



Member, United States
Olympic & Paralympic Committee

September 11, 2023

To the North American and Caribbean Handball Confederation,

We, the Women's National Team of USA Team Handball, are writing this letter following the 2023 Pan-American Games Second Chance Qualifier. As evidenced by videos captured, some of which are available for immediate review on social media channels, the playing conditions during the competition were unsafe for athletes and unfit for any, let alone National Team and Continental, handball competition.

Despite the event results and our acceptance thereof, we recognize a unique opportunity to open up a broader discussion about the playing conditions, and we see being on the "same page" about the events that took place to be a critical first step. We look forward to discussing better experiences for all team handball athletes in our region, to collaborate as confederation members, and to seek out direct, specific, and actionable ways to improve playing conditions going forward.

To be clear, our frustration is not aimed at the Dominican Republic Handball Federation and its athletes, as we empathize with the challenges of supporting a sport and organizing a competition with limited resources. We are grateful for the support they showed us during our training camp, and for the opportunity to compete alongside the athletes. Rather, our frustrations arise from a lack of comprehensive protocol and procedures that would safeguard athlete safety and the integrity of competition.

With this in mind, we request the following:

- Minimum venue requirements regarding court safety for a country wishing to host any official competition in accordance with IHF regulations, regardless of whether said competition is IHF-sanctioned. Specifically, that the floor provides "adequate grip to allow players to make safe changes in direction during the game" (Appendix 8: Slip Resistance of IHF Technical Regulations for the floor);
- Clear procedures on how and when to retest gameday court safety in extenuating circumstances (e.g. inclement weather, building integrity, etc.); and
- The publication and distribution of a full-cycle calendar of competitions, complete with set dates or date ranges and the host countries, allowing federations ample time to adequately prepare both their teams and their competition venues.

We hope that you will take these requests under serious consideration and engage with us and other NACHC members in productive solutions. We are all united in our desire to see handball grow and thrive in our region, and ensuring quality competitions where athletes feel that their safety and well-being are a priority is an essential step in achieving this.

Sincerely,

USA Team Handball's Women's National Team

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