

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES
OF
UNITED STATES FIELD HOCKEY ASSOCIATION
EFFECTIVE DATE: SEPTEMBER 16, 2025

1. Overview

This policy is meant to work in conjunction with USA Field Hockey's Bylaws, Athlete Safety Policy, and Response and Resolution Policy, along with the standards from the U.S. Center for SafeSport and U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee. The policy outlines various forms of complaints that USA Field Hockey may receive and how they are handled. In the event of a conflict between any of these regulations and the USA Field Hockey's Bylaws, the Bylaws should govern. In the event of a conflict between the Athlete Safety Policy and any other regulations other than the Bylaws, the Athlete Safety Policy should govern.

The USA Field Hockey (USFHA) Bylaws give the USFHA Judicial and Ethics Committee jurisdiction over complaints and grievances that must be handled by the organization. This policy outlines the investigation procedures and hearing and appeals procedures that the Committee uses.

THIS VERSION OF THE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES, DATED SEPTEMBER 16, 2025, SHALL PREEMPT AND FULLY REPLACE ANY PRECEDING VERSIONS OF THESE RULES. THESE ARE THE APPLICABLE PROCEDURES AND SHALL BE FULLY ENFORCEABLE UNLESS AND UNTIL A SUBSEQUENT VERSION SPECIFICALLY WITHDRAWS AND REPLACES THESE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES.

2. Types of Grievances

A. Administrative Grievance

USFHA or any member of USFHA may file a complaint pertaining to any matter within the cognizance of USFHA, including but not limited to any alleged violation of or grievance concerning: (i) any USFHA rule or regulation, (ii) any provision of USFHA's Bylaws, or (iii) any provision of the Sports Act relating to USFHA's recognition as an NGB.

Administrative grievances must be filed within 180 days of the occurrence.

A fee of \$50 must be filed with an administrative grievance.

B. Right to Compete

Any athlete, coach, trainer, manager, administrator or official may file a complaint pertaining to any alleged denial, or alleged threat of denial, of that individual's opportunity to compete or participate in a USFHA sanctioned competition.

Right to compete complaints must be filed within 180 days of the occurrence.

A fee of \$50 must be filed with any right to compete grievance.

C. Complaints Involving Selection to Participate in a Competition

Where a complaint is filed involving selection of an individual to participate in a competition, the complaint shall include a list of all other individuals, together with their contact information, that may be adversely affected by a decision rendered on the complaint as well as the specific rule or procedure upon which the complaint is based. The hearing panel shall determine which additional individuals must receive notice of the complaint. The complainant shall then be responsible for providing appropriate notice to these individuals. Any individual so notified then

shall have the option to participate in the proceeding as a party. If an individual is notified of the complaint, then that individual shall be bound by the decision of the hearing panel even though the individual chose not to participate as a party.

A fee of \$50 must be filed with any selection grievance.

D. Ethical Complaints

USFHA, any member of USFHA, or any parent or guardian of a minor USFHA member, may file a complaint pertaining to any matter within the cognizance of USFHA, including but not limited to any alleged violation of or grievance concerning the: (i) Code of Conduct, and/or (ii) Conflict of Interest Policy.

Complaints must be filed within 180 days of the main occurrence upon which the complaint is based

E. SafeSport and Athlete Safety Complaints

The Center accepts all reports of sexual abuse and child abuse within the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement. Reasonable suspicion of sexual misconduct or harassment, child abuse (including child sexual abuse), or intimate relationships involving an imbalance of power must be reported to the U.S. Center for SafeSport here: [Report a Concern | U.S. Center for SafeSport \(uscenterforsafesport.org\)](https://www.uscenterforsafesport.org).

The Center also accepts reports of emotional and physical misconduct (including but not limited to bullying, hazing, stalking, and harassment) within the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement. USA Field Hockey members can also report emotional and physical misconduct directly to USFHA.

For more information on SafeSport policies, please review USFHA's Athlete Safety Policy, Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies, and the Response and Resolution Policy, [all of which are available on the USFHA website](#).

SafeSport complaints can be made at any time after the incident. There is no fee required to file a SafeSport complaint.

- F. A complaint arising under any of the categories above may not include matters within the exclusive jurisdiction of the IOC, WADA, FIH, USOPC, USADA or the U.S. Center for Safe Sport.

The construction and application of these rules are governed by the state of Colorado

3. Judicial and Ethics Committee Responsibilities under these Grievance Procedures

- A. The Judicial and Ethics Committee is responsible for the following:
- i. Generally administer and oversee all administrative grievances and right to compete matters filed with USFHA.
 - ii. Generally administer and oversee all grievances related to any alleged violations of the U.S. Center for SafeSport's rules, policies, and procedures over which the U.S. Center for

SafeSport has not exercised jurisdiction, pursuant to the procedures set forth in this document.

- iii. Generally administer and oversee all grievances related to any violation of USFHA's Athlete Safety Policy over which the U.S. Center for SafeSport has not exercised jurisdiction.
- iv. Oversee implementation of, and compliance with, USFHA Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy.
- v. Report to Board of Directors on all Ethical Issues.
- vi. Identify individuals who would be fair and impartial and who would have the qualifications and ability to serve on hearing panels. Review and examine matters of ethical impropriety and make recommendations on such matters to the Board of Directors.
- vii. Review and provide guidance on ethical questions presented to the committee by the Board, officers, standing committee, and task force and working group members, staff, volunteers and members of USFHA.
- viii. Appoint a panel of independent individuals to hear and render a decision on grievances and disciplinary matters; and if disinterested, sit on hearing panels; and
- ix. Perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Board.

4. Manner of Filing

Grievances may be filed with the Executive Director, the Judicial and Ethics Committee Chair, or the Executive Director's designee.

The complaint must be written in clear and concise language, preferably in numbered paragraphs, setting out: (i) the full name and identifying membership information of the individual (ii) the alleged violation, grievance, denial or threat to deny, and (iii) the remedy requested. USA Field Hockey also accepts informal complaints, though informal reports may take longer to process, due to follow-up correspondence. Informal complaints must be followed up via email confirming that the claimant wants to move forward with the complaint.

The claimant may also attach supporting evidence and documentation to support the allegation. The complaint shall be served on the Judicial and Ethics Committee Chair or the Executive Director by certified mail or by return-receipt email.

A. SafeSport Complaints

Reports to both the Center for SafeSport and to USA Field Hockey can be made anonymously.

Report a Concern to the Center:

- Online: [Click Here](#)
- Phone: 833-5US-SAFE (833-587-7233)

Reporting to USA Field Hockey:

- Email: fieldhockeysafe@usafieldhockey.com
- Form: [Safe Sport Misconduct Reporting Form](#)

Reporting alleged criminal conduct to USA Field Hockey or the Center does not satisfy any individual mandatory reporting requirements under state or federal law. Each state has its own reporting requirements, which are available here: [State Statutes Search - Child Welfare Information Gateway](#).

For cases that do not include child abuse or sexual misconduct, sending an email to fieldhockeysafe@usafieldhockey.com satisfies the requirements of filing a complaint.

5. Grievance Procedures

A. Review and Investigation Process

- i. Recipient of complaint must ensure it is received by both the Chair of the Judicial and Ethics Committee and the Executive Director in a timely manner.
- ii. Director of Membership, Safe Sport, and Governance to log on Grievance Tracking Sheet and track process through to closure.
- iii. Director of Membership, Safe Sport, and Governance or Judicial and Ethics Committee Chair to notify Respondent of complaint within fourteen (14) business days and to include that the parties have the right to representation by a lawyer. Notice to include the charges or alleged violations, with specificity and in writing.
- iv. Judicial and Ethics Committee is responsible for conducting the review of the complaint, and the review must be conducted by disinterested and impartial parties
- v. Judicial and Ethics Committee Chair to arrange conference call for Committee, including the Director of Membership, Safe Sport, and Governance. If a conference call is not possible, the Committee may correspond by email. In this call, the Committee determines who will be responsible for the investigation. The investigation team can be made up of three to six members of the Committee. The investigation team must select a lead.
- vi. The Committee to review the report to determine whether it is an actionable claim for USA Field Hockey to resolve under its processes. The Committee may dismiss the claim without a full review for the following reasons:
 - a. The Claim is filed too late;
 - b. The filing fee has not been paid;
 - c. Reporting party declined to participate in the review;
 - d. Insufficient evidence to support claims;
 - e. No remedy available, even if claims were found to be supported; and/or
 - f. Other extenuating circumstances
- vii. The investigation team to arrange conference call with both Complainant and Respondent, utilizing the intake interview checklist, in order to ask for any supporting information. This information must be shared with the Judicial and Ethics Committee.
 - a. This may be done prior to the Judicial and Ethics Committee meeting or can take place for a defined period (i.e. 15 minutes per person) during the meeting.
- viii. The investigation team to review all relevant documentation and policies.
- ix. The investigation team to interview witnesses.
- x. The investigation team to review case and make a recommendation to the full Judicial and Ethics Committee for review.
- xi. Judicial and Ethics Committee to vote on recommendation.
 - a. The individual receiving disciplinary action, if applicable, must be provided the opportunity for a hearing. The hearing process is outlined in the subsequent section.
- xii. Judicial and Ethics Committee to share decision with Board of Directors Chair.
- xiii. USA Field Hockey staff representative to notify Respondent and Complainant in writing of outcome and the process to appeal the outcome.
- xiv. The process of the investigation and/or hearing panel must be completed in a timely but thorough manner, not to exceed 90 days from the date of filing without just cause for delay.

- xv. All documents related to the case are retained electronically by a USA Field Hockey staff representative throughout and following the investigation. This includes the initial report, email correspondence, text messages, and evidence.

B. Hearing Process

- i. The hearing is initiated by the complainant submitting a form that includes the information below to the Executive Director, the Judicial and Ethics Committee Chair, or their designee:
- ii. Full name and identifying membership information.
- iii. Alleged grounds of non-compliance or violation.
- iv. A summary or description of supporting evidence, including potential witnesses, and/or documentation to support the allegation.
- v. Judicial and Ethics Committee to appoint the disinterested and impartial members of the hearing panel, which consists of three (3) individuals, one (1) of which must be a USA Field Hockey 10 Year Athlete, and one (1) of which must be a lawyer. The Judicial and Ethics Committee Chair appoints the Chair of the hearing panel. Judicial and Ethics Committee members may be appointed to and serve on the hearing panel.
 - a. Panel members to be disclosed to the party in a reasonable time in advance of the hearing.
 - b. Members of the panel need not be members of USFHA or involved in the sport of field hockey but must have no inherent conflicts of interest or connection with the complainant on either a personal or professional level, either directly or indirectly.
 - c. Hearing panel appointments are subject to an objection from either the complaining party or responding party on the grounds of a conflict of interest which is believed to be disqualifying. Objections to be handled using the following process:
 - i. The objecting party may report the alleged conflict of interest to the Judicial and Ethics Committee in the seven (7) days following the parties' notification of hearing panel appointment.
 - ii. The Judicial and Ethics Committee to review the objecting party's report and, taking all investigative steps necessary, determine whether an actual or potential conflict of interest exists.
 - 1. If the Conflict involves a member of the Judicial and Ethics Committee, the Committee to convene without that member.
 - iii. If the Ethics and Judicial Committee determines that an actual or potential conflict of interest exists, the hearing panel member will be disqualified and a new hearing panel member will be appointed to replace the disqualified hearing panel member. The replacement hearing panel member shall be required to complete all disclosure requirements and is similarly subject to challenge by the parties as outlined in this section.
 - iv. USA Field Hockey's Conflict of Interest Policy is available on [USA Field Hockey's website](#).
 - d. Both parties may have a single 30-day continuance for any reason. Any further continuance will only be granted for good cause shown.
- vi. All documents related to the case are retained by the USA Field Hockey staff representative throughout and following the investigation. This includes the initial report, email correspondence, text messages, and evidence.
- vii. The legal rules of evidence are not strictly enforced; instead, rules of evidence generally accepted in administrative proceedings shall be applicable in the hearing.

C. Pre-Hearing Process

USA Field Hockey to provide notice to any respondent(s), in writing, of the proposed action, charges, or alleged violation with any supporting documentation filed by the filing party, and the consequences or remedy requested if a violation is determined to have occurred.

- i. Delivery of the notice to the respondent within a reasonable time after receipt by USA Field Hockey, not to exceed fourteen (14) business days, without just cause for delay.
- ii. Opportunity for the respondent to submit an answer, such that the respondent may provide a defense or reasons why the matter should not be taken on by the NGB.
- iii. Delivery of the answer to the filing party within a reasonable time before the hearing.
- iv. Notice that the parties have the right to have a legal representative.
- v. Notice of the identity of any witnesses that will appear at the hearing to all parties and distribution of evidence to all parties within ten (10) days of the hearing to allow for the parties to fully prepare for the proceedings.
- vi. The Hearing Panel may also decide, at its sole discretion, to order a pre-hearing scheduling conference with the parties to agree on the process for the hearing or decide any procedural issue in advance of the hearing. The Hearing Panel may also decide, at its sole discretion, that it can decide the case based on written submissions and that an oral hearing is unnecessary.

D. Hearing Schedule

- i. Hearing to be conducted at a time and place such that all parties are able to attend. The hearing can be held electronically if so ordered by the Hearing Panel.
- ii. Hearing Panel to hear from both Complainant and Respondent with the opportunity to ask for any supporting information.
- iii. The Complainant bears the burden of proving alleged violations by a preponderance of the evidence.
- iv. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Hearing Panel will review the evidence presented to determine whether the Complainant has met its burden of proof.
- v. A decision will be determined by a majority vote of the Hearing Panel.
- vi. Hearing Panel to write a summary of the hearing and the Hearing Panel's decision within thirty (30) days of the hearing.
- vii. Hearing Panel to share decision with Judicial and Ethics Committee Chair, Board of Directors Chair, and the Director of Membership, Safe Sport and Governance.
- viii. Director of Membership, Safe Sport, and Governance, or their designee, to report decision, consequences, or remedy to Complainant and respondent.
- ix. The process of the hearing must be completed in a timely but thorough manner, not to exceed 90 days from the date of filing without just cause for delay.

E. Informal Resolution Process

Working with the Judicial and Ethics Committee, the parties may agree to an informal resolution before the hearing takes place. If both parties agree to the informal resolution, the report will be considered closed as soon as any disciplinary actions are completed if necessary. Reports closed with an informal resolution are not eligible to be reopened unless new information is discovered. Documents related to informal resolutions are also retained by USA Field Hockey staff for record keeping.

6. Expedited Procedures

In the event that a Complainant demonstrates in writing that an expedited process is necessary because the complaint relates to a competition that is scheduled such that compliance with regular procedures would not be likely to produce a sufficiently timely decision to do justice to the affected parties, the Judicial and Ethics Committee in its sole discretion is authorized to order that the complaint be heard and decided within forty-eight (48) hours of the filing of the complaint. In such a case, the Hearing Panel is authorized to hear and decide the complaint pursuant to such procedures as are necessary, but fair to the parties involved.

7. Arbitration

USA Field Hockey will submit to binding arbitration in any controversy involving the opportunity of any §220522(4)(B) of amateur athlete, coach, trainer, manager, administrator, or official to participate in amateur athletic competition upon the demand of the USOPC or any aggrieved amateur athlete, coach, trainer, manager, administrator or official using an established major national provider of arbitration and mediation services based in the US and designated by the USOPC with the concurrence of the Team USA Athletes' Commission and the NGB Council, as required by §220522(4)(B) of the Act.

USA Field Hockey does not require an individual to exhaust other remedies before demanding arbitration.

8. Appeals

Any decision by the Judicial and Ethics Committee may be appealed to the Board of Directors. Appeals are limited to procedural issues only. The appeals process is explained below. Any decision determined through the appeals process is final and binding with no further right of appeal. The Complainant and Respondent complainant are both entitled to appeal.

A. Composition of the Appeals Panel

The Appeals Panel shall comprise of three disinterested and impartial members of the Board of Directors, one of which must be an athlete meeting the definition of 10 Year Athlete defined in the USA Field Hockey Bylaws. Members of the panel need not be members of USAFH or involved in field hockey but must have no inherent conflicts of interest or connection with the Appellant on a personal or professional level, either directly or indirectly.

The Chairman of the Board, working with applicable USA Field Hockey staff members as necessary, will appoint the members of the Appeals Panel. No Appeals Panel members may be from the original Hearing Panel. The Board of Directors maintains the discretion at any time to delegate its authority hereunder and appoint an independent panel of non-Board members to hear and decide the case.

B. Appeals to the Board of Directors

Any party complainant, who is entitled to an appeal of a decision by the Judicial and Ethics Committee, may appeal such action or decision to the Board of Directors by serving an appeal for review to the Chairman of the Board within 45 days of the written decision of the Hearing Panel, by email accompanied by a \$100.00 filing fee payable to USA Field Hockey. The fee shall be returned if the appeal is upheld but forfeited if it is rejected or abandoned.

The appeal must be in writing, signed by the Appellant or their attorney filing such appeal and shall set forth the specific procedure(s) that was violated in the hearing below to warrant an appeal, and shall contain, at a minimum, the following:

- i. Full names, membership information and addresses of the parties (if known);
- ii. Jurisdictional basis of the petition;
- iii. The grounds for the appeal;
- iv. Supporting evidence or documentation forming the basis of the appeal; and
- v. The relief sought.

C. Process

- i. The Chairman of the Board, Executive Director, or their designee to send a copy of the appeal for review to the respondent by email immediately upon receipt.
- ii. Within fourteen (14) business days following the filing of the appeal, the respondent to file a written response to the appeal with the Executive Director or their designee by email with a copy sent at the same time by email to all parties.
 - a. The appellant may within fourteen (14) business days following receipt of a copy of the response file a written rebuttal with the Executive Director or their designee by email with a copy sent at the same time by email to all parties.
- iii. The Executive Director or their designee to ensure that copies of all filings are sent to the designated members of the Appeals Panel by email before the appeals process begins.
- iv. Any party to the appeal is entitled, upon written request, to a hearing before the appeals panel; otherwise, all evidence may be submitted to the appeals panel in writing. Such a request for a hearing must be received by the Chairman of the Board or the Executive Director by email within fifteen (15) days of the filing of the appeal. In the event a hearing is held pursuant to this section, the procedures set forth below shall apply.
 - a. The rules of evidence are not strictly enforced; instead, rules of evidence generally accepted in administrative proceedings shall be applicable in the hearing.
 - b. The appeals panel to decide on the procedure, including the appropriate burden of proof. The parties are to be given a reasonable opportunity to present relevant oral or written evidence and to cross-examine witnesses. Witnesses appearing at the hearing shall be identified by the parties at least ten (10) days prior to the hearing.
 - c. The proceedings may be recorded if requested and a transcript made available to each interested party upon request within thirty (30) days of the hearing once payment is received.
- v. The hearing date should not take place more than ninety (90) days after the appeal is filed, without just cause for delay.
- vi. The hearing may be conducted in person or by video conference at a time and place (if applicable) selected by the appeals panel. Appeals panel members or their representative will try to select a time and place as convenient as possible for the parties to attend.

- vii. A final and binding decision shall be recorded and disseminated to the Board of Directors and the parties in a timely manner after the appeal panel has reviewed and discussed all the evidence before it. Decisions of the Appeals Panel will be determined by majority vote and cannot be opened for reconsideration.

9. Anti-Retaliation

USA Field Hockey has zero tolerance for retaliation against people who make good faith reports of violations, or who cooperate with investigations of those reports. That means no Affiliated Individual may threaten, harass, discriminate against, or take any negative employment (where applicable) or participation related action (e.g., discharge, demotion, suspension, non-assignment, negative review) on that basis.

Any such retaliation can be reported as described above in the same way as any other policy violation. It will be treated as a violation of this policy and the [USA Field Hockey Whistleblower and Anti-Retaliation Policy](#) may lead to serious consequences including termination of employment or participation for anyone involved in retaliation.

If USA Field Hockey finds that an employee has retaliated against an individual for reporting an allegation of physical abuse, sexual harassment, or emotional abuse, that employee must be immediately terminated or suspended without pay as required by 220509(c)(2) of the Act.

10. Resources

Individuals who wish to report concerns related to this policy as it relates to involvement in the Olympic and Paralympic Movement, or are uncomfortable reporting a concern directly to their NGB, may also submit a report using the [USOPC Integrity Portal](#). The Integrity Portal allows individuals to submit concerns to the USOPC confidentially and/or anonymously. Reports may be made online or by telephone.

Website: usopc.ethicspoint.com

Hotline: 877-404-9935

Team USA athletes may contact the Athlete Ombuds for independent and confidential advice on a variety of sport related matters, including their rights, applicable rules, policies or processes, and questions related to resolving disputes and grievances. The Athlete Ombuds can also help Team USA athletes connect with legal counsel or mental health resources if needed. All other NGB athletes (i.e., athletes competing domestically at the masters or youth level, recreational athletes, foreign athletes), are welcome to visit the Athlete Ombuds website to review informational resources and should work directly with their NGB to understand additional resources and options available to them.

Email: ombudsman@usathlete.org

Website: www.usathlete.org