Refer to the Appendix for details on exception requests to the NGB Compliance Standards.

<sup>7</sup> Refer to the Appendix for details on athlete representation exception requests.

<sup>8</sup> Refer to the Appendix for details on the review standards and process for information related to the Compliance Audit.

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

USA Hockey 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.

NGB Audit made an observation related to areas where USA Hockey could incorporate best practices for its financial policies and procedures during the 2023 Compliance Audit. USA Hockey has incorporated the recommendations from those observations into revised policies for approval by its board in 2024. USA Hockey's incorporation of these best practices is a demonstration of its commitment to organizational excellence.

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

USA Hockey 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.

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

In April 2022, the Center conducted its most recent Administrative Audit<sup>9</sup> of USA Hockey's implementation of policies required by the SafeSport Code and the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies, which resulted in no findings or directions for corrective actions.

The Center conducted an Event Audit<sup>10</sup> of USA Hockey in June 2023 at the 2023 Girls 16/17 BioSteel Player Development Camp. The event audit resulted in no findings or directions for corrective actions.

## ***Sport Performance***

USA Hockey 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. USA Hockey established selection procedures and executed them effectively to name and train Team USA athletes for Delegation Events, where its Olympic and Paralympic teams have been highly successful.

## ***Operational Performance***

The CRG determined that USA Hockey is meeting all Operational Performance standards. The organization demonstrates managerial capability to administer its sport, keeps current insurance policies, and demonstrates financial sustainability. USA Hockey has implemented a whistleblower and anti-retaliation policy and grievance procedures that meet the NGB Compliance Standards and allow members to report concerns and have them resolved.

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<sup>9</sup> [US Center for SafeSport Administrative Audit Report](#) – USA Hockey, April 12, 2022.

<sup>10</sup> [US Center for SafeSport Event Audit Report](#) – USA Hockey, June 24-25, 2023.

USA Hockey 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. USA Hockey submitted its action plan to the USOPC with sufficient detail to meet the NGB Compliance Standards. The action plan includes six overall goals targeting specific groups and measurements of success. USA Hockey's goals include increasing participation of underrepresented groups among staff, youth and amateur athletes, and volunteers; creating and promoting opportunities to showcase women's hockey; and increasing leadership opportunities within USA Hockey for individuals from diverse backgrounds. USA Hockey is also an active participant in the USOPC's DE&I programming.

## **Conclusion**

The CRG concluded that USA Hockey is performing satisfactorily based on input from the CRG members and the results of the NGB Audit team's 2023 Compliance Audit. There are no outstanding areas of significant concern affecting the NGB's certification status at this time. Accordingly, the CRG recommends that USA Hockey's certification as a member organization of the USOPC be renewed with a rating of Renewal in Good Standing

## 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>11</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>12</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>13</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>11</sup> See §220521(a) of the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act.

<sup>12</sup> NGB Certification Policy, Section 1.

<sup>13</sup> The CRG uses a four-year lookback period during this review process.