

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES
OF
UNITED STATES FIELD HOCKEY ASSOCIATION
EFFECTIVE DATE: JANUARY 1, 2025

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.

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.

Types of Grievances

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.

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.

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. The hearing panel shall determine which additional individuals must receive notice of the complaint. The complaint 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.

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: (i) Code of Conduct, or (ii) Conflict of Interest Policy.

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. Reports of emotional and physical misconduct can also be reported 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 website](#).

Judicial and Ethics Committee Responsibilities

The Judicial and Ethics Committee is responsible for the following:

- Administer and oversee all administrative grievances and right to compete matters filed with USFHA.
- 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.
- 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.
- Oversee implementation of, and compliance with, USFHA Conflict of Interest Policy.
- Report to Board of Directors on all Ethical Issues.
- Review and investigate matters of impropriety and provide decisions to the Board of Directors.
- Review and provide guidance on ethical questions presented to the committee by the Board, officers, committee, task force members, staff, volunteers and members of USFHA.

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: (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 to the Judicial and Ethics Committee Chair or the Executive Director by certified mail or by email.

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.

Grievance Procedures

Review and Investigation Process

1. Recipient of complaint to ensure complaint is received by both the Chair of Judicial and Ethics Committee and Executive Director.
2. Director of Membership, Safe Sport, and Governance to log on Grievance Tracking Sheet and track process through to closure.
3. Director of Membership, Safe Sport, and Governance or Judicial and Ethics Committee Chair to notify Respondent of complaint within five working days and to include that the parties have the right to representation. Notice to include the charges or alleged violations, with specificity and in writing.
4. Judicial and Ethics Committee is responsible for conducting the review of the complaint, and the review must be conducted by disinterested and impartial parties
5. 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.
6. 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. Reporting party declined to participate in the review
 - b. Insufficient evidence to support claims
 - c. No remedy available, even if claims were found to be supported
 - d. Other extenuating circumstances
7. The investigation team to arrange conference call with both Complaint and Respondent, utilizing the intake interview checklist, and ask for any supporting information. This information to be shared with 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.
8. The investigation team to review all relevant documentation and policies
9. The investigation team to interview witnesses.
10. The investigation team to review case and make a recommendation to the Judicial and Ethics Committee for review.
11. Judicial and Ethics Committee to vote on recommendation.
 - a. If the determination and subsequent disciplinary action affects participation, the individual to be provided with the opportunity for a hearing. The hearing process is outlined in the subsequent section.
12. Judicial and Ethics Committee to share decision with Board of Directors Chair.

13. Director of Membership, SafeSport, and Governance to notify Respondent and Complainant in writing of outcome and the process to appeal the outcome.
14. The process of the investigation or hearing panel must be completed in a timely but thorough manner, not to exceed 90 days without just cause for delay.

Hearing Process

1. The hearing is initiated by the complainant submitting a form that includes the information below to the CEO, the Judicial and Ethics Committee Chair, or their designee:
 - a. Full name and identifying membership information.
 - b. Alleged grounds of non-compliance or violation.
 - c. A summary or description of supporting evidence and/or documentation to support the allegation.
2. 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. 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 complaint 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:
 1. 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.
 2. 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.
 3. 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.
 4. 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

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.

1. Delivery of the notice to the respondent within a reasonable time after receipt by USA Field Hockey, not to exceed 14 business days, without just cause for delay.
2. 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
3. Delivery of the answer to the filing party within a reasonable time before the hearing
4. Notice that the parties have the right to have a representative
5. Notice of the identity of any witnesses that will appear at the hearing to all parties and distribution of evidence to all parties within a reasonable time before the hearing for the parties to prepare for one's position in the matter.

Hearing Schedule

1. Hearing to be conducted in real-time at a time and place such that all parties are able to attend. The hearing can be held electronically.
2. Hearing Panel to hear from both Complaint and Respondent and ask for any supporting information
3. Hearing Panel to write a summary of the hearing and the Panel's decision.
4. Hearing Panel to share decision with Judicial and Ethics Committee Chair, Board of Directors Chair, and the Director of Membership, Safe Sport and Governance.
5. Director of Membership, Safe Sport, and Governance, or their designee, to report decision, consequences, or remedy to claimant and respondent.
6. The process of the hearing must be completed in a timely but thorough manner, not to exceed 90 days without just cause for delay.

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.

Expedited Procedures

Upon the request of a party, and provided that it is necessary to expedite the proceeding in order to resolve a matter relating to a competition that is so scheduled 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 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.

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.

Appeals

Any decision by the Judicial and Ethics Committee may be appealed to the Board of Directors. Appeals are limited to process concerns. The appeals process is explained below. Any decision determined through this process is final and cannot be appealed.

Composition of the Appeals Panel

The Appeals Panel shall comprise three disinterested and impartial parties, 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 complaint 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.

Appeals to the Board of Directors

Any party 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, by email accompanied by a \$50.00 filing fee payable to the USA Field Hockey. The fee shall be returned if the petition is upheld but forfeited if it is rejected or abandoned.

The appeal must be in writing, signed by the individual or their attorney making such petition and shall set forth the factual allegations, and shall contain, at a minimum, the following:

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

Process

1. The Chairman of the Board, Chief Executive Officer, or their designee to send a copy of the petition for review to the respondent by email immediately upon receipt.
2. Within five (5) business days following filing of the petition, the respondent to file a written response to the petition with the CEO or their designee by email with a copy served at the same time by email on all parties.
 - a. The petitioner may within five (5) business days following receipt of a copy of the response file a written rebuttal with the CEO or their designee by email with a copy served at the same time by email to all parties.
3. The Chief Executive Officer or their designee to see that copies of all filings are sent to the designated members of the Appeals Panel by email before the appeals panel begins.

4. 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 of the Chief Executive Officer by email within fifteen (15) days of the filing of the petition. 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 panel to decide on the procedure. The real parties in interest 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 prior to the hearing.
 - c. The proceedings may be recorded if requested and a transcript made available to each interested party upon request with thirty(30) days of the hearing and payment therefore.
5. The hearing date may not exceed ninety (90) days after the petition filing, without just cause for delay.
6. 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 or their representative will try to select a time and place convenient and equitable to most of the persons to make it practicable for all parties to attend.
7. A final and binding decision shall be recorded and disseminated to the Board of Directors and the parties in a timely manner after the panel's conclusion and subsequent discussion. Decisions of the Appeals Panel cannot be reopened for consideration.

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.

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