



Fall Board Retreat Meeting

USA Fencing (United States Fencing Association, Inc.)

Hotel Cleveland

2026-09-19 13:30 - 15:30 MDT

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I. Zoom Dial In Details

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_tgAZnLJKSSymcac38C-srg

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- Roll Call

- General Announcements
- Opening Remarks - Chair
- Moment of Remembrance: Elaine Cheris OLY, Susan Jennings
- Conflict of Interest Declaration

III. Consent Agenda.....5

1. To approve the Minutes of the June 27, 2026 Meeting of the USA Fencing Board of Directors.
2. To approve the Minutes of the June 27, 2026 Executive Session Meeting of the USA Fencing Board of Directors.
3. To approve the Committee on Committee's recommendations for Committees and Resource Groups for 2026-2028.
4. To approve the Restated USFA Grievance and Disciplinary Committee Complaint and Hearing Procedures. (Note: These revisions reflect the collective work product and input of Donald Alperstein, the Grievance & Disciplinary Committee (GDC), the CEO, General Counsel, Outside Counsel, and the USOPC)
5. To approve the USFA Black Card Policy. (Note: these have been reviewed and approved by the BCRG, the Chairs of the Tournament Committee, Ethics Committee, Referees Commission, Athlete Council, General Counsel, and Outside Counsel).
6. To accept the USA Fencing Committee Charters for DEIB, GDC, RC, and Parents Council.
7. To approve the updated FenceSafe Handbook.
8. To reappoint Emily Bian as Treasurer of USA Fencing.
9. To reappoint Peter Barton as Parliamentarian of USA Fencing.
10. To reappoint Jessica Saxon as Secretary of USA Fencing.
11. Motion: To approve the proposed amendments to the USA Fencing Bylaws developed in response to feedback received through the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee's Compliance Assistance Program (CAP), in preparation for USA Fencing's 2027 Q2 compliance audit, and to authorize the proposed amendments to be published to the USA Fencing membership for review, comment, and consideration in accordance with the applicable Bylaw amendment process.
Rationale: These proposed amendments incorporate feedback received through the USOPC Compliance Assistance Program and are intended to proactively address identified governance and compliance considerations in advance of USA Fencing's 2027 Q2 audit. Advancing these amendments now will help ensure USA Fencing is well-prepared for the audit and positioned for a successful review.
12. Motion (Dr. Rodgers at the request of Mr. Alperstein as the liaison to the Referees' Commission): To revise, reorganize, and update Referees' Commission nomination and election procedures as adopted by the Board in December 2021 and in effect since then as attached and redlined.

13. Motion: To approve updating the account authorities for the Association's First Interstate Bank account to align with organizational best practices for financial governance and internal controls.

Rationale: Currently, Glen Hollingsworth and Kate Reisinger are the only authorized signers on the Association's First Interstate Bank account and also hold full administrative authority over the account. As a result, they have the ability to make administrative changes, withdraw funds, and close the account. To strengthen internal controls and ensure continuity of operations, staff recommends: 1) Retaining Glen and Kate as the authorized signers on the account. 2) Transferring the account's administrative authority to the Chief Executive Officer and General Counsel. Under this structure, the CEO and General Counsel would have authority to manage account administration, including updating authorized signers or making other administrative changes as needed. They would not have authority to withdraw funds unless separately authorized under the bank's signature requirements. This recommendation establishes an additional layer of oversight, enhances business continuity should current signers change, and aligns the Association's banking governance with sound internal control practices. The recommendation is intended solely to strengthen organizational safeguards and is not based on any concern regarding the integrity or intentions of the current account signers.

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VI. Discussion Topics

VII. New business

A. Motion: Bylaw Review Committee.....153

Motion: To form a Committee to review the USA Fencing Bylaws on a regular cadence basis. Such a Committee shall be formed of three (3) individuals appointed by the Board of Directors at this meeting, staffed by 33% Athletes, 33% Appointed Directors, and 33% Elected Directors (other than Athlete Directors), with the Athlete member selected by the Athlete Council and the Director members appointed by the Board. The Committee's Staff Liaison shall be the General Counsel or the Secretary of the Board. The Committee's first task is to define, for the Bylaws: the cadence and timing of review; the process for submitting proposed amendments from both the membership and the Board of Directors; how the Bylaws are reviewed; the timing on which amendments are brought forward and adopted, how member feedback and engagement are considered; the manner of legal review; and the circumstances warranting an extraordinary exception to that process. The Committee may at its own volition engage guests and advisors such that it is germane to the mission of the Committee.

Rationale: Amending the Bylaws should be a serious undertaking for the organization, not a routine one; the organization requires a robust process to evaluate potential Bylaw amendments and to give due consideration to both Board and membership feedback. This Committee allows for such a process while not removing the right of a member or a Board member to bring forth a suggested amendment for the Committee to consider as part of its review.

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VIII. Old business

A. MOTION-Bylaw Amendments.....156

Motion: To publish to the USA Fencing membership for a 45 day comment period with the Board of Directors recommendation for approval, the proposed bylaw amendments (highlights below and with red strikethroughs and green annotations as part of a full draft of the proposed bylaw amendments in the appendices) that will remove the current petition process and link nomination timelines to be linked to the Summer and Winter Meetings.

Rationale: The USA Fencing Board of Directors has created a Task Force to implement an independent Nominating Committee which would align the organization with industry best practices. Alongside these upcoming reforms and last year's by-law change that ensured the Nominating Committee must nominate enough qualified candidates for each position plus two extra, the nomination process will be more secure and fair than ever. Additionally, elimination of the petition process would match 73 percent of other NGBs, further strengthening the sport's credibility with sponsors, donors, and the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee.

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B. MOTION-Independent Nominating Committee Proposal.....160

Motion: To accept the recommendations of the Independent Nominating Committee Task Force and to direct that proposed amendments to the Bylaws necessary to implement those recommendations be prepared and published for review, comment and consideration to the membership.

Rationale: The Independent Nominating Committee Task Force was sat by the Board of Directors at the February 2026 meeting; and was charged with reviewing the Nominating Committee's governance structure and has developed recommendations intended to strengthen independence from the sitting Board of Directors, transparency of process and governance effectiveness. The Nominating Committee Task Force consisted of Jackie Dubrovich OLY, Joe Inzerillo and Bruce Mitchell supported by staff members Jess Saxon and Phil Andrews.

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IX. Executive session

1. CEO Performance Review
2. International Relations Discussion

X. Good and Welfare

Opportunity for Directors to raise announcements, observations, or other matters of general interest that do not require formal Board action.

XI. Adjournment

USA Fencing Black Card Policy

Effective Date: [effective date to be determined]

Approved By: USA Fencing Board of Directors

1. Scope and Application

1.1 This Black Card Policy applies to all USA Fencing events and participants, including athletes, coaches, referees, spectators, and any other individuals present at or affiliated with USA Fencing-sanctioned activities.

1.2 It governs all black cards issued at local, regional, and national tournaments, as well as any black cards subsequently rescinded, and it encompasses both active and rescinded cards for tracking and review purposes.

1.3 The scope includes circumstances involving Level 2 Black Cards, as well as cases in which an individual receives a second Level 1 Black Card during an active probation period. The Black Card Review Group (BCRG) provides the review, with administrative support from the National Office.

2. Roles and Composition

2.1 The BCRG is constituted as follows: two members from each of the Tournament Committee, the Referees' Commission, and the Ethics Committee, and two athletes selected by the Athlete Council.

2.2 The National Office designates a staff member, the Officials Coordinator, to manage submitted black cards and notifications and to maintain records and communications.

2.3 The National Office General Counsel or Member Safety & Organizational Compliance Coordinator may serve as an advisor to the BCRG.

2.4 The BCRG Chair coordinates meetings and workflow, ensuring that annual and case-specific reviews are scheduled, conducted, and documented.

3. Reporting, Tracking, and Recordkeeping

3.1 All black cards—whether issued or rescinded and regardless of tournament level—must be reported to the National Office at the conclusion of events. This may be done either during the results upload through the USA Fencing tournament organizer dashboard or via email at information@usafencing.org.

3.2 Every black card, including those later rescinded, will be entered into a central database maintained by the National Office, along with all supporting documentation and the rationale for issuance or removal. All such reports will be made available to be reviewed by the Referees Commission, National Office and Ethics Committee.

3.3 Tournament organizers, referees, and Head Referees must submit the Black Card Form and may also submit additional detailed written reports for each black card, with particular attention to the factual basis and reasons for any rescission.

3.4 The National Office manages tracking, documentation, and notification processes to support intra-organizational transparency, oversight, and consistency.

3.5 Confidentiality Statement: All information related to black cards is to be handled with strict confidentiality. Access to the central database and related documentation is restricted to authorized personnel only. At the discretion of the National Office, limited information may be shared with individuals or entities directly involved in the review and adjudication process.

4. Black Card Criteria

4.1 Level 1 Black Card, Standard Black Card

A Level 1 Black Card is imposed for disrespect, unsportsmanlike conduct, disruptive acts, and other infractions that are not severe enough to warrant Level 2 designation.

A Level 1 Black Card triggers a 12-month probation period beginning on the date of issuance.

4.2 Level 2 Black Card, Severe Offenses

A Level 2 Black Card is imposed for repeated Level 1 offenses, deliberate violence, verbal or thematic threats, or verified cheating.

A Level 2 Black Card may result in tournament exclusion for two to six months and a 24-month probation period, with longer or more severe sanctions possible for egregious acts based on case-specific facts and BCRG review.

Accumulation of a second Level 1 Black Card during an active probation period elevates the case to Level 2 review by the BCRG.

5. Review and Disciplinary Procedures

5.1 Formal Review

A Formal Review is triggered by issuance of a Level 2 Black Card or by the accumulation of a second Level 1 Black Card during an active probation period.

Upon trigger, the National Office notifies all pertinent parties (including but not limited to the carded individual and the referee) and offers an opportunity to submit statements and supporting materials within seven business days. At the discretion of the BCRG, this timeframe may be shortened or extended if the circumstances warrant.

Carded individuals may request a hearing by video or a review based on the written submissions.

The Formal Review shall be conducted by a panel of three members of the BCRG, selected in accordance with procedures established by the BCRG. One third of the Panel shall be an athlete representative. Panel members shall disclose any actual or apparent conflicts of interest. Any panel member with such a conflict shall be recused and replaced.

The three-member panel shall review all relevant documentation, conduct the hearing (if requested), and determine an appropriate sanction to safeguard the integrity of competition and the safety of members. In conducting its review, the panel shall apply a

preponderance of the evidence standard, under which a violation is established if it is more likely than not to have occurred.

5.2 Sanction Implementation and Communication

The National Office shall communicate all decisions, sanctions, and probation terms to the affected parties and relevant committees and officials and records such decisions in the central database.

Each communication will include clear appeal rights and timelines, and any conditions associated with reinstatement or completion of probation.

5.3 Appeal

Following a Formal Review, a carded individual whose ability to participate has been affected by the sanction may request an appeal within five business days of notice of the decision.

If an appeal is not requested within the stated timeframe, the Formal Review decision shall become final.

If an appeal is requested, the appeal shall be heard by the available members of the BCRG, excluding any members who participated in the original three-member Formal Review Panel. All participating members shall disclose any actual or apparent conflicts of interest. Any member with such a conflict shall be recused from the appeal.

The review shall be based on the record developed during the Formal Review and any written submissions and exhibits submitted by the Parties. The BCRG may, in its discretion, permit additional written submissions but shall not conduct a new evidentiary hearing.

The BCRG shall apply an arbitrary and capricious standard of review, under which it will not reweigh the evidence or substitute its judgment for that of the Formal Review Panel, but will instead determine whether the prior decision lacked a rational basis, failed to consider relevant factors, relied on improper considerations, or otherwise constituted a clear error in judgment.

The BCRG may uphold, reduce, modify, or vacate sanctions, including tournament bans and probationary periods, and may issue written guidance or conditions tailored to the conduct at issue. The decision of the BCRG on appeal shall be final.

Nothing in these procedures shall preclude the referral of a matter to the Grievance and Disciplinary Committee where required by the USA Fencing Bylaws, the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee Bylaws, or where the BCRG determines that extraordinary circumstances warrant GDC review.

Except as otherwise required by the USA Fencing Bylaws or Section 9 of the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee Bylaws, there shall be no further appeals beyond the BCRG appeal process.

6.1 The BCRG shall appoint a Chair to oversee the administration and coordination of its review and appeal processes. The Chair shall be responsible for managing case flow,

facilitating timely reviews, coordinating communications, and drafting and modifying any standard operating procedures (SOP), as well as ensuring adherence to any SOP.

6.2 To be eligible for appointment as Chair, an individual must have served as a member of the BCRG for at least one full season prior to selection. This requirement is intended to ensure that the Chair possesses sufficient familiarity with the BCRG's procedures, including the end-to-end Review and Appeal process, the operational workflow, and the administrative and time commitments associated with the role.

6.3 The National Office through the Officials Coordinator shall play an active role in the selection of the Chair, given its close operational coordination with the position. In consultation with BCRG members, the National Office may help identify and recommend candidates who demonstrate consistent participation, reliability, and interest in the role. The BCRG shall consider any such recommendations but shall retain the authority to appoint a candidate for chair.

6.4 The Chair shall be appointed or reconfirmed at the start of each competitive season to account for potential turnover and to ensure continued engagement and effectiveness in the role.

7. Annual Review and Policy Updates

The BCRG will convene at least annually to review all black cards issued and rescinded during the preceding period, evaluate the effectiveness of procedures, and recommend policy updates or workflow changes to ensure continued compliance and effectiveness.

8. Administration and Effective Date

The National Office is the steward of this policy's administration, including notifications, records management, and publication of updates. This policy becomes effective on the Effective Date listed above and applies to all black cards issued on or after that date. For black cards issued prior to the Effective Date, the BCRG may apply this policy or prior policy, as appropriate, to ensure fairness and consistency, with any approach documented in the case record.

9. Contact

Questions regarding this policy or its implementation should be directed to the National Office at [contact email to be determined] and to the BCRG Chair at **blackcard@usafencing.org**.



Summer Nationals Board Meeting Minutes

USA Fencing (United States Fencing Association, Inc.)

6/27/2026 7:00 PMMDT

Attendance

Present:

Members: Donald Alperstein, Phil Andrews, Peter Barton, Emily Bian, Jade Burroughs (remote), Tabitha Chamberlin (remote), Andrey Geva, Molly Hill, Kat Holmes (remote), Joe Inzerillo (remote), Damien Lehfeldt (remote), Bruce Mitchell, Andrea Pagnanelli (remote), Maria Panyi (remote), Scott Rodgers, Abdel Salem (remote), Jess Saxon

Guests: Dan Burke, Glen Hollingsworth, Mitchell Lane, Nona Lim, Brad Suchorski, Chuck Wemple, Bryan Wendell

Absent:

Members: Lauryl Deluca, Jackie Dubrovich

I. Zoom Dial In Details

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_8MeSrO7EQYS-Up_YnsyG6Q

II. Call to Order (Presenters: Scott Rodgers)

- Roll Call
- General Announcements
- Opening Remarks - Chair
- Moment of Remembrance: Jerzy Grzyski OLY & Louis Lepie
- Conflict of Interest Declaration

Bruce Mitchell noted a potential conflict of interest with Kelly Feilke, who was in marketing for USA Climbing when Mitchell served on the Board there.

III. Consent Agenda (Presenters: Scott Rodgers)

1. To approve the Minutes of the May 30, 2026 Meeting of the USA Fencing Board of Directors.
2. To approve the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) Athlete Assistive Technology Accommodation Policy.

 [Draft-May 30, 2026 USFA Board Meeting Budget Approval - Online Bradenton Minutes.docx](#)

 [DHH Athlete Policy Final.pdf](#)

 [USA Fencing DHH Policy Example Scenarios.pdf](#)

Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) Athlete Assistive Technology Accommodation Policy dropped from the consent agenda and moved to new business.

Motion:

Motion moved by Molly Hill and motion seconded by Bruce Mitchell.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

IV. CEO, Operational & Financial Reports (Presenters: Phil Andrews, Tabitha Chamberlin)

V. Committee Updates (Presenters: Scott Rodgers)

Motion: To accept the following committee reports:

- Parent Council Reports
- DEIB Committee Update
- HOF Board Report & Election Timeline
- International Relations FIE Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes
- Ethics Committee Annual Report
- GDC Board Report
- USA Fencing Referees' Commission
Grassroots Referee Development Annual Report

 [USFA Parent Council report 2026 04 21.pdf](#)

 [USFA Parent Council report 2026 03 17.docx](#)

 [USFA Parent Council report 2026 02 17.docx](#)

 [DEIB Committee Update.pdf](#)

 [USFA Parent Council report 2026 05 26.docx](#)

 [HOF Board Report 2026-06-10 continuous.pdf](#)

 [DEIB Committee Update- Spring Review, Roster Changes, & June .pdf](#)

 [HOF Election Timeline Attachment 2026-06-10.pdf](#)

 [IRC 06 09 2026 meeting minutes.pdf](#)

 [Ethics Committee Annual Report \(6-10-2026\).pdf](#)

 [GDC Board Report 6-10-26.pdf](#)

 [Grassroots Committee Report June2026.pdf](#)

 [USFA Parent Council report 2026 06 16.docx](#)

Motion:

Motion moved by Damien Lehfeltdt and motion seconded by Molly Hill.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

VI. New Business

A. Independent Director Appointments (Presenters: Scott Rodgers, Kat Holmes)

- Andrea Pagnanelli
- Erik Moses
- Amy Hever
- Skip Gilbert
- Kelly Feilke

 [Erik Moses Bio.pdf](#)

 [Amy Hever Resume-2.pdf](#)

 [Skip Gilbert Resume-2.pdf](#)

 [Feilke CV USA Fencing Board-2.pdf](#)

 [Report of the USA Fencing Nominating Committee.pdf](#)

Andrea Pagnanelli removed herself from candidacy.

Election was held and Peter Barton, Parliamentarian, announced Erik Moses and Skip Gilbert have won the Board seats.

Jess Saxon, Secretary, affirmed.

VII. Strategic Plan Focus

Membership growth towards target: 70,000

VIII. Discussion Topics

1. Athlete Burn Out Post College

Emily Bian joined the meeting in person.

IX. Old business (if any)

X. New business cont'd

A. MOTION -Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) Athlete Assistive Technology Accommodation Policy

Motion:

To accept the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) Athlete Assistive Technology Accommodation Policy.

Motion moved by Molly Hill and motion seconded by Bruce Mitchell.

Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

- B. MOTION — Amendment to Code of Conduct Regarding Protective Equipment (Presenters: Damien Lehfeltdt)

Motion: That the USA Fencing Board of Directors approve the following addition to the USA Fencing Code of Conduct:

"Participate in lessons, classes, drilling, bouting, and organized fencing activities involving weapons or blade contact with at least the minimum protective equipment as required by USA Fencing rules."

Rationale: The USA Fencing Code of Conduct currently contains no affirmative obligation requiring participants to use protective equipment during training, instructional, or club activities. This gap means the organization's safety expectations are expressed at competitions but not in the environments where the vast majority of participant injury risk exists — lessons, club practices, and organized drilling sessions.

This amendment establishes a clear, enforceable obligation at the governance level. It does not prescribe specific equipment beyond the minimum required by USA Fencing rules, and it leaves operational implementation — including any elaboration in the Athlete Handbook or club-facing guidance — to staff discretion. Its purpose is to ensure that safety compliance is an organizational expectation, not merely a competition requirement.

 [USA Fencing Member Code of Conduct Revision.docx](#)

Motion:

Motion moved by Damien Lehfeltdt and motion seconded by Molly Hill.

Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

- C. MOTION-Hall of Fame Induction Policy (Presenters: Damien Lehfeltdt)

Motion: That the USA Fencing Board of Directors adopt the following as standing Hall of Fame induction policy:

That in any Hall of Fame induction cycle, both the candidate with the highest objective scoring total and the candidate with the highest public vote total shall be inducted, provided each meets the minimum eligibility threshold. If the same candidate leads both categories, one induction slot is awarded. This policy shall apply prospectively to all future induction cycles.

Rationale: The current Hall of Fame process creates an internal inconsistency: a public vote is conducted, winners are identified, and the results are then treated as advisory rather than determinative. This undermines member confidence in the process and makes for confusing results.

This policy change recognizes that both objective achievement and broad member recognition are legitimate and complementary criteria for Hall of Fame induction. Enshrining both outcomes as mandatory—rather than discretionary—eliminates ambiguity, and gives the public vote the weight it implies.

Motion:

Motion moved by Damien Lehfeltdt

No second.

Motion fails.

- D. MOTION-Induction of Tim Morehouse OLY into the USA Fencing Hall of Fame (Presenters: Damien Lehfeltdt)

Motion: That the USA Fencing Board of Directors approve the induction of Tim Morehouse OLY into the USA Fencing Hall of Fame.

Rationale: Tim Morehouse's record speaks for itself: Olympic silver medalist, three-time Olympian, two-time U.S. National Champion, seven-time World Cup medalist, and the architect of two of the most significant fencing outreach initiatives in American history — Fencing in the Schools and Fencing Masters. The 2008 Beijing silver was the first U.S. men's fencing medal since 1984. Mr. Lehfeltdt acknowledges his own role in this oversight directly. He served on the Hall of Fame Committee during the years following Tim's eligibility in 2015, and a nomination never advanced. That failure belongs, in part, to him. It is for that reason — not in spite of it — that he believes it is appropriate to bring this motion personally and directly rather than route it through another Committee cycle that would further defer a recognition that is a decade overdue. This motion is brought in conjunction with Motion 3 below, which addresses the structural process failure that allowed this gap and others like it to occur.

Motion:

Motion moved by Damien Lehfeltdt.

No second.

Motion fails.

- E. MOTION-Bylaw Amendments (Presenters: Damien Lehfeltdt)

Motion: To publish to the USA Fencing membership for a 45 day comment period with the Board of Directors recommendation for approval, the proposed bylaw amendments (highlights below and with red strikethroughs and green annotations as part of a full draft of the proposed bylaw amendments in the appendices) that will remove the current petition process and link nomination timelines to be linked to the Summer and Winter Meetings.

Rationale: The USA Fencing Board of Directors has created a Task Force to implement an independent Nominating Committee which would align the organization with industry best practices. Alongside these upcoming reforms and last year's by-law change that ensured the Nominating Committee must nominate enough qualified candidates for each position plus two extra, the nomination process will be more secure and fair than ever. Additionally, elimination of the petition process would match 73 percent of other NGBs, further strengthening the sport's credibility with sponsors, donors, and the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee.

 [USFA Bylaws Amendment \(6-11-26\) .docx](#)

Motion:

Motion moved by Damien Lehfeltdt and motion seconded by Molly Hill.

Motion:

Motion to table this motion to the September meeting.

Motion moved by Andrey Geva and motion seconded by Bruce Mitchell.

Motion passes by majority voice vote.

- F. MOTION-Independent Nominating Committee Proposal (Presenters: Jackie Dubrovich, Bruce Mitchell)

Motion: To accept the recommendations of the Independent Nominating Committee Task Force and to direct that proposed amendments to the Bylaws necessary to implement those recommendations be prepared and published for review, comment and consideration to the membership.

Rationale: The Independent Nominating Committee Task Force was sat by the Board of Directors at the February 2026 meeting; and was charged with reviewing the Nominating Committee's governance structure and has developed recommendations intended to strengthen independence from the sitting Board of Directors, transparency of process and governance effectiveness. The Nominating Committee Task Force consisted of Jackie Dubrovich OLY, Joe Inzerillo and Bruce Mitchell supported by staff members Jess Saxon and Phil Andrews.

 [Section 11.10 Nom Com Bylaw Redlines.docx](#)

Motion:

Motion moved by Bruce Mitchell and motion seconded by Kat Holmes.

Motion is withdrawn. Request to put it on the September agenda.

Motion:

Motion to move to Executive Session.

Motion moved by Bruce Mitchell and motion seconded by Abdel Salem.

Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

- XI. Executive Session

1. Grievance and Disciplinary Appeal
2. International Relations Discussion

- XII. Adjournment

Passed by unanimous voice vote.



USA Fencing Summer Nationals Executive Session Minutes

USA Fencing (United States Fencing Association, Inc.)
6/27/2026 9:00 PMMDT

Attendance

Present:

Members: Donald Alperstein, Phil Andrews, Peter Barton, Emily Bian, Jade Burroughs (remote), Andrey Geva, Molly Hill, Joe Inzerillo (remote), Damien Lehfeltdt (remote), Bruce Mitchell, Andrea Pagnanelli (remote), Maria Panyi (remote), Abdel Salem (remote), Jess Saxon, Scott Rodgers

Guests: Glen Hollingsworth, Nona Lim

Absent:

Members: Lauryn Deluca, Jackie Dubrovich, Kat Holmes

I. USA Fencing Grievance and Disciplinary Appeal

Jess Saxon and Phil Andrews declared conflicts and recused.

Damien Lehfeltdt and Maria Panyi declared conflicts of interest.

Molly Hill recused herself and left the room for this discussion and motion.

Motion: Move to affirm the Grievance and Disciplinary Decision.

Motion moved and seconded.

Motion passes by roll call vote: 8-0

II. International Relations Discussion (Presenters: Damien Lehfeltdt)

Motion:

Motion moved and seconded.

Motion:

Motion to refer this to the IRC for discussion and decision by the September meeting.

Motion moved and seconded.

Motion passes unanimous by voice vote.

Motion:

Motion to adjourn to Regular Session.

Motion moved and seconded.

Motion passes by unanimous voice vote.



Parent Council Charter

Last update: July 2026

Purpose

The Parent Council carries the voice, views, issues and expressions of Parents across the USA Fencing community. Its primary role is to provide a communicative and representative voice for Parents in the USA Fencing community, providing a balanced and diverse viewpoint across that Parent community. This Council should not only provide input but also be able to express why and how concerns are – or are not – addressed so that the gap in communication is reduced between non-member parents that have member (youth) fencers.

Therefore, the remit of the Parents Council is broad and is free to raise any issue that is germane to the experience of Parents (and their fencers) to the CEO, Staff and Board of Directors. Similarly, the CEO, Staff and Board of Directors may from time to time refer matters to the Parent Council for the opinion and voice of the Parent community.

Structure & Composition

The Parent Council is structured as a single Committee, selected by the USA Fencing Board of Directors from expressions of interest from a diverse group of Parents. The Committee ought to represent a diversity (where possible) of weapon, able-bodied and para, level, age and circumstances of fencers (and thus fencing families) across the community.

Appointments & Terms

The Parents Council is appointed by the Board of Directors. It is not limited to a specific number of individuals, however it must contain a minimum of 6 members.

Non-voting advisors:

- CEO of USA Fencing (or designee).

Commented [HS1]: Should this be instead 6 parent members with current and paid (xx level) USA Fencing membership?

Meetings: The Parents Council ought to meet at least quarter, with the goal of meeting monthly to deal with issues on a timely basis as they arise.

- Appointments: Members are appointed by the Board of Directors upon recommendation from the Board Chair (or his or her designee) in consultation with the CEO and Governance leadership. As a Council, the Parent Council is not obligated to have an athlete representative, however should an Elite Athlete be able to be seated who is also a Fencing parent, it is highly encouraged to do so.
- Terms: Terms follow USA Fencing committee norms unless otherwise set by the Board. Chairs serve at the pleasure of the Board.
- Voting: All members listed as voting above possess voting privileges; advisors are nonvoting.

Commented [HS2]: Is this the nominating committee?

Commented [HS3]: I don't think this applies as the focus is on a parental status - if they happen to be an athlete, too, that's extra.

Commented [HS4]: Probably should clarify voting on what: Items within the Council? Board items? Or as USAF members paid to a certain level, usual membership voting.

Honestly, we have not had items where we've had to vote, so this would be new.

Commented [HS5]: I would recommend that this is a requirement of the chair's role. The remainder of the Council should also act in good faith.

Responsibilities & Deliverables

- Diligently reflect the position and desires of the Parent community of USA Fencing, taking care to ensure that any potential personal bias is addressed and the entire community of Parents represented through the Council.
- Provide feedback, both constructive and positive, to the staff, CEO and Board of Directors on current USA Fencing programming.
- Provide ongoing input on enhancing the experience of the Parent community of USA Fencing.
- Ensure that the Parent voice is heard within the strategic plan of USA Fencing, focused on involvement from the start of youth levels and up to and through collegiate fencing.
- Provide the Board of Directors, CEO and Staff with a potential list of topics to explore/improve/change yearly, ideally prior to the start of the next season (target after JOs, before Summer Nationals).
- In collaboration with the staff, suggest, devise and execute Parent education plans to enhance education of parents, and resources for parents.

Commented [HS6]: Phil - What do you envision as the working plan? As a committee that is acting as a listening post and sounding board, a working plan is less of a budget and operational plan and more of continued monitoring and advisory.

Commented [HS7R6]: Recommendation: Providing a list of topics to potentially explore for the season, knowing full well that additional considerations, challenges and other issues tend to become evident throughout the year.

Commented [HS8]: If this is the purpose of the Parents Council, then let's remove points about working plans, voting and other operational structures (budget) that imply voting, operational control.

We need to clarify as this conflicts with the structure proposed above.

Operating Guidelines

- Conflicts of Interest: Members follow USA Fencing's conflict-of-interest and ethics policies and disclose relevant affiliations.
- Decision-Making: The Parents Council is not a decision-making body, but instead makes recommendations for adoption to the Staff and Board of Directors.
- Liaisons: The Parents Council Chair shall act as the primary liaison to the Board of Directors, and to the CEO. He or she may designate such from time to time.

- Transparency: Notes, comments, requests and discussions should be captured to share exploration, ideation and actions regarding all issues raised by parents. This should include determinations from both the Board and USA Fencing operations to better communicate, illustrate and share discussions, decisions, reasons, limitations. This provides the ability for parents to participate fully in changes, decisions and other circumstances that will have an effect on their family – and fencer(s) – regarding competitions, ratings, eligibility and other competitive considerations.



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee Charter

Last update: July 2026

Purpose

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee exists to recommend to USA Fencing methods and ways of providing further inclusivity and widening partnership within USA Fencing. Explicitly, it seeks to broaden the appeal of Fencing in order to bring more people into the sport of Fencing, and ensure a comfortable, safe and welcoming environment for all within Fencing.

Structure & Composition

The DEI Committee is structured in accordance with the USA Fencing bylaws.

Appointments & Terms

The Grievance & Disciplinary Committee is sat by the Board of Directors, per the bylaws.

Non-voting advisors:

- CEO of USA Fencing (or his/her designee)

Meetings: The DEI Committee shall meet at least once per quarter, or shall conduct business at least once per quarter

- Appointments: Members are appointed by the Board of Directors upon recommendation from the Board Chair (or his or her designee) in consultation with the CEO and Governance leadership. Athlete representatives are confirmed consistent with USA Fencing's athlete representation policies. If you are appointed to fill a vacancy or join the committee outside of the standard cycle, your term will still be guaranteed for a full year from your start date, ensuring you have the time needed to make a meaningful impact.
- Terms: Terms follow USA Fencing committee norms unless otherwise set by the Board. Chairs serve at the pleasure of the Board. A standard term on the committee runs for exactly two years.
- Voting: All members listed as voting above possess voting privileges; advisors are nonvoting.

Responsibilities & Deliverables

- Recommend and discuss potential areas of improvement for USA Fencing in the matters related to DEIB
- Discuss and advise on potential minority issues face by USA Fencing members, that may affect their ability to fully enjoy their membership in USA Fencing.
- Provide a voice for minority view points within USA Fencing to the staff, CEO and Board of Directors.

Operating Guidelines

- Conflicts of Interest: Members follow USA Fencing's conflict-of-interest and ethics policies and disclose relevant affiliations, any doubts should be resolved by the USA Fencing Ethics Committee.
- Quorum: A simple majority of voting members constitutes quorum for the Primary Committee and each subcommittee.
- Decision-Making: The Committee acts in recommendation to the Board, CEO and Staff only.
- Liaisons: The DEI Committee Chair shall act as the primary liaison to the Board of Directors, the General Counsel, and to the CEO. He or she may designate such from time to time.

USA FENCING FENCESAFE HANDBOOK

April 15, 2019 Update

As a member National Governing Body of the United States Olympic Committee (“USOC”), and pursuant to federal law, USA Fencing is required to adhere to the rules and regulations of the USOC and of the U.S. Center for SafeSport (the “Center”), which has promulgated its “SafeSport Code for the US Olympic and Paralympic Movement” (the “Code”). Pursuant to USA Fencing’s Bylaws as amended effective July 31, 2017, the Code superseded and replaced the USA Fencing FenceSafe Policy.

Effective April 15, 2019, the U.S. Center for SafeSport issued a revised Code, which can be found [here](#) and supersedes and replaces previous versions of the Code.

June 3, 2019 Update

Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy replaces Proactive Policies

Dec 31, 2019
Updates to BGS

April 15, 2021
Move Disciplinary Proceedings to Athlete Handbook

November 1, 2021
Updated Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies

December 2, 2021
Updated to FenceSafe

December 21, 2022
Updates to Reporting and Resolution

February 1, 2023
Updates to Background Check Policy

September 1, 2024
Updated to Incorporate 2025 MAAPP

September 19, 2026
Updates to Background Check Policy

USA FENCING ADDENDUM EFFECTIVE AUGUST 1, 2025

USA Fencing is committed to protecting opportunities for athletes participating in sport. USA Fencing will continue to collaborate with various stakeholders with oversight responsibilities, e.g., IOC, IPC, USOPC, to ensure that women have a fair and safe competition environment consistent with Executive Order 14201 and the Ted Stevens Olympic & Amateur Sports Act, 36 U.S.C. § 22501, et. Seq.

Effective January 1, 2019

The U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement is committed to creating and maintaining a sport community where all persons who participate in sport programs and activities can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of misconduct. As a member National Governing Body of the United States Olympic Committee (“USOC”), and pursuant to federal law, USA Fencing is required to adhere to the rules and regulations of the USOC and of the U.S. Center for SafeSport (the “Center”), which has promulgated its “SafeSport Code for the US Olympic and Paralympic Movement” (the “Code”). Pursuant to USA Fencing’s Bylaws as amended effective July 31, 2017, the Code superseded and replaced the USA Fencing FenceSafe Policy, which has been amended and restated as set forth herein (the “Handbook”). This handbook includes additional FenceSafe related policies, procedures and requirements that are important to creating and maintaining a safe environment. USA Fencing is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for athletes’ physical, emotional and social development and to ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct. USA Fencing is committed to improving the development and safety of athletes and participants involved in sport.

I. REPORTING AND RESOLUTION

A. Mandatory Reporters

1. Every Adult Participant *shall* report:

- a) Observed or reasonably suspected violations of this Policy, the Code and the MAAPP.
- b) Observed or reasonably suspected allegations of child abuse. This includes incidents that involve a victim who was a minor at the time of the alleged incident but may now be an adult.
 - All cases of suspected child abuse, to include emotional, physical or sexual abuse of a minor (under the age of 18) must be reported to law enforcement and any applicable state law requirements immediately. Mandatory reporters must comply with any other applicable reporting requirements under state and federal law. Filing a report with the Center and/or USA Fencing does not satisfy this obligation.
2. Every constituent *may* report: observed or suspected violations of this Policy, the Code, the MAAPP, or reasonably suspected allegations of child abuse.
3. USA Fencing follows the Code’s requirements for reporting and their definition of Failure to Report which can be found [here](#).

B. Sexual Misconduct

1. Conduct by a participant that could constitute sexual misconduct must be reported to the Center as set forth in the *SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement* through their online report form [here](#). USA Fencing will also accept reports of Sexual Misconduct which can be submitted online [here](#). USA Fencing will forward any reports that fall under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Center immediately and no later than 24 hours from receipt of the report.

C. Other Misconduct

1. Emotional and Physical Misconduct

Conduct by a participant that could constitute Emotional or Physical Misconduct under this Policy, including but not limited to Stalking, Bullying Behaviors, Hazing, and Harassment, shall be reported to USA Fencing. If the report is determined to be within the Center’s jurisdiction, USA Fencing will forward to the Center.

2. Proactive Policies

Conduct by a participant that could violate a proactive policy should be reported to USA Fencing.

3. Additional Misconduct Required to be Reported

- a. Criminal Charges or Dispositions involving sexual misconduct or misconduct involving minors shall be reported to the Center. USA Fencing will also accept reports of this nature and will forward on to the Center if it is determined to be within their jurisdiction.
- b. Misconduct related to the Center's process, including aiding and abetting, abuse of process, and retaliation shall be reported to the Center. USA Fencing will also accept reports of this nature and will forward on to the Center if it is determined to be within their jurisdiction.

D. Reporting Process

1. Following the receipt of a report, USA Fencing will evaluate the report and promptly inform the reporting party of the jurisdictional determination communicating whether the report is being referred to the Center or will be addressed by USA Fencing.
 - a. The USA Fencing Athlete Safety Manager ("the Manager") shall monitor and track all reports and investigations through an internal database and is responsible for ensuring compliance with this Policy and the Disciplinary Proceedings.
 - b. Reports which fall under the jurisdiction of USA Fencing will be regulated by the Disciplinary Proceedings outlined in the [Athlete Handbook](#).
 - c. Reports which fall under the jurisdiction of the Center will be regulated by the procedures outlined in the Code. the Manager (or their designee) shall be responsible for responding to all requests for information from the Center within 72 hours.
 - d. Reports to USA Fencing or the U.S. Center for SafeSport are expressly permitted to be submitted anonymously. Individuals are encouraged to provide as much information as possible to enable a thorough review; however, anonymity will not, by itself, prevent a report from being reviewed or acted upon.

E. Jurisdictional Determination

1. The Center holds *exclusive jurisdiction* to investigate and resolve allegations of the following:
 - a. Sexual misconduct, including without limitation child sexual abuse and any misconduct that is reasonably related to an underlying allegation of sexual misconduct;
 - b. Criminal Charges or dispositions involving child abuse or sexual misconduct;
 - c. Misconduct related to reporting where the underlying allegation involves child abuse or sexual misconduct;
 - d. Misconduct related to aiding and abetting, abuse of process, or retaliation, when it related to the Center's process;
 - e. Other inappropriate conduct as defined in the Code.
2. The Center holds *discretionary jurisdiction* to investigate and resolve allegations of the following:
 - a. Non-sexual child abuse;
 - b. Emotional and physical misconduct, including stalking, bully behaviors, hazing, and harassment;
 - c. Criminal charges or dispositions not involving child abuse or sexual misconduct;
 - d. Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy or other similar proactive policy violations;

- e. Misconduct related to aiding and abetting, abuse of process, or retaliation when it related to the processes of the USOPC or USA Fencing.
3. USA Fencing holds jurisdiction over all observed or reasonably suspected violations of this Policy, the Code, or the MAAPP in which the Center does not have exclusive jurisdiction, or the Center has discretionary jurisdiction but declines.

F. Retaliation

1. Retaliation or attempt to do the same by a participant, someone acting on behalf of a participant, USA Fencing, or the USOPC is prohibited by USA Fencing and the Center. Retaliation is any adverse action or threat to take any adverse action against any person related to allegations of prohibited conduct. Adverse actions include, but are not limited to: threatening, intimidating, harassing, coercing, or any other action or conduct with the potential effect of dissuading any reasonable person from reporting a violation of this Policy, the Code, or the MAAPP or engaging in activity related to any reporting or investigative processes. Retaliation may take place at any time, including before, during, or after an individual's reporting or engagement in the processes of the Center or USA Fencing. Retaliation may be present even where there is a finding that no violation occurred. Retaliation does not include good-faith actions lawfully pursued in response to a report of a Code violation.
2. Retaliation related to an allegation of sexual misconduct should be reported to the Center. If reported to USA Fencing, then USA Fencing shall forward the report of retaliation to the Center.
3. Retaliation related to an allegation of other misconduct— Emotional Misconduct, Physical Misconduct, Bullying Behaviors, Hazing, Harassment or proactive policies as contained in the MAAPP— should be reported to USA Fencing. USA Fencing will forward on to the Center if it is determined to be within their jurisdiction.

G. Interference

1. USA Fencing and any participants shall not interfere in, attempt to interfere in, or attempt to influence the outcome of any Center investigation.

H. Quality Control System

1. Please view the [Athlete Safety Procedures for USA Fencing Events](#) for details on procedures for enforcing sanctions, temporary measures, ensuring completed SafeSport training for those that are required.

I. Annual Data Submission

1. The Manager is responsible for compiling and providing data annually to the Center. USA Fencing's local affiliated organizations do not collect any reports of misconduct, violations of this Policy, the Code, the MAAPP, retaliation, or related data. All reports are required to be submitted and resolved by either USA Fencing or the Center. The following data will be collected and reported:
 - a. Reports of emotional or physical misconduct made to USA Fencing
 - Total reported incidents of alleged emotional misconduct
 - Total reported incidents of alleged physical misconduct
 - Total number of investigations of alleged emotional misconduct
 - Total number of investigations of alleged physical misconduct

- Total number of violations for emotional misconduct adjudicated by USA Fencing.
- Total number of violations for physical misconduct adjudicated by USA Fencing.
- b. Reports to USA Fencing that a participant violated the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP)
 - Total reported incidents of alleged violations of the MAAP, by policy type
 - Total number of investigations of alleged violations of the MAAPP
 - Total number of violations of the MAAPP adjudicated by USA Fencing.
- c. Reports to USA Fencing that a participant engaged in retaliation
 - Total reported incidents of alleged retaliation
 - Total number of investigations of alleged retaliation
 - Total number of violations of retaliation policy adjudicated by USA Fencing

J. USOPC Athlete Safety Reporting Requirements

- a. In accordance with the USOPC's NGB Athlete Safety Policy, USA Fencing will notify the USOPC's Security and Athlete Safety Office via email at athlete.safety@usopc.org as soon as possible, and in any case within 24 hours of imposing its own or being notified of Center-imposed sanction(s) and/or temporary measure(s), affecting any of the individuals receiving these funds/benefits. Notification will also be provided to the USOPC's Security and Athlete Safety Office via e-mail at athlete.safety@usopc.org in the event of any change or removal of any such sanction and/or temporary measures within 24 hours of such change.
- b. USA Fencing must notify the USOPC's Security and Athlete Safety Office via e-mail at athlete.safety@usopc.org as soon as possible, and in any case within 24 hours of learning of an allegation of Prohibited Conduct as defined in the Code, that occurred at an Olympic & Paralympic Training Center or at any third party-sponsored event in which the USOPC sends a delegation. Any temporary measures imposed by USA Fencing and/or the Center in response to the allegation must be included in the required notification.

PLEASE REFER TO ATHLETE HANDBOOK CH 13 FOR DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS – [LINK HERE](#)

II. USA FENCING SCREENING AND BACKGROUND CHECK PROGRAM

A. Screening and Background Check Program

The purposes of USA Fencing's Background Check Program are as follows:

- Protect USA Fencing athletes and participants from known offenders so that such known offenders do not have access to USA Fencing members in connection with USA Fencing sanctioned events or activities.
- Deter offenders that have not been caught from joining USA Fencing programs.
- Protect USA Fencing's reputation as a sport where participants are protected against abuse.
- Help protect USA Fencing, USA Fencing Clubs and their respective employees and volunteers from liability that could arise from allowing a previous offender to have access to athletes and participants.

1. USA Fencing Screening Policies

USA Fencing's policy includes set criteria for which a person may be disqualified and prohibited from serving under USA Fencing. Under the policy, USA Fencing will not authorize or sanction any individual who has routine access to athletes and participants unless that person consents to be screened and passes a criminal background screen conducted by USA Fencing through the Coach, +Coach upgrade or +CheckEd upgrade Member programs.

The USA Fencing Screening and Background Check Program shall be applicable to the following who are 18 years of age or older: employees of USA Fencing, USA Fencing Board of Directors, USA Fencing committee/task force members, division officers, officials, administrative personnel, coaches, volunteers, medical personnel, other individuals authorized or nominated to work with athletes or other participants while at a training site or event, assistants or personal care assistants who are funded, have a contractual obligation with, or are credentialed by USA Fencing, independent contractors, and other individuals who have regular contact with athletes. Additionally, all athletes, alternates, training partners, or guides who are selected to participate in national or international team or delegated events or to train at an Olympic & Paralympic Training Center or USOPC High Performance Training Center.

- All individuals subject to the USA Fencing Screening and Background Check Program shall be screened through the Coach, +Coach upgrade or +CheckEd upgrade Member programs prior to commencement of a new role or training/competition and then shall be re-screened every two (2) years. This includes a Supplement background check after one year.

2. USA Fencing Club Screening Policies

As a condition of its affiliation with USA Fencing, each Member and Affiliate Club must be in compliance with the requirements set forth below:

All Club employees and independent contractors, including but not limited to coaches and instructors, must be USA Fencing Coach, +Coach upgrade or +CheckEd upgrade prior to such individuals having access to athletes and participants

In addition, all Club owners, directors, managers, and program administrators, and all other affiliated persons having frequent contact with athletes or participants at the Club or its events or activities, must be USA Fencing Coach, +Coach upgrade or +CheckEd upgrade.

An approved screen of Club personnel through those programs shall be valid for two years. All previously screened persons must complete a new background screen every two (2) years. This includes a Supplement background check after one year.

3. Search Criteria

- a) Social Security Number validation;
- b) Name and address history records;
- c) Two independent Multi-Jurisdictional Criminal Database searches covering 50 states plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico;
- d) Federal District Courts search for each name used and district where the individual currently lives or has lived during the past seven years, going back the length of time records are available and reportable;
- e) County Criminal Records for each name used and county where the individual currently lives or has lived during the past seven years, going back the length of time records are available and reportable for each county searched;

- f) National Sex Offender Registry database search of all available states, plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico;
 - g) Multiple National Watch Lists;
 - h) SafeSport Disciplinary Records;
 - i) Comprehensive International Records search U.S. citizens who have lived outside of the United States for six consecutive months in any one country, during the past seven years;
 - j) Motor Vehicle Records of at least a 3-year history in the state of licensure; (if driving is required for position).
4. Supplemental Background Checks. All supplemental off-year background check screens will be conducted using at least the following search components:
- a) Multi-Jurisdictional criminal database covering 50 states plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico
 - b) Sex Offender Registry database searches of all available states, plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico; and
 - c) SafeSport Disciplinary Records.

5. USA Fencing Criminal Background Check Disqualification Criteria

Any background check that results in a report of a disposition or resolution of a criminal proceeding, other than an adjudication of not guilty, for any of the below criminal offenses will be issued a red light determination:

- a. Any felony (any crime punishable by confinement greater than one year)
- b. Any misdemeanor involving:
 - i. All sexual crimes, criminal offenses or a sexual nature to include but not limited to; rape, child molestation, sexual battery, lewd conduct, possession and distribution of child pornography, possession and distribution of obscene material, prostitution, indecent exposure, public indecency, and any sex offender registrant (any participant that has been convicted of, received an imposition of a deferred sentence for, or any plea of guilty or no contest for any sexual crime, criminal offense of a sexual nature, and/or sex offender registrant must be reported);
 - ii. Any drug related offenses;
 - iii. Harm to a minor and vulnerable person, including, but not limited to, offenses such as child abandonment, child endangerment/neglect/abuse, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, and DUI with a minor;
 - iv. Violence against a person (including crimes involving firearms and domestic violence);
 - v. Stalking, harassment, blackmail, violation of a protection order and/or threats;
 - vi. Destruction of property, including arson, vandalism, and criminal mischief; and
 - vii. Animal abuse or neglect.

Secondary Review of Responsible Sport Organization Determinations: USA Fencing will comply with the

USOPC Background Check Policy and Procedures as it relates to situations under which a secondary review of USA Fencing's determination will be conducted by the USOPC. ([USOPC BG Policy](#) and [USOPC BG Procedures](#))

6. USA Fencing Background Check Appeal Procedures

All appeals of "red light" or "adverse action letter" background checks shall be referred to the FenceSafe Coordinator (SSC) for initial evaluation, and when appropriate, for further action in accordance with USA Fencing policies and procedures. In the discharge of these duties, the SSC shall consult with the Chief Executive Officer and USAF legal counsel as he or she deems appropriate. If the SSC is the subject of the complaint, the President shall serve the functions assigned by this policy to the SSC.

Any member of the USAF or applicant for USAF membership who is denied admission or appointment to any position on the basis of a "red light" background check or an "adverse action letter" predicated on the results of a background check shall have a right to seek review of that decision in accordance with the procedures here specified.

1. Should any individual receive a "red light" finding or an "adverse action letter" based on a USAF required background check and wish to contest any resulting USAF decision to deny his or her application for membership or to deny him or her any USAF position or appointment, that individual has a right to a review of the denial. The person who seeks review is referred to herein as "the appellant." The appellant may act on his or her own behalf during the appeal or may be assisted by a representative.
2. Unless otherwise notified by the USAF that a shorter period is required because of nomination deadlines dictated by the USAF, the USOC, the FIE or by prevailing circumstances, the appellant shall have 10 business days from the date that he or she is informed of the decision from which the appeal is being taken to notify the Safe Sport Coordinator of the appeal.
3. The SSC shall review any evidence and arguments submitted by the appellant or on his or her behalf and shall undertake such additional investigation as the SSC believes necessary to make an initial determination of the merits of the appeal. Upon reaching that determination, the SSC may inform the appellant thereof and shall ascertain from the appellant whether he or she wishes to proceed to a hearing by the Board of Directors.
4. If the appellant wishes to proceed, and the Board has previously provided for the hearing of background check appeals by a committee of the Board, and has constituted and populated such a committee, the SSC shall refer the matter to that committee and shall forward to them, his/her file in the matter, including (a) all statements, documents and other evidence obtained by him, including the background check findings; (b) the arguments and evidence submitted by the appellant or on his behalf, and (c) the SSC's recommendation whether the decision being appealed should be upheld or overruled and the reasons underlying that recommendation. If the committee is not in place, the matter will be referred directly to the Board of Directors at the next scheduled meeting.
5. The designated committee shall review the file. The decision shall be reversed if a majority of the members of the Board (or of the designated committee) present and voting concludes either (a) by a preponderance of the evidence that the background check results were based on erroneous information; or (b) that to a reasonable degree of certainty the applicant does not pose a danger to the individuals with whom he or she is expected to come into contact by virtue of the class of membership, the position or the appointment that was denied on the basis of the "red light" or "adverse action letter." If the designated committee is not unanimous in their ruling, the

review will be done by the USA Fencing Board of Directors.

6. The SSC shall communicate the results of the appeal to the appellant with copies to the CEO, legal counsel and any other person or organization necessary to effect any change in the appellant's status resulting from the decision on appeal.
7. If the appellant disagrees with the outcome of the appeal, he or she may file a demand for arbitration with the American Arbitration Association as provided in the Bylaws. The award obtained in the arbitration shall be final and binding on all parties.
8. The intentional submission of false information or evidence in connection with any proceeding provided herein shall be grounds for disciplinary action in accordance with USAF disciplinary procedures.
- 8.9. If a prior Board reversed a red-light determination and no new disqualifying criteria or red-light determinations are present in the appellant's subsequent background screens, but the Board's determination expires with the lapse of time, the SSC shall have the authority to maintain the prior reversal of the red-light determination without a hearing.

III. USA Fencing and U.S. Center for SafeSport Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Center for SafeSport (the Center) is committed to building a sport community where Participants can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of emotional, physical, and sexual misconduct. Throughout this document the most commonly used terms are defined in the Terminology section in the back of this document.

Authority

The Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 authorizes the Center to develop training and policies to prevent abuse—including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse—within the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Movement. 36 U.S.C. § 220542(a)(1). Federal law requires that, at a minimum, national governing bodies and paralympic sports organizations *must offer and give consistent training related to the prevention of child abuse: (1) to all adult members who are in regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors and (2) subject to parental consent, to members who are minors*. 36 U.S.C. § 220542(a)(3). Federal law requires that these policies contain reasonable procedures to limit unobservable and uninterrupted one-on-one interactions between an amateur athlete, who is a minor, and an adult, who is not the minor's legal guardian, at facilities under the jurisdiction of organizations within the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Movement. 36 U.S.C. § 220542(a)(2).

What is the MAAPP?

To that end, the Center has developed the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP). The MAAPP is a collection of proactive prevention and training policies for the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Movement. It has four primary components:

1. Organizational Requirements for Education & Training and Prevention Policies;
2. An Education & Training Policy that requires training for certain Adult Participants within the Olympic & Paralympic Movement;
3. Required Prevention Policies, focused on limiting one-on-one interactions between Adult Participants and Minor Athletes, that Organizations within the Olympic & Paralympic Movement must implement to prevent abuse;
4. Recommended Prevention Policies.

The Center developed the MAAPP to assist National Governing Bodies (NGBs), Local Affiliated Organizations (LAOs), the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC), and other individuals to whom these policies apply in meeting their obligations under federal law (*note: implementing these policies does not guarantee that an organization or individual fully complies with federal law or all applicable legal obligations*). These Organizations should share these policies with all Participants and with parents/guardians of minor athletes. Those implementing these policies should consider the physical and cognitive needs of all athletes.

The MAAPP focuses on just two important aspects of a much larger comprehensive abuse prevention

strategy. These policies address training requirements and limiting one-on-one interactions between adults and minor athletes. These policies are intended to be enforceable and reasonable, acknowledging, for example, that when a 17-year-old athlete turns 18, they become an adult athlete, and a complete prohibition of one-on-one interactions may not be necessary or practical. Additionally, there may be other instances when one-on-one interactions could occur, and in those cases, these policies provide strategies so parents/guardians can provide informed consent if they choose to allow a permitted interaction. **The Center recommends that parents first complete training on abuse prevention to be informed about potential boundary violations and concerns before consenting to the interaction.**

While the MAAPP will help organizations implement these policies to greatly improve minor athlete safety, in no way can they guarantee athlete safety in all circumstances, especially when the policies are not fully implemented, followed, or monitored. These policies are not comprehensive of all prevention strategies, nor are they intended to be. These policies should be implemented alongside the [SafeSport Code](#). Additionally, other resources are available that may assist organizations in improving athlete safety¹.

How Does the Center Ensure Compliance with the MAAPP?

Federal law requires the Center to conduct regular and random audits of the NGBs to ensure compliance with these policies. 36 U.S.C. § 220542(a)(2)(E). More specific organizational compliance requirements can be found in Appendix A. Additionally, it is the responsibility of the USOPC and each NGB, LAO, and Adult Participant to comply with the MAAPP. The aforementioned Organizations can act in their respective programs for violations of the MAAPP by Adult Participants. Adult Participants also have an independent responsibility to comply with these MAAPP provisions. Violations of these provisions can result in sanctions under the SafeSport Code.

Is the MAAPP Different from the SafeSport Code?

Yes. The [SafeSport Code](#) works alongside the MAAPP to prevent abuse. The MAAPP includes proactive prevention policies for organizations and individuals, while the SafeSport Code contains misconduct policies for individuals. However, violations of the MAAPP can violate the SafeSport Code, and violators can be sanctioned.

SCOPE

The MAAPP Applies to “In-Program Contact” Within the Olympic & Paralympic Movement

The MAAPP is required for the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC), National Governing Bodies (NGB), and Local Affiliated Organizations (LAO). (each an “Organization”).

¹ Saul, J., & Audage, N.C. (2007). [Preventing Child Sexual Abuse Within Youth-Servicing Organization: Getting Started on Policies and Procedures](#). Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Canadian Centre for Child Protection. (2014). [Child Sexual Abuse: It Is Your Business](#). Winnipeg, Manitoba: Canadian Centre for Child Protection.

The Australian Royal Commission Into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. (2017). [Final Report](#).

Some policies impose requirements on USA Fencing and/or its divisions or member clubs at sanctioned events and facilities partially or fully under USA Fencing's jurisdiction. For example, USA Fencing and/or its divisions or member clubs, as the case may be, must monitor locker rooms at their respective facilities and sanctioned events. Other policies impose certain requirements on Adult Participants under USA Fencing's jurisdiction when the Adult Participant is having "In-Program Contact." For example, Adult Participants cannot have one-on-one meetings with Minor Athletes unless it is observable and interruptible.

Who is a Minor Athlete?

A **Minor Athlete** is an amateur athlete under 18 years of age who participates in, or participated within the previous 12 months in, an event, program, activity, or competition that is part of, or partially or fully under the jurisdiction of, USA Fencing and/or its divisions or member clubs².

Partial or Full Jurisdiction: Includes any sanctioned event or activity (including all travel and lodging in connection therewith) conducted or sanctioned by USA Fencing or any of its divisions or member clubs, and any facility that USA Fencing or any of its divisions or member clubs owns, leases, or rents for practice, training, or competition.

Who is an Adult Participant?

An **Adult Participant** is any adult (18 years of age or older) who is:

1. A member or license holder of USA Fencing
2. An employee or board member of USA Fencing and/or its divisions or member clubs
3. Within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of USA Fencing and/or its divisions or member clubs
4. Authorized, approved, or appointed by USA Fencing and/or its divisions or member clubs to have regular contact with or authority over minor athletes.³

What is In-Program Contact?

In-Program Contact includes sanctioned events and facilities, but it also applies more broadly to sport-related interactions. **The MAAPP defines "In-Program Contact" as:**

Any contact (including communications, interactions, or activities) between an Adult Participant and any Minor Athlete(s) related to participation in sport.

Examples of activities related to participation in sport that could be identified as In-Program Contact include, but are not limited to: competition, practices, camps/clinics, training/instructional sessions, pre/post game meals or outings, team travel, review of game film, team- or sport-related relationship building activities,

² This term shall also include any minor who participates in, or participated within the previous 12 months in, a non-athlete role partially or fully under the jurisdiction of an NGB, USOPC, or LAO. Examples include, but are not limited to: officials, coaches, or volunteers.

³ This may include volunteers, medical staff, trainers, chaperones, monitors, contract personnel, bus/van drivers, officials, adult athletes, staff, board members, and any other individual who meets the Adult Participant definition.

celebrations, award ceremonies, banquets, team- or sport-related fundraising or community service, sport education, or competition site visits.

Am I required to take SafeSport Training?

Certain Adult Participants within the Olympic & Paralympic Movement who have (i) regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors, (ii) authority over amateur athletes who are minors, or (iii) are employees or board members of the USOPC, NGBs, or LAOs, are required to take training. The specific training requirements can be found in Part I.

PART I EDUCATION & TRAINING POLICY

A. Mandatory Child Abuse Prevention Training for Adult Participants

1. Adult Participants Required to Complete Training

- a. The following Adult Participants must complete the *SafeSport Trained* Core either through the Center's online training:
 - i. Adult Participants who have regular contact with any amateur athlete(s) who is a minor;
 - ii. Adult Participants who have authority over any amateur athlete(s) who is a minor;
 - iii. Adult Participants who are an employee or board member of USA Fencing and/or its divisions or member clubs
- b. Adult Participants who are medical providers are required to take training under Section (a) can take the Health Professionals Course in lieu of the *SafeSport Trained* Core. This includes designated medical providers at USA Fencing National Events and designated providers for USA Fencing National Team travel.

2. Timing of Training

Adult Participants must complete this training:

- a. Before regular contact with an amateur athlete who is a minor begins; **and**
- b. Within the first 45 days of either initial membership or upon beginning a new role subjecting the adult to this policy whichever comes first.

3. Refresher Training

The above-listed Adult Participants must complete a refresher course every 12 months, beginning the calendar year after completing the *SafeSport Trained* Core. Every four years, Adult Participants will complete the *SafeSport Trained* Core training. Medical providers can take the Health Professionals Course in lieu of the *SafeSport Trained* Core and are required to take the refresher courses on an annual basis if they meet the criteria for A(1).

B. Minor Athlete Training Must Be Offered

1. USA Fencing and/or its divisions or member clubs, every 12 months must offer and, subject to parental consent, give training to minor athletes on the prevention and reporting of child abuse.

2. The Center offers youth courses, located at <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/courses/>, that meet this requirement.

C. Parent Training Must Be Offered

1. USA Fencing and/or its divisions or member clubs, every 12 months must offer training to parents on the prevention and reporting of child abuse.
2. The Center offers a parent course, located at <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/courses/> that meets this requirement.

D. Optional Training

1. Adult Participants serving in a volunteer capacity, who will not have regular contact with or authority over Minor Athletes, should take the Center's brief Volunteer Course (or *SafeSport Trained Core*) before engaging or interacting with any Minor Athlete(s).
2. USA Fencing and/or its divisions or member clubs may provide training *in addition to* the *SafeSport Trained Core*, although they cannot refer to this training as "SafeSport" training. **Training other than the SafeSport Trained Core or Refresher does not satisfy this policy.**
3. Parents of Minor Athletes are provided free online access to the Center's parent course and are encouraged to take the training.

E. Exemptions and Accommodations

The Center's online training courses contain information about various forms of abuse. The courses do not include graphic descriptions of abuse or show violent images or video. The content may be uncomfortable to trigger trauma for some participants.

1. Exemptions to the online training requirements may be requested by survivors of abuse and misconduct. Survivors of abuse can request an exemption by reaching out to USA Fencing at fencesafe@usafencing.org or choose to contact the Center directly at exemptions@safesport.org. All exemptions granted by the Center or USA Fencing in the category are considered indefinite and do not need to be re-requested every year.
2. Exemptions to the online training requirements for reasons other than survivor of abuse or misconduct are limited to cognitive or physical disability or language barrier. Requests for these exemptions must be made by the individual to USA Fencing. USA Fencing will determine whether to grant exemption. If USA Fencing grants an exemption it will track the exemption to ensure it is appropriately applied to the individual's membership status. USA Fencing will preserve documentation that the exemption was granted and for what duration.
3. The Center has several options available to assist individuals in completing the online training courses, including screen reader-compatible versions and course availability in several languages, including

English, Spanish, French, Mandarin, Russian, German, and Japanese. If none of the available options will fit the individual's needs, USA Fencing may determine whether to grant an exemption.

PART II REQUIRED POLICIES FOR ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

The U.S. Center for SafeSport recognizes that youth-adult relationships can be healthy and valuable for development. Policies on one-on-one interactions protect children while allowing for these beneficial relationships. As child sexual abuse is often perpetrated in isolated, one-on-one situations, it is critical that organizations limit such interactions between youth and adults and implement programs that reduce the risk of sexual abuse.

All one-on-one In-Program Contact between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be *observable and interruptible*, except in emergency circumstances or with a documented exception.

EXCEPTIONS

There are certain relationships and situations in which one-on-one interactions may be allowed or necessary. This section identifies policy exceptions for close-in-age relationships, Personal Care Assistants, dual relationships, and emergencies.

The following exceptions are applicable within all Required Prevention Policies unless otherwise noted.

A. Mandatory Components

1. A Close-in-Age Exception

The purpose of this exception is to allow for continued relationships among athletes on the same team.

This exception allows for one-on-one In-Program Contact between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete if:

- a. The Adult Participant has **no** authority over the Minor Athlete; and
- b. The Adult Participant is not more than 4 years older (determined by birth date) than the Minor Athlete.

Note: this exception is different than the close-in-age exception in the SafeSport Code pertaining to misconduct.

2. Exceptions for Adult Participants Personal Care Assistants Working with a Minor Athlete

This exception exists for Adult Participants who also assist an athlete with activities of daily living and preparation for athletic participation.

This exception allows for one-on-one In-Program Contact between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete if the following requirements are met:

- a. The Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to USA Fencing or their member club for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete; and

- b. The Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the Education & Training Policy; and
- c. The Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with USA Fencing's background screen policy.

3. Exceptions for Dual Relationships

This exception allows for one-on-one In-Program Contact when the Adult Participant has a relationship with a Minor Athlete that is outside of the sports program. The exception requires written consent of the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian at least annually. The consent must identify for which Required Prevention Policies the parent/guardian is allowing the one-on-one In-Program Contact.

4. Emergency Exception

This exception applies to all Required Prevention Policies for situations where an Adult Participant must violate the requirement(s) of the MAAPP due to an emergency. Adult Participants must carefully consider whether specific circumstances meet the threshold of "emergency". Adult Participants should document emergency situations using the [USA Fencing MAAPP Emergency Exception Form](#) and maintain in their own records.

USA Fencing recommends parents take training on child abuse prevention before providing consent to the above exceptions. The Center offers a free Parent Course at safesporttrained.org

MEETINGS

Sexual abuse often happens when children are alone with their abusers. This section provides policies for meetings to limit one-on-one interactions between children and adults, including mental health care professionals and licensed health care providers.

A. Mandatory Components

1. Observable and Interruptible

Adult Participants must ensure that all In-Program meetings with Minor Athletes be observable and interruptible, unless an exception exists.

2. Meetings with licensed mental health care professionals and health care providers (other than athletic trainers⁴)

If a licensed mental health care professional or licensed health care provider, or a student under the supervision of a licensed mental health care professional or a licensed health care provider, meets one-on-one with a Minor Athlete at a sanctioned event or a facility, which is conducted, operated or maintained by USA Fencing's or one of its divisions or member clubs, then the meeting must be observable and interruptible except:

- a. If the door remains unlocked; and
- b. Another adult is present at the facility and notified that a meeting is occurring, although the Minor Athlete's identity needs not be disclosed; and

⁴ Athletic trainers who are covered under these policies must follow the "Manual Therapy and Therapeutic and Recovery Modalities" policy.

- c. USA Fencing or the relevant division or member club, as the case may be, is notified that the provider will be meeting with a Minor Athlete; and
- d. The provider obtains consent consistent with applicable laws and ethical standards, which can be withdrawn at any time.

INDIVIDUAL TRAINING SESSIONS

Some abusers will single out athletes for special one-on-one instruction. This kind of isolation provides opportunities for abuse to occur. This section establishes rules for individual training sessions to protect youth athletes from uncomfortable or unsafe situations.

A. Mandatory Components

1. Observable and Interruptible

Adult Participants must ensure all In-Program individual training sessions with a Minor Athlete be observable and interruptible unless an exception exists.

2. Consent

The Adult Participant providing the individual training session must receive advance, written consent from the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian at least annually, which can be withdrawn at any time; and

3. Parent Observation

Parents/guardians must be allowed to observe the individual training session.

MANUAL THERAPY AND THERAPEUTIC AND RECOVERY MODALITIES

Many athletes require therapies to prevent or treat injuries. However, these treatment sessions can place children in vulnerable positions, especially if they involve physical contact with adults. This section establishes standards for therapeutic and recovery modalities and manual therapy to reduce the risk of inappropriate contact between youth and adults.

Manual therapy and therapeutic and recovery modalities can include but are not limited to: first aid, massage, taping, cupping, stretching, cryotherapy, neuromuscular stimulation, electrical stimulation, or other modalities within the scope of a Healthcare Provider's credentials.

A. Mandatory Components

Note: Only emergency exception applies within this policy.

1. Observable and Interruptible

Adult Participants must ensure all In-Program Contact during manual therapy and therapeutic modalities and recovery modalities with Minor Athletes be observable and interruptible and meet the following requirements

- a. Have another Adult Participant physically present for the modality or manual therapy; and
- b. Have documented consent as explained below; and

- c. Be performed with the Minor Athlete fully or partially clothed, ensuring that the breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals are always covered; and
- d. Allow parents/guardians in the room as an observer, except for competition or training venues that limit credentialling; and
- e. The provider must narrate the steps in the modality before taking them, seeking assent of the Minor Athlete throughout the process.

2. Consent

- a. Providers of manual therapy, therapeutic modalities, or recovery modalities for USA Fencing or any its divisions or member clubs, must, when applicable, obtain consent at least annually from Minor Athletes' parents/guardians before providing any manual therapy, therapeutic modalities, or recovery modalities..
- b. Minor Athletes or their parents/guardians can withdraw consent at any time.

B. Recommended

- 1. Only licensed providers should administer manual therapy, therapeutic modalities, or recovery modalities..
- 2. When possible, techniques should be used to reduce physical touch of Minor Athletes.
- 3. Coaches, regardless of whether they are licensed massage therapists, should not massage Minor Athletes.

LOCKER ROOMS AND CHANGING AREAS

Young athletes may be especially vulnerable to abuse in changing areas where they are undressing and possibly showering. Appropriate monitoring is necessary in these areas to prevent abuse and other inappropriate conduct. This section outlines policies for locker rooms and changing areas to ensure privacy and safety.

A. Mandatory Components

1. Observable and Interruptible

Adult Participants must ensure that all one-on-one In-Program Contact with Minor Athlete(s) in a locker room, changing area, or similar space where Minor Athlete(s) are present is observable and interruptible, unless an exception exists.

2. Conduct in Locker Rooms, Changing Areas, and Similar Spaces

- a. No Adult Participant or Minor Athlete can use the photographic or recording capabilities of any device in locker rooms, changing areas, or any other area designated as a place for changing clothes or undressing.
- b. Adult Participants must not remove their clothes or behave in a manner that intentionally or recklessly exposes their breasts, buttocks, groins, or genitals to a Minor Athlete in a locker room or changing area.
- c. Adult Participants must not shower with Minor Athletes unless:
 - i. The Adult Participant meets the Close-in-Age Exception; or
 - ii. The shower is part of a pre- or post-activity rinse while wearing swimwear.

- d. Parents/guardians may request in writing that their Minor Athlete(s) not change or shower with Adult Participant(s) during In-Program Contact. USA Fencing or the relevant division or member club, as the case may be, and the Adult Participant(s) must abide by this request.

3. Media and Championship Celebrations in Locker Rooms

USA Fencing or any of its divisions or member clubs, as the case may be, may permit recording or photography in locker rooms for the purpose of highlighting a sport or athletic accomplishment if:

- i. Parent/legal guardian consent has been obtained; and
- ii. USA Fencing or the relevant division or member club, whichever is conducting the event or activity, approves the specific instance of recording or photography; and
- iii. Two or more Adult Participants are present; and
- iv. Everyone is fully clothed.

4. Personal Care Assistants

Adult Participant Personal Care Assistants are permitted to be with and assist Minor Athlete(s) in locker rooms, changing areas, and similar spaces where other Minor Athletes are present, if they meet the full requirements of the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant exception.

5. Availability and Monitoring of Locker Rooms, Changing Areas, and Similar Spaces

- a. USA Fencing or its relevant division or member clubs, as the case may be, must provide a private or semi-private place for Minor Athletes that need to change clothes or undress at sanctioned events or facilities partially or fully under USA Fencing's, or the relevant division's or member club's, jurisdiction.
- b. USA Fencing or its relevant division or member club, as the case may be, must monitor the use of locker rooms, changing areas, and similar spaces to ensure compliance with these policies at sanctioned events or facilities that the relevant organization conducts, operates, maintains or is otherwise partially or fully under its jurisdiction.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS⁵

Technology has made it easier for teams to communicate and share information. Unfortunately, it also makes it easier for abusers to contact children without supervision or share inappropriate images and video. This section sets standards for appropriate electronic communication between youth and adults.

A. Mandatory Components

1. Open and Transparent

- a. All one-on-one electronic communications between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be Open and Transparent unless an exception exists.

⁵ Electronic communications include, but are not limited to: phone calls, videoconferencing, video coaching, texting, social media, or through any other electronic medium.

- b. Open and Transparent means that the Adult Participant copies or includes the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian, another adult family member of the Minor Athlete, or another Adult Participant on every communication.
 - If a Minor Athlete communicates with the Adult Participant first, the Adult Participant must follow this policy if the Adult Participant responds.
- c. Only platforms that allow for Open and Transparent communication may be used to communicate with Minor Athletes.

2. Team Communication

When an Adult Participant communicates electronically to the entire team or any number of Minor Athletes on the team, the Adult Participant must copy or include the Minor Athletes' parents/guardians, another adult family member of the Minor Athletes, or another Adult Participant.

3. Content

All electronic communication originating from an Adult Participant(s) to a Minor Athlete(s) must be professional in nature unless an exception exists.

4. Requests to discontinue

Parents/guardians may request in writing that USA Fencing or one of its divisions or member clubs or an Adult Participant subject to this policy not contact their Minor Athlete through any form of electronic communication. USA Fencing or the relevant division or member club, as the case may be, and the Adult Participant must abide by any request to discontinue, absent emergency circumstances.

5. Social Media Connections

Adult Participants, except those with a Dual Relationship or who meet the Close-in-Age Exception, are not permitted to maintain private social media connections with Minor Athletes.

TRANSPORTATION

Athletes are often carpooling or traveling without the supervision of their parent/guardian to practices and competitions. This can place them in vulnerable positions where they are susceptible to abuse. This section established policies for adults transporting children to or from sport activities.

A. Mandatory Components

1. Observable and Interruptible

Adult Participants must ensure that all In-Program Contact during transportation is observable and interruptible unless an exception exists or:

- a. The Adult Participant has advanced, written consent to transport the Minor Athlete one-on-one, obtained at least annually from the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian. Minor Athlete(s) or their parent/legal guardian can withdraw consent at any time.
- b. The Adult Participant is accompanied by another Adult Participant or at least two minors who are at least 8 years of age.

2. Additional Requirements for Transportation Authorized or Funded by USA Fencing or its relevant division or member club, as the case may be.

- a. Written consent from a Minor Athlete's parent/guardian is required for all transportation authorized or funded by USA Fencing or its relevant division or member club, as the case may be, at least annually.
- b. Minor Athlete(s) or their parent/guardian can withdraw consent at any time.

LODGING AND RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTS

Youth athletes traveling overnight face greater risk of sexual abuse if they are traveling without their parent/guardian. Abusers can take advantage of the situation by trying to have unsupervised time alone with children. This section sets rules for sleeping arrangements and room monitoring to protect athletes during overnight travel.

A. Mandatory Components

1. Observable and Interruptible

All In-Program Contact during lodging must be observable and interruptible unless an exception exists.

- a. Lodging arrangements covered under this policy include, but are not limited to, hotel stays, rentals (i.e. AirBnB, VRBO, HomeTo Go, etc.) and long-term residential environments, including lodging at training sites and billeting.

2. Hotel Rooms and Other Sleeping Arrangements

- a. An Adult Participant cannot share a hotel room or otherwise sleep in the same room with a Minor Athlete(s) unless an exception exists and the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided USA Fencing or its relevant division or member club, as the case may be, with advance, written consent for each specific lodging arrangement.
- b. Written consent from a Minor Athlete's parent/guardian must be obtained for all In-Program lodging at least annually and can be withdrawn at any time.

3. Monitoring or Room Checks During In-Program Travel

If USA Fencing and/or its divisions or member clubs perform room checks during In-Program lodging, the one-on-one interaction policy must be followed and at least two adults must be present for the room checks.

4. Additional Requirements for Lodging Authorized or Funded by the Organization

Adult Participants that travel overnight with Minor Athlete(s) are assumed to have Authority over Minor Athlete(s) and thus must comply with the Center's Education & Training Policy, unless the Adult Participant meets the Close-in-Age exception.

PART III

RECOMMENDED POLICIES FOR KEEPING YOUNG ATHLETES SAFE

A. Out-of-Program Contact

Adult Participants, who do not meet the Close-in-Age Exception nor have a Dual Relationship with a Minor Athlete, should not have out-of-program contact with Minor Athlete(s) without legal/parent guardian consent, even if the out-of-program contact is not one-on-one.

B. Gifting

1. Adult Participants, who do not meet the Close-in-Age Exception nor have a Dual Relationship with a Minor Athlete, should not give personal gifts to Minor Athlete(s).
2. Gifts that are equally distributed to all athletes and serve a motivational or educational purpose are permitted.

C. Photography/Video

1. Photographs or videos of athletes may only be taken in public view and must observe generally accepted standards of decency.
2. Adult Participants should not publicly share or post photos or videos of Minor Athlete(s) if the Adult Participant has not obtained the parent/guardian and Minor Athlete's consent.

TERMINOLOGY

Adult Participant: Any adult (18 years of age or older) who is:

- a. A member or license holder of USA Fencing;
- b. An employee or board member of USA Fencing or relevant division or member clubs, as the case may be;
- c. Within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of USA Fencing, or relevant division or member clubs;
- d. Authorized, approved, or appointed by USA Fencing or relevant division or member clubs, as the case may be, to have regular contact with or authority over minor athletes. This includes, but is not limited to, USA Fencing coaches, referees, adult athletes, event medical personnel and event staff⁶

Amateur Athlete: An athlete who meets the eligibility standards established by the National Governing Body or paralympic sports organization for the sport in which the athlete competes.

Authority: When one person's position over another person is such that, based on the totality of the circumstances, they have the power or right to direct, control, give orders to, or make decisions for that person. Also see the [Power Imbalance definition in the SafeSport Code](#). This may include but is not limited to coaches, officials, medical training staff, etc.

Close-in-Age Exception: An exception applicable to certain policies when an Adult Participant does not have authority over a Minor Athlete *and* is not more than four years older than the Minor Athlete (e.g., a 19-year-old and a 16-year-old). Note: this exception *only* applies within the prevention policies and *not* regarding conduct defined in the SafeSport Code.

Dual Relationships: An exception applicable to certain policies when an Adult Participant has a relationship with a Minor Athlete outside of the sport program and the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent at least annually authorizing the exception.

In-Program Contact: Any contact (including communications, interactions, or activities) between an Adult Participant and any Minor Athlete(s) related to participation in sport.

Examples of In-Program Contact include, but are not limited to: competition, practices, camps/clinics, training/instructional sessions, pre/post game meals or outings, team travel, review of game film, team- or sport-related relationship building activities, celebrations, award ceremonies, banquets, team- or sport-related fundraising or community service, sport education, or competition site visits.

Local Affiliated Organization (LAO): A regional, state, or local club or organization that is directly affiliated

⁶ This may include volunteers, medical staff, trainers, chaperones, monitors, contract personnel, bus/van drivers, officials, adult athletes, staff, board members, and any other individual who meets the Adult Participant definition.

with USA Fencing or that is affiliated with an NGB by its direct affiliation with a regional or state affiliate of USA Fencing. More specifically for USA Fencing, LAO includes divisions and any club that is registered with and purchased a USA Fencing Premium Club Membership .

Minor Athlete: An Amateur Athlete under 18 years of age who participates in, or participated within the previous 12 months in, an event, program, activity, or competition that is part of, or partially or fully under the jurisdiction of, an NGB, USOPC, or LAO.

Partial or Full Jurisdiction: Includes any sanctioned event (including all travel and lodging in connection with the event) by the NGB, USOPC, or LAO, or any facility that the NGB, USOPC, or LAO owns, leases, or rents for practice, training or competition.

National Governing Body (NGB): A U.S. Olympic National Governing Body or Pan American Sport Organization recognized by the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee pursuant to the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, 36 U.S.C. §§ 220501, et seq. This definition shall also apply to the USOPC, or other sports entity approved by the USOPC, when they have assumed responsibility for the management or governance of a sport included on the program of the Olympic, Paralympic, or Pan-American Games.

Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant: An Adult Participant who assists a parasport athlete requiring help with activities of daily living (ADL) and preparation for athletic participation. This support can be provided by a Guide for Blind or visually impaired athletes or can include assistance with transfer, dressing, showering, medication administration, and toileting. Personal Care Assistants are different for every athlete and should be individualized to fit their specific needs. When assisting a Minor Athlete, Adult Participant PCAs must be authorized by the athlete's parent/guardian.

Regular Contact: Ongoing interactions during a 12-month period wherein an Adult Participant is in a role of direct and active engagement with any amateur athlete(s) who is a minor. This may include but is not limited to coaches, officials, adult athletes, medical training staff, etc. For USA Fencing, six (6) instances of In-Program Contact during a 12-month period is Regular Contact.

Residential Environment: A place in which participants live or stay temporarily. Residential environments include, but are not limited to, onsite housing at training facilities, billeting, hotel stays, or rentals (i.e., AirBnB, VRBO, HomeToGo, etc.).

Billeting: A residential environment facilitated by an Adult Participant, NGB, LAO, the USOPC, or sanctioned event staff in which a Minor Athletes is temporarily housed in a private home with an adult or family who is not related to or known by the Minor Athlete. This lodging arrangement is in conjunction with an activity related to sport.

U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC): A federally chartered nonprofit corporation that serves as the National Olympic Committee and National Paralympic Committee for the United States.

APPENDIX A: ORGANIZATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR EDUCATION & TRAINING AND PREVENTION POLICIES

USA Fencing or the relevant division or member club, as the case may be, must implement proactive policies designed to prevent abuse. These organizational requirements are described below.

A. Organizational Requirements for Education & Training

1. USA Fencing must track whether Adult Participants under its jurisdiction complete the required training listed in Part I.
2. USA Fencing or the relevant division or member club, as the case may be, must, every 12 months, offer and, subject to parental consent, give training to minor athletes on the prevention and reporting of child abuse.
 - a. For training to minor athletes, USA Fencing or the relevant division or member club, as the case may be, must track a description of the training and how the training was offered and provided to Minor Athletes.
 - b. USA Fencing or the relevant division or member club, as the case may be, are not required to track individual course completions of minor athletes.
3. USA Fencing or the relevant division or member club, as the case may be, must, every 12 months, offer training to parents on the prevention and reporting of child abuse.
 - a. For training to parents, USA Fencing or the relevant division or member club, as the case may be, must track a description of the training and how the training was offered and provided to parents.
 - b. USA Fencing or the relevant division or member club, as the case may be, are not required to track individual course completions of parents.

B. Required Prevention Policies and Implementation

1. USA Fencing must develop minor athlete abuse prevention policies to limit one-on-one interactions between a Minor Athlete and an Adult Participant. These policies must contain the mandatory components of the Center's model policies in Part II. These model policies cover:
 - a. Meetings
 - b. Individual Training Sessions
 - c. Therapeutic and Recovery Modalities and Manual Therapy
 - d. Locker rooms and changing areas
 - e. Electronic communications
 - f. Transportation
 - g. Lodging and Residential Environments
2. The policies must be approved by the Center as described in subsection (C) below. The policies may include the recommended components in Part II and the recommended policies in Part III. Given the

uniqueness of each sport, however, some recommended components or policies may not be feasible or appropriate. Such concerns should be addressed with the Center during the Policy Approval and Submission Process discussed below. USA Fencing may choose to implement stricter standards than the model policies.

3. USA Fencing must also require that its division or member clubs implement these policies within their division or club.
4. USA Fencing or the relevant division or member club, as the case may be, must implement these policies for all In-Program Contact.
 - a. At sanctioned events and facilities partially or fully under its jurisdiction, the organization must take steps to ensure the policies are implemented and followed.
 - b. For In-Program Contact that occurs outside USA Fencing's and/or the relevant division's or member club's sanctioned event or facilities, implementing these policies means:
 - i. Communicating the policies to individuals under its jurisdiction;
 - ii. Establishing a reporting mechanism for violations of the policies;
 - iii. Investigating and enforcing violations of the policies.
5. USA Fencing must have a reporting mechanism to accept reports that an Adult Participant is violating USA Fencing's Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies. USA Fencing must appropriately investigate and resolve any reports received, unless the violation is reported to the Center and it exercises jurisdiction over the report. This requirement is in addition to requirements to report abuse under the SafeSport Code.

C. Policy Approval and Submission Process

1. USA Fencing may adopt the MAAPP as-is or adapt it to fit their needs. Regardless, USA Fencing must submit their policies to the Center at compliance@safesport.org for review and approval by April 1, 2024. The Center will approve, approve with modifications, or deny the policies. If the Center denies the proposed policy, the mandatory components of Part III of the Center's Model MAAPP become the default policy until the Center approves the policy.
2. USA Fencing must require their LAOs to incorporate the mandatory components of Part III of the Center's Model MAAPP. USA Fencing may require that their LAOs implement USA Fencing's policies, which may be more stringent than the policies in Part III.
3. USA Fencing may, in its discretion, require its National Member Organizations (NMO) to implement these policies.
 - An NGB that chooses to require its NMOs to implement the Education & Training Policy must obtain advanced, written approval from the Center to expand the training access to additional persons. Requests must be submitted to ngbservices@safesport.org.
4. The mandatory components of Part III of the Center's Model MAAPP will serve as the default policy for any Organization that fails to develop its own policy as required by this section.

Any changes made to USA Fencing's MAAPP after the policy is approved must be submitted to the Center for approval. The previously approved MAAPP will remain in effect until written approval is provided to USA Fencing from the Center.

**APPENDIX B:
ADULT PARTICIPANTS AT USA FENCING**

Adult Participant	Regular Contact	Authority	Training Required
USA Fencing Staff and Interns		x	x
USA Fencing Board / Committee members		x	x
USA Fencing Club Staff/ Board members	x	x	x
USA Fencing Division Officers	x	x	x
Coaches	x	x	x
Event officials (referees, bout committee, armorers, etc.)	x	x	x
Event volunteers (More than 6 instances of In-Program Contact in a 12-month period)	x	x	x
Event Volunteers (Not more than 6 instances of In-Program Contact in a 12-month period)			
Medical professional (preventative care & emergency response)	x	x	x
Medical professional (emergency response only)			
Vendors at National Events	x		x
Adult athletes traveling on a team with minors, supported by USA Fencing	x	x	x
Adult members who have regular contact with minor athletes	x		x
USA Fencing members 18 years of age and older who have no regular contact with minor athlete(s)			



Grievance and Disciplinary Committee

Last update: August 2026

Purpose

The Grievance and Discipline Committee shall be responsible for the administration and adjudication of all grievances and disciplinary complaints falling within its jurisdiction as prescribed by the Board of Directors.

The Grievance and Disciplinary Committee's primary purpose is to oversee the fair and reasonable execution of USA Fencing's disciplinary, grievance and related procedures, as well as extended procedures related to external bodies such as the US Center for SafeSport, US Anti-Doping Agency, US Olympic & Paralympic Committee, FIE, World Ability Sport or other body with primary jurisdiction that refers their jurisdiction (as appropriate) to USA Fencing.

The Grievance and Disciplinary Committee also seats hearing panels and oversees and approves the work of the same.

The Grievance and Disciplinary Committee should be composed primarily of qualified attorneys with experience of such procedures; and at all times must be free of a Conflict of Interest in matters before it. Any doubt regarding if a member has a Conflict of Interest in a matter shall be resolved by the USA Fencing Ethics Committee.

The Grievance and Disciplinary Committee also recommends areas for improvement in the Grievance and Disciplinary process of USA Fencing and may be requested to review an opportunity for improvement arising from a membership suggestion, or a suggestion from Staff, the CEO or the Board of Directors.

This Charter does not take precedence over the USA Fencing bylaws or any other relevant procedure involving the G&DC; where there is a conflict the Bylaws shall preside.

Structure & Composition

The Grievance and Disciplinary Committee is structured as a single Committee, sat by the USA Fencing Board of Directors from expressions of interest from a diverse group; the group should reflect the diversity of the membership of USA Fencing.

Appointments & Terms

The Grievance & Disciplinary Committee is sat by the Board of Directors, per the bylaws.

Non-voting advisors:

- General Counsel of USA Fencing (or designee). USA Fencing general counsel may litigate the interests of USA Fencing (e.g., act as an advocate or in a role similar to a prosecutor). Doing so is presumptively (i) a disclosed conflict of interest that (ii) does not require recusal or (iii) reference to the Ethics Committee.
- Board liaison who has a right of access, a right of information, and a right to be heard.

Meetings: The Grievance & Disciplinary Committee shall meet as needed to conduct necessary Committee business and fulfill its responsibilities under these Procedures.

- Appointments: Members are appointed by the Board of Directors upon recommendation from the Board Chair (or his or her designee) in consultation with the CEO and Governance leadership. Athlete representatives are confirmed consistent with USA Fencing's athlete representation policies.
- Terms: Terms follow USA Fencing committee norms unless otherwise set by the Board. Chairs serve at the pleasure of the Board.
- Voting: All members listed as voting above possess voting privileges; advisors are nonvoting.

Responsibilities & Deliverables

- Oversee the Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures of USA Fencing, ensuring a fair and reasonable process for all parties.
- Make recommendations for improvement of such procedures.
- Alongside the General Counsel and the staff, recommend educational or policy improvements to improve behavioral standards across USA Fencing.

Operating Guidelines

- Conflicts of Interest: Members follow USA Fencing's conflict-of-interest and ethics policies and disclose relevant affiliations; any doubts should be resolved by the USA Fencing Ethics Committee.
- Quorum: A simple majority of voting members constitutes quorum for the Primary Committee and each subcommittee.
- Decision-Making: The Grievance and Disciplinary Committee has delegated authority per the bylaws.

- Liaisons: The Grievance and Disciplinary Committee Chair shall act as the primary liaison to the Board of Directors, the General Counsel, and to the CEO. He or she may designate such from time to time.

Task Force on Committees and Resource Groups

Report to the USA Fencing Board of Directors

September 3, 2026

Task Force and Application Process

The members of the Task Force for 2026-2028 were Molly Hill (Chair), Emily Bian, Will Chang, Jackie Dubrovich OLY, Sarah Hall Kaufman, Lauryn DeLuca PLY, Alice Kee, Alan Kidd, and Ari Simmons. For this cycle an emphasis was placed on reducing the number of Board members and bringing in members of the community who were stand-out contributors on committees. All Task Force members recused themselves from the evaluation of their own applications or of their family members.

The Task Force formally met four times on June 11, June 17, July 27, and August 20 with informal calls and emails in between. Working with the national office, the Task Force amended last year's application form to include pronouns, a location option for people not living in the US, removing the address and phone number, adding a member number requirement (or "willing to become a member", a checkbox for current athlete and 10-year athlete, and a checkbox for para-fencing-related experience. The call for applications was posted on March 16 and the deadline was July 10.

A form for feedback from last year's committee members was also created and distributed to better inform this year's selections. Staff and board members were also invited to fill this form out for committees to which they were liaison. Board members also were sent a form to submit preferences for liaison assignments. Then committees were delegated to each Task Force member to draft a list of selected applicants to then be reviewed and modified by the team as a whole.

Emails have been sent to those who are being nominated for committee service. This is because we have received feedback that if an applicant were not to read the agenda of the September meeting, and then they are voted onto a committee, it might come as a surprise to them. It is better to notify applicants that they are being recommended to the Board and that they may be appointed. Emails will also be sent to those who did not receive appointments after the Board meeting, including specific encouragement for the best applicants to engage in other ways such as the Leadership Academy, Empower mentorship program, or division leadership. Emails will also be sent to Chairs with feedback about their committees from this cycle. Additionally, any attorneys who were not selected will have their names provided to the General Counsel to be considered for Grievance and Disciplinary panels. Finally, referees who were not selected will have their applications forwarded to the Referees Commission in case there are openings on RC committees.

Athlete composition will be determined separately by the Athlete Advisory Council (AAC). A number of athletes applied through the standard process which is acceptable but those who

were not selected had their names passed along to the AAC for consideration for the Athlete slots. Additionally the Task Force discussed recommendations and feedback for athlete representatives with Ari Simmons, Lauryn DeLuca, and Jackie Dubrovich, all of whom sat on the Task Force.

The Staff Liaisons listed below have been determined by the National Office.

Staff members essential to this project were Phil Andrews, Jess Saxon, Morgan Boland, Shannon Daugherty, Bryan Wendell, Brad Suchorski, and in fact all the staff members who provided their feedback on committee composition and worked behind the scenes to make this process as smooth as possible.

Call for applications:

<https://www.usafencing.org/news/2026/march/16/shape-the-future-of-fencing-apply-to-usa-fencing-s-committees-councils-and-resource-groups-for-2026-27>

Notes on Review Process

- In addition to the existing committee orientation provided by the national office, the task force recommends an orientation for all new chairs.
- In the optional demographics questions on the application, there should be age categories above 60 especially to facilitate diverse membership of the Veterans Committee.
- This application cycle we added demographic questions to determine who was eligible as a 10-year athlete. However there was a lot of confusion as to the definition of the term. The task force recommends that next time the application directly asks about the factors that qualify someone as an athlete, e.g. "Have you competed in a World Cup or Grand Prix for Team USA in the last 10 years?"
- The next cycle it would be helpful to have a checkbox for "USA Fencing Leadership Academy Graduate"
- The Budget Committee and Sports Performance Resource Group should be removed from the application next time. This is because the Budget Committee can only consist of Board members and the Sports Performance Resource Group is dormant.
- Some committee members from last year did not understand that they needed to reapply every year. This continues to be an issue each year. It is recommended that in future application cycles a specific email is sent to committee members before the application is released explaining this process.
- Engagement and succession planning were two key issues considered by the Task Force. Most of the recommendations for committees are a mix of old and new members. The by-law amendment about term limits began in 2024 and is not retroactive, but the Task Force urges committees to emphasize succession planning and mentorship of the next generation of volunteers. As for engagement, the task force reminds committee chairs and staff liaisons to take attendance (which was intermittent in the past few years) for better evaluation of engagement at the end of each year per committee attendance requirements.

- The Budget Committee does not currently allow for any community members and yet applications were collected for the Budget Committee. As a result of this process, the Chair of the Task Force is putting forth a motion to formalize seats on the Budget Committee for community members with experience in finance.
- The task force reminds the Board and national office that per a motion passed in 2024, selected members of committees must complete all requirements of membership, Conflict of Interest form, background check, and SafeSport certification within 45 days or they will be removed.

Applicant Summary

USA Fencing received 227 applications (similar to 233 in 2024 and much greater than the 99 applicants received in 2023) from across 29 states. 91 unique applicants (40% of the applicant pool) were selected for 112 positions across 19 committees, resource groups, and councils.

The most popular committees for applicants were the Tournament Committee (81), International Relations Committee (70), and Ethics Committee (62) though notably the option “Willing to serve anywhere” (77) was equally as popular. The least popular committees were the Nominating Committee (21), Hall of Fame Committee (24), Election Committee (24), SEMI (26) and Paralympic Committee (28). There was a significant increase in applications even for the least popular committees which last time were the Hall of Fame Committee (10), Audit Committee (12), Nominating Committee (12), and Election Committee (14).

Diverse representation is a key value of our organization as highlighted in the strategic plan and recent by-law amendments to mandate diversity in committees when possible. Note that for ethnicity the total is greater than 100% because many applicants list themselves as having more than one ethnicity, so some were counted more than once. One highlight of this year’s committee selection is that Asian-American representation on committees has increased from 13% to 19%. Additionally 29% of our selected committee members identify as representatives of the para-fencing community (coaches, parents, fencers, referees, etc.).

<i>Age</i>	<i>% Applicants</i>	<i>% Selected</i>
18-20	1%	0%
21-30	10%	7%
31-40	13%	10%
41-50	27%	33%
51-60	25%	30%
60 or older	22%	19%
Prefer Not to Answer	2%	1%
Grand Total	100%	100%
<i>Gender Identity</i>	<i>% Applicants</i>	<i>% Selected</i>
Female	43%	51%
Male	55%	48%
Prefer not to Answer	1%	1%
Grand Total	100%	100%
<i>Para-fencing Community</i>	<i>% Applicants</i>	<i>% Selected</i>
No	73%	64%
Prefer not to answer	6%	6%
Yes	20%	29%
Grand Total	100%	100%

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>% Applicants</i>	<i>% Selected</i>
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2%	2%
Asian/Asian American	23%	19%
Black/African American	7%	3%
Hispanic/Latino(a)/Chicano(a)	7%	4%
Middle Eastern or North African	2%	1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0%	1%
Not Listed	1%	0%
Two or more Ethnicities	8%	6%
White	53%	71%
Prefer Not to Answer	6%	1%
Grand Total	109%	109%
<i>Identify as person with disability?</i>	<i>% Applicants</i>	<i>% Selected</i>
No	81%	84%
Prefer not to answer	8%	10%
Yes	11%	6%
Grand Total	100%	100%

Task Force Recommendations

Committees		2026-28 Committee Members	2026-28 Chair	2026-28 Board Liaisons	2026-28 Athlete Suggestions	2026-28 Ex Officio / Advisors	2026-28 Staff Liaisons	2024-25 RC Liaisons
1	Audit Committee	Joe Inzerillo (2027) Tetyana Klepko (2027) Charles (Chuck) Wemple (2028) Skip Gilbert (2028)	Charles (Chuck) Wemple	Bruce Mitchell	2x		Tabitha Chamberlin	
2	Budget Committee	Emily Bian Maria Panyl Nona Lim Erik Moses	Emily Bian	Scott Rodgers	Recommendations: Cody Ji Dawson Sieradzky	Voting ex-officio: Emily Bian	Tabitha Chamberlin	
3	Coaches' Committee	Jennifer Kay Oldham Tsvetelina Hristov Greg Domashovetz Soren Thompson Ipek Irem Utku Dan Kellner	Jennifer Kay Oldham	Andrey Geva	3x		Brad Suchorski	
4	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Committee	Christopher Collado Dawn Wilson Adeline Chung-Feder 4th chosen by committee later	Dawn Wilson	Nona Lim	2x Recommendations: Jataya, Bryce, Iman		Kaitlyn Litten	Tasha Martin
5	Election Committee	Oppong Hemeng (2027) Mark Segal (2027) 2028 Positions - Work in Progress	Work in progress	Jeremy Sirota	2x		Bryan Wendell	
6	Ethics Committee	Severin Wirz Will Chang Kelvin Mai Claire Yan	Will Chang	Gregory Husisian	2x		Jess Saxon	
7	Grievance & Discipline Committee	Mark House David Eldridge Sarah Hall Kaufman Melissa Corona	Mark House	Skip Gilbert	2x Recommendation: Keep Ellen and Iman		Jess Saxon	
8	Hall of Fame Committee	Maggie Dull Adeline Chung-Feder Christopher Cheney Michael Marx Valerie Asher Gabrielle Sabharwal	Maggie Dull	Erik Moses	3x Recommendations: Ellen Geddes, Peter Souders, Soren Thompson		Bryan Wendell	
9	International Relations Committee	Overall Kelly Koehler Jennifer Yamin Scott Rodgers Felicia Zimmermann Gabrielle Sabharwal	Kelly Koehler	Jackie Dubrovich	Recommendations: Scott, Alex (Scott and Alex are ex-officio but should get votes)	Non-voting ex-officio: Phil Andrews or designee Chair of BoD (in this case Scott is voting as athlete)	Phil Andrews	
		FIE Sub-Committee Kelly Koehler Jennifer Yamin Iana Dakova Don Anthony Rita Comes Lorrie Marol-Holmes Ashley Brady	Jennifer Yamin	N/A	4x Recommendations: Kat, Alex, Scott (Scott and Alex are ex-officio but should get votes)	Non-voting ex-officio: Carl Borack Greg Massialas Felicia Zimmermann Donald Alperstein Alex Massialas Peter Barton Phil Andrews or designee Chair of BoD	N/A	
		WAS Sub-Committee Sean Shumate Kathy Walters Jelena Zeljkovic Jon Moss Susan Kim Tsui	Scott Rodgers	N/A	3x Recommendations: Scott (ex-officio but should get vote) Lauryn (ex-officio but should get vote) Jataya Taylor	Non-voting ex-officio: Gil Pezza Gabrielle Sabharwal Lauryn DeLuca Phil Andrews or designee Chair of BoD	N/A	
10	Nominating Committee	Harrison Hue (2027) Bruce Mitchell (2028) Iana Dakova (2027) Dennis Kolakowski (2028)	Committee selected Harrison again	Bruce Mitchell	2x Recommendations: Ellen Geddes, Kat Holmes		Jess Saxon	
11	U.S. SEMI Committee	David Blake Theodore Li Joseph Moore Alice Kee Irene Edgerton Albert Merritt Liz Morey Brian Rosen Kathy Walters Shane Malachow Kira Horiuchi	Kathy Walters	Scott Rodgers	6x Recommendations: Scott		Margie Gronke	Bradley Baker
12	Tournament Committee	Brandon Rochelle Nathan Anderson Jennifer Salmon Laura S. Johnson Richard Weiss David Blake Dan Berke Iana Dakova	Brandon Rochelle	Joe Inzerillo	4x Recommendations: Peter Souders Soren Thompson		Glen Hollingsworth	Sean Shumate
13	Veterans Committee	Valerie Asher Jane Carter Kate Sierra Jonathan Bartlett Ken Gauvey Thomas Mahnken Marsha Reichman Holly Buechel Kathleen Reckling David Tsung David Baxter	Valerie Asher	Nona Lim	6x	Voting ex-officio: Rita Comes	Phil Andrews	

Task Force Recommendations (continued)

Resource Groups	2026-28 Committee Members	2026-28 Chair	2026-28 Board Liaisons	2026-28 Athlete Suggestions	2026-28 Ex Officio / Advisors	2026-28 Staff Liaisons	2026-28 RC Liaisons
14 Data Resource Group	Coby Clark James Edwards Justin Smith Alexander Ju Annmaria Lu Elena Pivovarov Marc Shull	Marc Shull	Jeremy Sirota	4x Recs: looking for more women, experience in data analysis and surveys		Brad Suchorski	
15 Divisions Resource Group	Dan Berke Shanna Davis Dennis Kolakowski Brenda Waddoups Richard Weiss Rebecca Ferguson Stephen Janoski Linda Dunn Teena Myers		Donald Alperstein	4x		Brad Suchorski	
16 Paralympic Development Resource Group	Stacey Breidenstein Sean Shumate Jill Feldman Derek Anthony Plonka Stacie LaMoore Robert Renfro		Laurn DeLuca	3x Recommendation: T	Voting ex-officio: Head Coach	Beth Mahr	
17 Sports Medicine Resource Group	Alan Friedman Stephen Morales Nicole Polanichka Derek Anthony Plonka Eugene Yin Mia Chao Laura S Johnson		Kat Holmes	4x		Peggy Chin	
18 Sports Performance Resource Group	(John) Scott Rodgers Harrison Hue Holly Buechel Ipek Irem Ulku Kelly Koehler Natalie Dostert Dagmara Wozniak		Jackie Dubrovich	4x		Kate Reisinger	
Other	2026-28 Committee Members	2026-28 Chair	2026-28 Board Liaisons	2026-28 Athlete Suggestions	2026-28 Ex Officio / Advisors	2026-28 Staff Liaisons	2026-28 RC Liaisons
19 Parents' Council	Heather Shankwiler Cynthia Carrasco Gregory Husisian Julien Beasley Steven Horowitz Will Chang	Heather Shankwiler	Maria Panyi	optional (incorrectly listed on website as "vacant")		Phil Andrews	
20 Referees' Commission			Donald Alperstein	4x		Glen Hollingsworth	

Notes on Liaison Recommendations

Committee recommendations for both members and Board liaisons are like a giant game of Tetris. The task force did its best to balance Board members' responses to the poll for committee preferences, expertise, and time commitment. Below we have listed all of the committees that we recommend for each Director, either as **liaison**, **general member**, or **both**.

Lauryn DeLuca: **IRC**, **Parafencing Development**

Jackie Dubrovich: **IRC**, **Sports Performance**

Andrey Geva: **Coaches**

Skip Gilbert: **Audit**, **G&DC**

Kat Holmes: **Sports Medicine**, *recommended for IRC athlete position*

Greg Husisian: **Ethics**, **Parents**

Nona Lim: **Budget**, **DEIB**, **Veterans**

Bruce Mitchell: **Audit**, **Nominating**

Erik Moses: **Budget**, **Hall of Fame**

Maria Panyi: **Budget**, **Parents**

Scott Rodgers: **Budget**, **IRC**, **SEMI**

Jeremy Sirota: **Election**, **Data**

Donald Alperstein: **Division**, **RC**

Emily Bian: **Budget**

Notes on Committee Recommendations

Audit Committee

Charles (Chuck) Wemple does a stellar job as Chair of the Audit Committee so it was an easy decision to recommend his continued service. Jackie Dubrovich decided to step away from the Audit committee so we recommend Skip Gilbert takes her place, bringing a fresh perspective as an independent Director as required in the by-laws. We also recommend Bruce Mitchell join the committee as Board Liaison.

Budget Committee

Emily, Maria, and Scott were central to the Budget committee last year so we wanted to keep them in their positions. We also wanted to introduce two new voices with Nona and Erik. Scott is still on the committee as Board liaison which makes sense especially in his role as Chair of the Board. While the Athlete Council decides who will serve as an athlete representative, we want to highlight Cody Ji and Dawson Sieradzky who applied for committee work, had excellent applications, and are eligible as 10-year athletes. They cannot serve as non-athlete representatives as they are not on the Board of Directors but we believe that they would be good contributors to this committee.

Coaches Committee

First we would like to recognize Allen Evans for his excellent work as the very first Chair of the Coaches Committee in its current form. He decided to not re-apply and he will be missed. Thank you Allen for your dedication and contributions. In his stead the task force recommends that Jen Oldham becomes Chair of the task force. She brings extensive coaching and leadership experience from her own club and the NCAA. We also would like to welcome back Tsvetelina Hristov, Greg Domashovetz, and Board liaison Andrey Geva who all bring expertise and continuity from the previous term. For new voices on the committee, we recommend Soren Thompson OLY (epee fencer and coach), Ipek Irem Ulku (saber coach with a background in research), and Dan Kellner OLY (club owner, foil coach, and Hall of Famer).

DEIB Committee

This committee has been working well in its current form. Christopher and Dawn re-applied so we recommend keeping them on the committee with Dawn continuing as Chair. Adeline Chung-Feder brings expansive experience as a new member including in her time with WFencing. The fourth position (currently held by Harrison Hue) will be determined by the DEIB Committee itself per the by-laws. The task force recommends that the DEIB committee selects Beverly Isom as their fourth member. Beverly has been a passionate advocate for fencing in underrepresented communities for her whole life and brings experience from her career as a communications professional. Lauryl DeLuca was previously Board Liaison but prefers to switch committees so we recommend Nona Lim to this position.

Election Committee

Two positions are up for re-appointment for the Election Committee this year. The task force is still finalizing its recommendations for membership and will have names for you shortly. We definitely recommend Jeremy Sirota as Board liaison.

Ethics Committee

The Ethics Committee saw a drastic increase in work this year and professional legal input became more important. Claire Yan replaces Rachel Crass and fulfills the requirement for someone who meets the criteria of an independent Director. Severin Wirz and Will Chang are also new members of the committee. Severin is a former fencer who works in ethics and compliance in his career. He, Will, and Claire are all attorneys. Gregory Husisian will continue on the committee but as Board liaison rather than Chair as the Task Force believes that the Chair should not be a Board member. Will has been an excellent contributor on a few committees this past cycle. While he helped with the composition of the Ethics Committee, he recused himself from the discussion of his own application and the recommendation for Will as Chair is supported by the whole Task Force as well as Ethics Committee Staff Liaison Jess Saxon.

Grievance and Disciplinary Committee

All of the current committee members except Michael Chapman re-applied to be on this committee. The Task Force feels that stability in this committee is very important so it recommends that all three re-applicants and the Chair remain the same. Melissa Corona was chosen for the fourth position given her experience as a litigation attorney in California, balancing out the geographic diversity of the committee (Arizona, North Carolina, and Illinois for the others). The Task Force would like to applaud the contributions of athlete representatives Ellen Geddes and Iman Blow and strongly recommend that they continue in their positions. We thank Peter Barton for his service to the G&DC but at this time Skip Gilbert is our recommendation for Board liaison given his extensive legal experience and because this committee is a good fit for an independent At-Large director.

Hall of Fame Committee

The Hall of Fame process has had a lot of ups and downs over the years. It was important to pause, reassess, and document the ideal process. This summer the National Office formed a Task Force of Valerie Asher, Michael Marx OLY, Sean Shumate PLY, and Andy Shaw. Their work is still in progress but they hope to report to the Board and Hall of Fame committee soon.

Very few members of the Hall of Fame Committee re-applied this year. With the applications that the Task Force did receive, we recommend the following members: Valerie Asher - Chair of the Veterans' Committee, vet national team member, and strong contributor to last year's Hall of Fame Committee; Christopher Cheney - saber coach and FIE referee; Adeline Chung-Feder - coach at Wagner College, USFCA committee member, and former board member of WFencing; Maggie Dull - bout committee chair, Assistant Dean at University of Rochester, and Jack Baker Service Award winner; Michael Marx - Olympian in both foil and epee, coach, club owner, and

Hall of Fame member; Gabrielle Sabharwal - member of World Para Fencing Executive Board with experience working on Hall of Fame processes. This group brings a variety of experience from across the sport, a deep knowledge of USA Fencing history, and professional skills to reboot the Hall of Fame process. Maggie Dull would make an exceptional Chair with her skills in leadership and change management at this critical juncture.

Erik Moses should serve as Hall of Fame liaison as his outside experience in sports will be useful during the re-evaluation of the committee standard operating procedures.

International Relations Committee

Overall the task force recommends keeping the IRC and its sub-committees similar to the last cycle. The only slight changes were related to which members re-applied. Additionally, we received two particularly outstanding applications - Ashley Brady and Susan Kim Tsui. Ashley is a fencing parent and a former US diplomat who served in China, Canada, and South Africa. Additionally she liaised with the NBA and WNBA during her time stationed in South Africa. Susan is also a fencing parent with diplomatic experience, and has spent her career focused on strategic marketing, communications, and partnerships across global markets. The task force believes that Ashley and Susan can bring a unique outside perspective to the IRC sub-committees especially as we move towards LA 2028.

One additional note on this committee is that Dr. Scott Rodgers PLY should continue as a voting member of the WPF sub-committee. We recommend that the Athlete Council appoints him as an athlete representative so he is a voting member. We also recommend that the Athlete Council appoints Dr. Kat Holmes OLY as another athlete representative. USA Fencing does not hold a position on the FIE Medical Commission and Kat's perspective as an athlete and doctor would be vital when determining a future nominee for that commission.

Finally, the committee recommends Jackie Dubrovich OLY as Board liaison to the IRC. Scott can maintain his position on the committee as a voting athlete representative, ex-officio as Chair of the Board, current national team member, and Paralympic bronze medalist. Appointing Jackie allows for another representative from the Board and brings her experience as a coach and Olympic gold medalist.

Nominating Committee

Two positions are up for re-appointment on the Nominating Committee, those held by Al Kidd (someone who meets the criteria for an independent director) and Cody Mattern OLY (someone with experience as an At-Large Director, officer, or committee member. Neither Al nor Cody re-applied. In their place we recommend Bruce Mitchell (as a member and Board liaison) and Dennis Kolakowski. The task force acknowledges that the Board is likely to change the composition of the Nominating Committee soon and has relayed this information to Dennis.

SEMI

This committee should stay very similar to its previous iteration. However the task force believes it's vital to include some fresh perspectives - we specifically recommend Shane Malchow and Kira Horiuchi. The majority of the committee has served for over 8 consecutive years and with term limits coming into play in a few years, it's vital to start considering succession planning.

The task force also notes that there are no mandatory qualifications for serving on SEMI. However we decided that all of our recommendations should be on the national hire list and must not have a business selling fencing equipment. There were discussions around additional criteria to avoid conflicts of interest but given the existing framework provided by the Ethics Committee's protocols, any additional restrictions should be discussed by SEMI and the Board of Directors as modifications to their committee charter.

Dr. Scott Rodgers PLY should continue as Board liaison given his experience as an engineer and excellent work on this committee.

Tournament Committee

Similar to SEMI, the Tournament Committee stays mostly the same and succession planning is also important. In 2024 we introduced some new members to help with this, including Jennie Salmon, Rich Weiss, and Laura Johnson. This year there will be a bit more turnover as Alan Geller and Maggie Dull did not reapply but we thank them for their incredible contributions over the years. The only new member we recommend this year is Iana Dakova who brings a vital perspective from the referee cadre to supplement the existing RC liaison position. Joe Inzerillo would be a perfect Board liaison to bring years of technology and data expertise.

Additionally the committee wishes to recognize the stellar work by Peter Souders. He is vital to the Tournament Committee's efforts and we recommend that he continues to serve as one of the athlete representatives.

Veterans Committee

The names put forward expand the Veterans Committee but this was only after consultation with Valerie Asher who we would like to continue as Chair. Having a larger group allows for perspectives from more weapons and age categories. We're happy to welcome back most of the previous committee except for Will Chang who has decided to prioritize other committee work. We've also added Holly Buechel (film editor, referee, and V40 WE World Champion), Kathleen Reckling (V40WF team member, coach, and non-profit leader), David Tsung (V40MS team member), and David Baxter (film producer and V60ME fencer). We recommend Nona Lim as Board liaison as she is an active veteran fencer.

Data Resource Group

This group is almost entirely different from its previous iteration. As the Data Resource Group's sole purpose is to assist the national office, the task force worked with Brad Suchorski on its

composition. Brad shared the office's data-driven initiatives for the upcoming year (surveys, data and technology audit, and AI) and the task force used that information to select the applicants with the appropriate expertise. Marc Shull should continue as Chair as he is vital to the organization of this group's initiatives. Jeremy Sirota would be an excellent Board liaison given his experience with technology.

Divisions Resource Group

Our recommendations for the Divisions Resource Group is largely the same as the previous iteration with the exception of Dominique Hance and David Galler who did not apply. We believe they should be replaced with Rebecca (Chimahusky) Ferguson and Teena Myers. This maintains a fairly even balance of representatives from all six USA Fencing regions. Rebecca had previously served on this group as an athlete representative (until 2024) and has experience on both the Capitol and Hawaii division boards though she is now based in Colorado. She also brings a unique point of view from being an athlete, coach, and division officer. Teena currently serves on the Central Ohio Division board and works in professional club management and bout committee, and also brings experience from her career as a Vice President in a global financial services firm.

Paralympic Resource Group

This group is working well so members that reapplied to this particular group should be reappointed (Stacey, Sean, and Jill). We then recommend the addition of Derek Plonka (physical therapist and fencing parent), Stacie LaMoore (sister of an international parafencer), and Robert Renfro (nonprofit leader, parafencer, and retired military officer with international work experience). Lauryn DeLuca is best suited to continue in her role as liaison.

Sports Medicine Resource Group

Many current members of this group did not reapply which is why we are recommending mostly new names. Everyone brings extensive professional experience to the group, and names have been reviewed and approved by staff liaison Dr. Peggy Chin. Dr. Kat Holmes OLY should continue as Board liaison.

Sports Performance Resource Group

This group is essentially dormant just in case the national office needs its expertise. Therefore the task force recommends maintaining the same members of the group as they understand the current situation.

Parents Council

Heather has done an amazing job as Chair of the Parents Council in its first ever term. In addition to reappointing Heather in her role, the task force recommends keeping Council members who reapplied (Julien Beasley, Will Chang, Greg Husisian) as well as Maria Panyi as Board liaison. For the three new members of the Council, we recommend adding Cynthia Carrasco (parent with Board experience) and Steven Horowitz (parent, lawyer, and Board member.. They are both younger and from diverse backgrounds and locations across the

country. The task force would like to note that it would have liked to appoint a parent from the para-fencing community, however it was unsuccessful in either receiving a direct application or sourcing someone from the community.

**UNITED STATES FENCING ASSOCIATION
GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE
COMPLAINT and HEARING PROCEDURES**

Restated and Adopted on XXXX XXXXX, 2026

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITIONS

The following Complaint and Hearing Procedures (“Procedures”) apply to Reports and Complaints that are filed with the United States Fencing Association (“USFA”) and are within the jurisdiction of the Grievance and Discipline Committee (“Committee”). Any person who becomes a member of USFA or participates in USFA-sanctioned events agrees to be subject to these Complaint and Hearing Procedures.

As used in these Procedures:

A **Report** is a submission to USFA alleging a violation of USFA’s Articles of Incorporation, bylaws, rules, regulations, or policies; the USOPC bylaws; or the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act. A **Reporting Party** is the person or entity that submits a Report to USFA. The Reporting Party is not necessarily the Complainant and does not acquire party status in any proceeding solely by virtue of submitting a Report.

A **Complaint** is a formal document that initiates proceedings before the Committee. A **Complainant** is the person or entity formally filing a matter before the Committee. For disciplinary matters, the Complaint will generally be filed by USFA after review and investigation of the Report as described in Section 4, and USFA will serve as the Complainant. For non-disciplinary Reports described in §3.6.3 and §3.6.4, a private party may serve as the Complainant. In such cases, the Manager may, after initial review, designate the Report as the Complaint or require the Complainant to submit a Complaint in the form prescribed by these Procedures.

SECTION 2. JURISDICTION

The USFA Grievance and Discipline Committee is created and governed by the USFA Bylaws, and the policies, rules, and practices adopted by USFA. The purpose of these Complaint and Hearing Procedures is to provide a mechanism for adjudicating cases that fall within any of those policies or that allege conduct detrimental to USFA, and to adjudicate the grievances of USFA members. Nothing in these Procedures shall be construed as expanding or limiting the jurisdiction of the Committee.

The Committee shall not have jurisdiction over the following Reports or Complaints:

- (a) Reports or Complaints involving disputes over matters covered by USFA’s Black Card policy;
- (b) Reports or Complaints involving disputes over membership decisions made in relation to USFA’s background check policy;
- (c) Reports or Complaints concerning the resolution of disputes arising in the context of traveling teams where such resolution is directed to other personnel under separately stated USFA policies;
- (d) Reports or Complaints over which the Referees’ Commission is given exclusive jurisdiction, provided that with respect to any matter over which the Referees’ Commission has non-exclusive jurisdiction, the Manager, in consultation with the

- Referees' Commission Chair, shall determine which tribunal will adjudicate the Complaint;
- (e) Reports or Complaints relating to Anti-Doping under the jurisdiction of the United States Anti-Doping Agency or the doping rules of FIE;
 - (f) Reports or Complaints over which the US Center for SafeSport has exclusive jurisdiction or has given USFA notice that it is exercising discretionary jurisdiction;
 - (g) Reports or Complaints involving the Field of Play or within the purview of the Rules of Competition, unless other USFA Policies are clearly implicated by the alleged misconduct;
 - (h) Reports or Complaints involving non-members, such as action taken against non-members under the Spectator Code of Conduct.

SECTION 3. REPORTS AND COMPLAINTS

§3.1 Reports via the Portal. Any person may submit a Report through the USFA Reporting Portal. A Report may be anonymous, although identification is encouraged and may be necessary for the Committee to take further action.

§3.2 Confidentiality of Reports. Reports are confidential. The Manager may share Reports on a need-to-know basis with the Committee Chair, the CEO, or other appropriate USFA personnel. Reports shall not be disclosed to the Respondent or the public except as authorized by these rules or as required by law, USOPC policy, or the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

§3.3 Contents of Report. A Report alleging a violation of the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act (the "Act"), USOPC Bylaws, USFA Articles of Incorporation, USFA Bylaws, any USFA rule, regulation, or policy (except as set out below), or any grievance of a USFA member against another member or the USFA itself shall:

§3.3.1 Identify the individual or body filing the Report ("Reporting Party"), with membership number where applicable, and the individual(s) or body(ies) against whom the Report is filed ("Respondent") including, where available, the membership number and any contact information the Reporting Party has for the Respondent. The USFA, its Board, or any of the Committees of the Board may act as the Reporting Party.

§3.3.2 Set forth a statement in clear and concise language of the conduct or omission that is alleged to constitute a violation or upon which the grievance is based;

§3.3.3 Identify, where possible, any specific policy or rule that the Reporting Party alleges has been violated;

§3.3.4 Be signed by the person making the Report or, where the Reporting Party is a minor, by the minor's parent or legal guardian, who shall attest to its validity, under express affirmation that all factual statements contained in the Report are true to the best of the Reporting Party's knowledge, information and belief;

§3.3.5 Provide a telephone number and sufficient contact information for the Reporting Party or the Reporting Party's counsel or representative (or, for a minor, the minor's parent or legal guardian) to permit the exchange of information in written or electronic form (physical address or email);

§3.3.6 State the relief sought, except that the relief specifically requested shall not serve as a limitation on the relief that the Hearing Panel may grant.

§3.3.7 Attach documentation or materials to support initial review of the Report. Attachment of information or materials shall not serve as a bar to the Reporting Party's subsequent provision of information in accordance with the Hearing Panel's procedural orders or at the hearing, unless doing so would unfairly disadvantage the Respondent.

§3.3.8 If the Report alleges denial of an opportunity to compete in a Protected Competition, the Report shall also identify the Protected Competition and any other person(s) whose opportunity to participate may be affected by the Committee's adjudication.

§3.4 Timeliness of Reports/Statute of Limitations. Except as otherwise provided herein, a Report alleging a grievance, violation of USA Fencing's Bylaws, rules, policies, codes of conduct, or other misconduct subject to these Procedures must be filed within two (2) years from the date of the alleged conduct giving rise to the Report. The Grievance & Discipline Committee may, for good cause shown and in the interests of fairness, safety, or the integrity of the sport, consider a Report filed outside this limitations period. In determining whether good cause exists, the Committee may consider, among other factors, when the Reporting Party knew or reasonably should have known of the alleged conduct, whether the alleged conduct was concealed, the age or circumstances of the Reporting Party at the time of the alleged conduct, the continuing or recurring nature of the alleged conduct, the availability of relevant evidence, and any other circumstances the Committee deems relevant.

§3.4.1 SafeSport Matters. Notwithstanding the foregoing, no statute of limitations or other time bar under these Procedures shall apply to allegations, reports, or conduct that fall, or may reasonably fall, within the jurisdiction or authority of the U.S. Center for SafeSport under the SafeSport Code, federal law, or other applicable policies or requirements. Nothing in these Procedures shall prohibit, limit, delay, or otherwise affect the reporting or referral of any matter to the U.S. Center for SafeSport, law enforcement, or any other authority with jurisdiction over the alleged conduct. To the extent USA Fencing has jurisdiction or authority to address conduct that is also reported or referred to the U.S. Center for SafeSport, USA Fencing may take such action as is permitted or required by applicable law, the SafeSport Code, USA Fencing policies, or other governing requirements, without regard to the limitations period set forth above.

§3.5 Role of the Manager. The USFA General Counsel or their designee will serve as the Manager for any Report. In all cases, the Manager (and any designee) shall be a disinterested individual. In the event of a conflict, the CEO, the Chair of the Board of Directors, or the Committee Chair will serve as the Manager or appoint a designee (including external investigators or counsel) to serve as the Manager. The Manager may designate external investigators or counsel

as necessary. The Manager is responsible for handling the Report as described in this policy. The Manager shall have the authority to file a Report (or, in appropriate circumstances, a Complaint) on behalf of USFA even in the absence of a Reporting Party. The Manager shall have the power to set any necessary deadlines during any review, investigation, or appeal.

§3.6 Incomplete Reports. If a Report does not contain the information required under §3.3, the Manager shall notify the Reporting Party of the deficiency and provide a reasonable period for compliance. If a Reporting Party fails to comply with §3.3, the Manager may dismiss the Report.

§3.7 Processing of Reports and Filing of Complaints.

§3.7.1 For all Reports, the Manager will conduct an initial review to determine whether there is jurisdiction consistent with Section 2. The Manager shall dismiss any Report that is outside the Committee's jurisdiction. The Manager may refer the Report to any relevant entity, committee, or organization that may have jurisdiction.

§3.7.2 For Reports involving violations of USFA's FenceSafe, Code of Conduct, or other disciplinary policies, the Manager will handle the report as outlined in Section 4. Should the Report not be resolved under Section 4, the Manager may file a Complaint with the Committee. USFA will serve as the Complainant.

§3.7.3 For Reports alleging the denial of an opportunity to compete in a Protected Competition, USFA shall be named as a Respondent and shall have the right, in its discretion, to defend against that Report. In appeals in which Section 13 of the Athlete Handbook applies, the appealing party shall be named as the Complainant and the other party the Respondent. In these circumstances, the Report may serve as the Complaint and the confidentiality provisions of §3.2 will not apply, or the Manager may require the Complainant to prepare and file a formal Complaint. The Manager will send the Complaint to the Committee Chair to appoint a Hearing Panel and for a hearing, consistent with Section 6.

§3.7.4 In all other matters, following initial review by the Manager, the party filing the initial Report shall be designated the Complainant and the other party the Respondent. USFA may substitute as Complainant in any matters brought under these rules at its sole discretion. In these circumstances, the Report may serve as the Complaint and the confidentiality provisions of §3.2 will not apply, or the Manager may require the Complainant to prepare and file a formal Complaint. The Manager will send the Complaint to the Committee Chair to appoint a Hearing Panel and for a hearing, consistent with Section 6.

SECTION 4. REVIEW AND RESOLUTION OF DISCIPLINARY REPORTS

§4.1 Manager Review and Resolution of Reports. After receiving a Report under §3.6.2, the Manager shall review the submission and determine the appropriate disposition as described in this Section.

§4.2 Initial Inquiry. When USFA becomes aware of a potential violation of its Policies through a report, the Manager will begin an initial inquiry. In the initial inquiry, the Manager shall first review the concern to determine whether the alleged violation is within USFA's jurisdiction and whether the underlying facts, if taken as true, give rise to an actionable claim. If the matter is an actionable claim within USFA's jurisdiction, the review will continue. If the matter is not an actionable claim within USFA's jurisdiction, the matter will be closed for lack of jurisdiction.

§4.3 Investigative Review. After the initial inquiry, the Manager or their designee shall conduct a review. At this stage, the Manager will draft and send a Notice of Allegations to the Respondent. The Notice should be sent to the Respondent within 14 business days after receipt of a properly filed Report absent good cause, in the Manager's discretion, for delay. The Notice must include the Respondent's name and identifying membership information, the alleged grounds of the violation, and the evidence or a summary of the evidence supporting the allegation. During the review, the Manager or their designee may take whatever steps deemed necessary in their discretion to conduct a full review of the matter, including but not limited to:

- Reviewing applicable USFA Bylaws, applicable authorities, and relevant policies;
- Making requests for and reviewing documentation related to the matter;
- Conducting open-source research;
- Reviewing any evidence related to the matter;
- Interviewing involved parties, including the Reporting Party, the Respondent, and any witnesses;
- Making relevant credibility determinations.

§4.4 Grounds for Dismissal. If the Manager finds cause to do so, a Report may be dismissed during the initial inquiry or investigative review for reasons including but not limited to:

- Lack of jurisdiction;
- Failure to state an actionable claim;
- Insufficient evidence to support the claims by a preponderance of the evidence;
- Lack of participation by a necessary party or witness;
- The issue has been previously adjudicated.

§4.5 Agreed Resolution. Where possible, the Manager may resolve a Report in advance of hearing by agreement of USFA and the Respondent. Such agreed resolutions may consist of any disposition that could result from a full panel hearing and may include an offer of diversion.

§4.5.1 The Manager shall have the authority to resolve the Report upon terms approved by the Chief Executive Officer and the Committee Chair (or, in the event of a conflict, their designee).

§4.5.2 Agreed resolutions shall be reduced to writing and become effective upon acceptance by USFA and the Respondent, which acceptance may be evidenced by signature, confirming email or other recognizable means of assent. A Reporting Party may be provided notice of the agreed resolution.

§4.6 Resolution after Review. After the review, if the Report is not dismissed or resolved under §4.5, the Manager will conclude whether a violation occurred.

§4.6.1 Burden of Proof. USFA's Manager conducts the review with a preponderance of the evidence standard, meaning that a matter can be considered a violation if it appears "more likely than not" that a violation occurred.

§4.6.2 Notice of Determination. The Manager will send the Respondent a notice of the Manager's determination. The Manager may also provide the notice to the Reporting Party.

§4.6.3 Sanction. If the Manager determines that, in their judgment, a violation occurred, the Manager, with the approval of the CEO and the Committee Chair, will assess what disciplinary sanction (or combination of sanctions) is appropriate. The disciplinary sanction will be included in the Notice. Disciplinary sanctions include, but are not limited to:

- Warning (public or private),
- Probation, with or without conditions,
- Limitations on access to USFA facilities,
- Performance of a specified task(s), such as a formal written or oral apology or completion of training or education.
- Suspension for a specified duration,
- Lifetime ban/permanent ineligibility.

The Manager's approved decision to impose a sanction(s) that does not impact the ability to participate, including a warning (public or private), probation (with or without conditions), or completion of training and education, is final and not subject to hearing or appeal.

§4.7 Request for a Hearing. For any disciplinary actions that will impact a Respondent's ability to participate, the Notice will include information on the proposed discipline and about how the impacted individual may request a hearing within a reasonable time (10 business days) before such discipline takes effect.

As required by the Act, in no case will USFA declare an amateur athlete, coach, trainer, manager, administrator, or official ineligible to participate in amateur athletic competition without the opportunity for a hearing. However, should a Respondent communicate that they accept such discipline with no hearing, or do not request a hearing before the deadline communicated in the Notice of Determination (10 business days after receipt), the Respondent will be deemed to have waived their opportunity for a hearing.

After a request for a hearing, the Manager shall prepare a Complaint that complies with the requirements under §3.3 and submit it to the Chair of the Committee as described in Section 6.

§4.8 Receipt of Notices. Throughout these Procedures, notice is deemed received on the day it is sent to the email address on file in USFA's membership database.

SECTION 5. SAFETY PLANS AND INTERIM MEASURES

§5.1 Safety Plans. At any time after receiving a Report, the Manager may impose a Safety Plan. A Safety Plan is a condition or set of conditions that a Respondent must follow while participating with USA Fencing that does not affect the ability to participate in sport. The decision to impose a Safety Plan is not reviewable or subject to appeal.

§5.2 Interim Measures. At any time after receiving a Report, if the Manager determines that an individual's continued membership or participation poses an immediate risk of ongoing physical or emotional harm, the Manager may impose Interim Measures to limit or remove the ability of the Respondent to participate in sport. Interim Measures include but are not limited to restrictions on participation or a temporary suspension, pending final resolution of the report. In such instances, USA Fencing will provide the individual with notice of the Interim Measures. The individual will then have five business days to request a Hearing to contest the Interim Measures, or the Interim Measures will remain in place until the conclusion of the case. Once requested, a hearing to contest Interim Measures will be held within 10 business days.

USA Fencing may temporarily suspend the Respondent where there is a reasonable belief that the Respondent has committed emotional, physical or sexual misconduct or has been subject to a criminal disposition other than a petty offense. Evidence which may be found sufficient to support a reasonable belief includes, at a minimum:

- The suspension or termination of employment or membership by a national governing body or other sport organization;
- A FenceSafe or SafeSport Report Form with specific and credible information;
- Other legal documentation or report supporting a reasonable belief that the Respondent has committed emotional, physical or sexual misconduct, including but not limited to abuse of a child, or has been subject to a criminal disposition (e.g., a criminal charge, conviction or plea bargain of other than a petty offense).

§5.3 Hearing to Contest Interim Measures. Hearings to contest Interim Measures will be conducted by a three-person panel of the Board of Directors or, in the Board's sole discretion, a hearing of the entire Board. At least one-third of the Panel will consist of an athlete representative. At least 48 hours before the hearing, the Respondent and the Manager (or their designee) may submit any relevant evidence to the Panel. At either Party's request, the Panel may permit either side to submit a position statement before the hearing. The Respondent may be represented by a representative, who may (but need not be) a licensed attorney. The hearing is not a hearing on the merits of the underlying charges. The Panel will decide whether Interim Measures are reasonably appropriate to mitigate risk to the sport and its participants under the totality of the circumstances. The hearing will consist solely of oral arguments and questions from the Panel. No witness testimony is permitted. The Panel will issue a written decision within 24 hours of the hearing. The Panel may accept, modify, or eliminate the Interim Measures. A decision on Interim Measures is not admissible in any later hearing on the merits.

SECTION 6.

COMPLAINT DISTRIBUTION AND APPOINTMENT OF HEARING PANEL

§6.1 Complaint Distribution. After preparation of a Complaint under §3.6.3 or §3.6.4, or following request for a hearing under §4.7, the Manager shall forward the Complaint to the Committee Chair.

§6.2 Initial Review by the Committee Chair. The Committee Chair, or their designee, shall perform an initial review of materials provided with the Complaint to ensure that the Complaint is complete under the provisions of Section 3 and that it is not frivolous, beyond the Committee's jurisdiction, imprudent in light of existing or available collateral proceedings (such as other civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings) or otherwise inappropriate for the Committee's consideration. Any decision by the Committee Chair regarding its exercise of jurisdiction over the Complaint may be undertaken by the Committee itself as well and may be made at any stage of the proceedings. A decision to dismiss under this section may be appealed pursuant to Section 11.

§6.3 Dismissal of Complaint. The Committee Chair or Committee may dismiss a Complaint that fails to comply with the provisions of Section 3 after giving the Complainant reasonable notice of deficiencies and an opportunity to cure them. If the Complainant does not cure the deficiencies within that defined period, the Complainant shall be barred from filing another Complaint arising from the same transaction or event unless the Committee finds special circumstances warranting an additional extension. A decision to dismiss under this section may be appealed pursuant to Section 11.

§6.4 Dismissal in Writing. If the Committee Chair or the Committee dismisses the Complaint under Sections 6.2 or 6.3, they shall state the reasons for dismissal in writing, which shall be communicated to the parties.

§6.5 Service on Respondent. If the Complaint is not dismissed upon initial review by the Committee Chair or Committee, the Committee shall instruct the Manager to serve the Complaint on the Respondent(s), including notice of the alleged violation or charges and all supporting documents, and the consequences, possible sanctions, or remedy requested in the event a violation is determined to have occurred, within 14 business days after receipt of a sufficient Complaint together with a copy of these Complaint and Hearing Procedures through the Respondent's e-mail address on file with the USFA or, in the absence of same, at the address or email address provided by the Reporting Party.

§6.6 Answer. The Respondent may file an Answer to the Complaint within 7 business days of receipt. The failure to file an Answer shall be deemed to constitute a denial of the allegations of the Complaint. The Manager shall ensure that the Complainant receives a copy of the Answer within a reasonable time prior to the hearing.

§6.7 Appointment of Panel. After the initial review has been completed and the Complaint accepted, the Committee Chair shall assign the Complaint to a Hearing Panel of three members, at least one of whom shall be an athlete satisfying the requirements of the USOPC Bylaws and who shall be appointed by the Chair of the USFA Athlete Council. Hearing Panel members may be but need not be members of the Committee and may be but need not be "independent" as that

term is defined in the USFA Bylaws. All Hearing Panel members shall be impartial and free of any actual or apparent conflicts of interest in the matter. The Committee Chair shall designate one of the Hearing Panel members to serve as Panel Chair. In selection of the Panel Chair, preference shall be given to individuals with education or experience in the practice of law or arbitration.

When a matter is referred from the Board of Directors or another committee or group, including but not limited to the USFA Ethics Committee or the Black Card Review Group, the Committee Chair may appoint a panel as provided in the preceding paragraph or may submit the matter to the full Grievance and Discipline Committee itself, provided that 1/3 of the appointed Committee members are athlete representatives who meet the requirements of the USOPC Bylaws and who shall be appointed by the Chair of the USFA Athlete Council. The Committee Chair, or their designee, shall chair the hearing under the latter circumstances.

Once appointed, the Panel Chair shall preside over all proceedings before the Hearing Panel.

§6.8 Panel shall be disinterested. All Hearing Panel members shall be impartial, disinterested and shall be free of any actual or apparent conflict of interest. Within a reasonable time after appointment to a Hearing Panel, each Hearing Panel member shall expressly confirm that they have no known conflicts or shall disclose any conflicts or potential appearances of impropriety. Upon appointment of the Hearing Panel, and after passage of the time specified in this Section, the Committee Chair shall instruct the Manager to notify the parties of the identity of the Hearing Panel members. Throughout this process, all members of the Hearing Panel shall be subject to the USFA's Conflicts of Interest Policy and shall adjust their involvement, including recusal or withdrawal as necessary, in accordance with that policy.

§6.9 Objections to the Panel. Upon appointment of the Hearing Panel, the Manager shall promptly provide written notice to all parties identifying the members appointed to serve on the Hearing Panel. Any objection to the composition of the Hearing Panel must be made within 10 business days of notice of the Hearing Panel composition. In the event any party objects to the composition of the Hearing Panel, the Committee, without the participation of any member designated to serve on the Hearing Panel, shall determine the validity of such challenge. A challenge shall be upheld if the challenged member's service involves an actual conflict or reasonably creates an appearance of a conflict or other impropriety, and any member so removed shall be replaced by the Committee Chair, ensuring that the composition of the Hearing Panel satisfies the requirements set out above.

§6.10 The Committee shall endeavor to maintain a pool of qualified Hearing Panel members approved by the Board of Directors.

§6.11 The deadlines may be accelerated by the Hearing Panel or agreement of the parties as necessary.

SECTION 7. PRE-HEARING PROCEDURES

§7.1 Deadlines and Scheduling. Absent good cause, the Panel Chair shall consult with the parties within 10 business days after the Hearing Panel is confirmed, after which the Panel Chair shall impose dates for (a) the hearing and for any pre-hearing conferences the Hearing Panel deems necessary, (b) the parties' exchange of all exhibits to be used as evidence, (c) the parties' exchange of identification of witnesses, their contact information, and a brief statement as to the subject matter of their testimony, (d) submission of hearing briefs by the parties if desired by the Hearing Panel or the parties, and (e) any other preliminary matters. If both parties waive their right to a hearing, the Hearing Panel may adjudicate the matter on written submissions. Any deadlines established in the preliminary conference shall allow sufficient time for each party to examine evidence so as reasonably to prepare for the hearing.

§7.2 Preliminary Hearing Order. The Panel Chair shall issue a Preliminary Hearing Order setting out the deadlines established under §7.1. The Hearing Panel, may, on its own accord or upon request of a party and for good cause, amend any of the dates set out in the Preliminary Hearing Order.

§7.3 Hearing within 90 days. Absent just cause for delay, the Panel Chair shall schedule the hearing within 90 days of the Hearing Panel being finalized.

§7.4 No Ex Parte Communication. No party or party representative shall engage in any *ex parte* communication with the Panel Chair or the members of the Hearing Panel. All requests for relief shall be made in writing and submitted to the Hearing Panel, with a copy to the opposing party(ies). When a party has designated a representative, all communications to that party shall be through the representative only. In the interest of the privacy of panel members, the Panel Chair may require that all communications to the Hearing Panel be sent to the Panel Chair only. The Panel Chair will then ensure that all communications are disseminated to the panel members.

§7.5 Additional Procedural Orders. The Hearing Panel may impose such other procedural orders as it deems necessary to the fair and efficient conduct of proceedings.

§7.6 Motion to Dismiss. A Respondent may seek dismissal of a Complaint on any grounds set out for denial of jurisdiction above by filing a motion with the Hearing Panel, except that the filing of a motion shall not stay the running of any other deadlines established hereunder unless ordered by the Hearing Panel. The Complainant shall have 7 business days to respond to such motion or such additional time as the Hearing Panel may order. The Hearing Panel may deny the motion to dismiss without awaiting a response from the Complainant.

§7.7 Withdrawal of Complaint. Once the Hearing Panel has taken jurisdiction of a matter, the Complainant may withdraw the Complaint only with the Hearing Panel's permission and under such conditions as the Hearing Panel may impose, which may include the payment of any costs.

§7.8 Special Considerations for Hearings involving the Denial of an Opportunity to Compete. In light of the special nature and timing considerations related to Complaints alleging the denial of an opportunity to compete in a Protected Competition, a party may request expedited procedures at the time the Complaint or Answer is submitted, or as soon thereafter as the need for expedited consideration becomes known. The request shall identify the basis for expedited consideration.

Upon receipt of such a request, or on its own initiative, when necessary, the Hearing Panel may impose additional or different requirements from those set out herein, including but not limited to shortening any time period hereunder.

§7.9 Remedial Measures for Non-Compliance. The Hearing Panel may impose such remedial measures as it may deem advisable for the failure of any party to comply with the procedural orders of the Hearing Panel.

§7.10 Temporary Orders. In appropriate cases, the Committee Chair before appointment of the Hearing Panel, and the Panel Chair after such appointment, following an initial investigation and after providing the Respondent an opportunity to be heard, may impose such temporary orders (prohibitory or mandatory in nature) as may be necessary for the good of the sport of Fencing and the protection of USFA or its members. Any temporary orders may encompass any remedy or order permissible in a final decision. Nothing in this Section shall preclude imposition of temporary orders or interim measures under FenceSafe policies or Section 5 of this policy.

§7.11 No Discovery. The parties shall not be entitled to general discovery from USFA. The Panel, on request or on its own initiative, may order USFA to provide specific documents or information if a Party can show the document or information is relevant and narrowly tailored to a claim or defense. If requested by USFA, the Panel must order the requesting party to reimburse USFA prior to production of the documents or information for the reasonable costs and expenses in producing the materials.

§7.12 Mediation and Agreed Resolutions. Where possible, cases may be resolved in advance of hearing by agreement of the parties. Such agreed resolutions may consist of any disposition that could result from a full panel hearing. Where USFA is the Complainant, the requirements of §4.5 will be followed. In all other cases, the Manager may encourage the parties to consider mediation and serve as an intermediary between the parties or act as a mediator for them. Nothing in these Procedures shall prevent the parties from seeking other assistance in achieving a resolution. Agreed resolutions shall be reduced to writing and become effective upon acceptance of all parties to the Complaint, which acceptance may be evidenced by signature, confirming email or other recognizable means of assent.

SECTION 8. CONDUCT OF HEARINGS

§8.1 Form of Hearing. A hearing before the Hearing Panel may be held in person, telephonically, or through a videoconference service. The hearing may be recorded for the sole purpose of review by the panel members in deliberation or for review during appeal proceedings. The hearing shall be held in real-time and shall provide all parties the opportunity to attend and participate in the entire proceedings (except deliberations by the Hearing Panel) unless the right to a hearing is waived by the parties. Where appropriate and with the consent of the parties, the hearing may be conducted in part through written means and in part by testimony and oral argument, except that the Hearing Panel shall not consider any written or oral evidence that the opposing party has not been given an opportunity to rebut. Hearings shall be conducted fairly and in an orderly fashion, but without regard for the formalities of traditional courtroom procedures.

§8.2 Failure of a Party to Appear. If any party fails to be available without good cause shown in advance, the hearing may go forward at the duly noticed time and proceed to judgment despite that person's absence. If the Panel Chair determines that in the interests of justice and the sport of Fencing the hearing cannot proceed without the absent party, the Panel Chair may adjourn the hearing and reschedule it for such time as is necessary for the absent party to be present. Any subsequent absence may be considered by the Hearing Panel in reaching its decision, and the Hearing Panel may impose reasonable conditions on the missing party for continuation of the hearing.

§8.3 Conduct of the Hearing. The hearing shall be conducted in the following manner, and the Hearing Panel may set reasonable time limits for each portion of the hearing consistent with the nature of the hearing and relief sought.

§8.3.1 The Panel Chair shall open the hearing and conduct such preliminary matters as may be necessary. The Hearing Panel may continue any hearing, or recess a hearing that has been commenced, for good cause shown.

§8.3.2 Each party shall have the opportunity to make a brief opening statement.

§8.3.3 The Complainant shall call each of its witnesses for examination, which witnesses shall be sworn upon their oath, substantially as follows: "I do hereby swear or affirm under penalties of perjury that the testimony I give shall be true and complete." In lieu of formal examination, the witnesses may make a statement after being sworn. Upon completion of each witness's examination or statement, the opposing party(ies) or their counsel may cross-examine the witness. The Panel Chair shall have the power to limit the examination of witnesses as may be necessary to avoid the introduction of irrelevant evidence, to protect against harassment or intimidation of any witness, or to avoid repetitive testimony, except that the Panel Chair may not bar the cross-examination of any witness as to relevant matters introduced as part of that witness's direct examination or their statement in lieu of testimony. The Complainant shall then have the opportunity to conduct re-direct examination, and the witness shall have the opportunity to make a concluding statement limited to the issues that were raised in cross-examination. No further examination or statements shall be permitted except as the Panel Chair may permit in their discretion. Exhibits may be presented through witnesses, by stipulation or in any other way permitted by the Hearing Panel.

§8.3.4 After conclusion of the presentation of witnesses or witness statements by the Complainant, the Respondent(s) shall have the opportunity to present witnesses and exhibits in the same manner as stated in Section 8.3.3.

§8.3.5 After the conclusion of the presentation of evidence by the Respondent(s), the Complainant shall have the opportunity to present rebuttal witnesses and exhibits in the same manner as above, but only to respond to new evidence that was presented by Respondent's witnesses.

§8.3.6 After conclusion of the Complainant's rebuttal evidence, each side shall be permitted to give closing argument. The Panel Chair shall decide on the time limits for such closing arguments and whether they are to be delivered orally or in writing. The Complainant may divide closing argument time to permit rebuttal of the Respondent's closing argument.

§8.3.7 The Hearing Panel members may question any witness presented by the parties. The Panel Chair shall direct the order of such questioning and any follow-up questions by the parties.

§8.3.8 The Hearing Panel shall issue a written decision and findings of fact and deliver it to the Manager, who shall serve it on the parties within 10 business days. The decision shall include a summary of the facts, the specific policy or policies violated, a summary of the Panel's reasoning, the sanction imposed (if any), and any aggravating and mitigating factors for any sanction which is imposed. The Panel Chair shall complete any hearing information form used by USFA.

§8.3.9 No failure to satisfy the timing requirements of any of these Complaint and Hearing Procedures by USFA or by any Hearing Panel shall serve to invalidate any decision or to deprive the Hearing Panel of jurisdiction over the Complaint.

§8.3.10. If the Hearing Panel determines that any Complaint is frivolous, groundless, or vexatious, or if a Complainant fails to appear at a duly scheduled hearing, the Hearing Panel may impose a charge of up to \$250 against the Complainant for each infraction.

§8.4 Representation. The Complainant(s) and the Respondent(s) shall be entitled to be represented by a person of their choice at their own expense. Such representative may, but need not be, an attorney.

§8.5 Admissibility of Evidence; Privilege. Judicial rules regarding admissibility of evidence shall not apply to the Hearing Panel, except that the Hearing Panel shall respect all lawful claims of privilege based on Colorado law.

§8.6 Attendance at Hearing. Any hearing, or a part thereof, shall be open to members of the Hearing Panel, any attorney advising the Panel Chair, the Complainant(s), the Respondent(s), any other real party in interest, or their representatives. The Hearing Panel shall exclude from the hearing any witnesses except during the witness's testimony unless the witness is also a real party in interest or their representative. The record of the hearing and the Hearing Panel's decision shall be kept confidential by the Hearing Panel, the Committee, USFA, the parties, and the Board of Directors on appeal, except for an executive summary and such public sanctions as may be imposed. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Panel Chair may in the interests of justice and the sport of Fencing remove or limit the requirement of confidentiality as to all or part of the record.

§8.7 Burden of Proof. In all hearings, the Complainant shall bear the burden of proving any alleged violation by a preponderance of the evidence.

§8.8 Transcript. The Complainant(s), the Respondent(s) and any other person participating in a hearing conducted by a Hearing Panel shall, at their own cost, have the right to arrange for a transcription of the proceedings. The transcriber shall be subject to any applicable rules of the proceedings and shall not disrupt or interfere with the proceedings. A copy of the transcription shall be provided to all parties involved upon request and the transcript and copies thereof shall be treated as part of the record of the hearing under §8.6.

SECTION 9. SANCTIONS

A Hearing Panel, after conducting such investigation or hearings as they may determine to be necessary, may impose any of the following sanctions or resolutions:

§9.1 Dismiss the Complaint with or without permission to re-file;

§9.2 Censure a party, publicly or privately (public censures are not considered confidential under §8.6);

§9.3 Establish a period of probation, with or without conditions;

§9.4 Deny, grant, suspend or restore the eligibility or right to compete or participate of any member of USFA;

§9.5 Deny, grant, suspend, ban, or restore membership in USFA for a definite or indefinite period of time, with or without terms of probation, or expel any member of USFA, including, without limitation, any administrator, athlete, coach, trainer, manager, official, officer, Board Member, spectator, employee, chair or member of any committee or sub-committee;

§9.6 Assess actual costs to the prevailing party;

§9.7 Impose any sanction identified in §4.6.3; and

§9.8 Assess sanctions in any combination of the foregoing or assess any other remedies, including reasonable fines, deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

§9.9 Repeat or Habitual Violator. In imposing sanctions, the Panel may consider whether the Respondent is a repeat or habitual violator of USFA policies in determining the severity of the sanction warranted.

SECTION 10. ANTI-RETALIATION AND INTERFERENCE

§10.1 Retaliation Prohibited. No person shall engage in any retaliation against any Protected Individual who files a Complaint under these procedures or participates in the defense or prosecution of such a Complaint. For purposes of this policy, "retaliation" means any adverse or discriminatory action, or the threat of an adverse or discriminatory action, including, but not

limited to, removal from a training facility, reduced coaching or training, reduced meals or housing, removal from competition, harassment, or abuse carried out against a Protected Individual as a result of any communication, including the filing of a formal Complaint by the Protected Individual or a parent or legal guardian of the Protected Individual relating to an allegation of physical abuse, sexual harassment, or emotional abuse, or otherwise given in connection with any proceeding conducted under these procedures. The phrase "Protected Individual" shall be read to include (but not be limited to) any amateur athlete, coach, trainer, manager, administrator, or official associated with the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee, any National Governing Body and person who serves as a witness, who provides information in support of any investigation, or in any manner is associated with the investigation or pursuit of prosecution or defense of a Complaint filed hereunder, regardless of whether that person testifies. The violation of this Section shall constitute a violation of a USFA rule and shall be subject to sanctions hereunder.

§10.2 Interference Prohibited. No person shall interfere with proceedings under these procedures by intimidating or otherwise imposing on or attempting to influence parties, witnesses, potential witnesses, Hearing Panel or Committee members, or any person associated with the investigation, pursuit, prosecution or adjudication of a Complaint filed hereunder with the intent of preventing, changing or limiting their participation in such proceedings, nor shall any person without good and just cause attempt to delay, disrupt or prevent such proceedings. The violation of this Section shall constitute a violation of a USFA rule and shall be subject to sanctions hereunder.

§10.3 Termination or Suspension without Pay for Retaliation. If the review concludes that a USFA employee has retaliated against an individual for reporting an allegation of physical abuse, sexual harassment, or emotional abuse, the employee will be immediately terminated or suspended without pay as required by the Act.

SECTION 11. APPEALS

§11.1 Appeals. The decision of the Hearing Panel or the dismissal of a Complaint under §6.2 or §6.3 may be appealed to the Board of Directors. A request for appeal must be filed with the Manager within 10 business days of the date the decision of the Hearing Panel is communicated to the appealing party, or the appeal will be considered untimely and will be dismissed with prejudice. No appellant shall have the right to a hearing de novo before the Board of Directors.

§11.2 Standard of Review on Appeal. The Board of Directors shall review a decision of a Hearing Panel or the dismissal of a Complaint under §6.2 or §6.3 for abuse of discretion, including whether the decision (1) was arbitrary and capricious, (2) based on findings of fact that are clearly erroneous based on the record as a whole, or (3) unsupported by substantial evidence when the record is considered as a whole.

§11.3 Appeal Procedures. The Manager shall set appropriate deadlines for the filing of any written submissions or evidence to the Board for consideration in the appeal. The Appeal will be

set at the next Regular or Special meeting of the Board of Directors unless the Manager determines that the Appeal should be heard by the Board of Directors at an earlier or later date, in which event the Manager may request the Chair of the Board of Directors to schedule a Special meeting for that purpose. The Appeal is heard on the written submissions of the parties and the hearing record only (including any evidence presented and a transcript if one was produced), and no party shall have the right to appear before the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors, or their designee, will issue a written determination via email to the parties.

§11.4 Arbitration in Certain Circumstances. The USFA shall submit to binding arbitration, through the arbitral body designated by the USOPC, any controversy involving the opportunity of any athlete, coach, trainer, manager, administrator, or official to participate in amateur athletic competition in the sport of fencing, as lawfully provided for in the Bylaws of the USOPC. An individual may request arbitration at any point in the process outlined in this policy, including simultaneously to filing the request for a hearing, and is not required to exhaust other remedies before demanding arbitration.

§11.5 Section 9 of the USOPC Bylaws. For Opportunity to Participate Complaints involving a Protected Competition, a complainant or affected party may file a complaint with the USOPC under Section 9 of the USOPC Bylaws.¹ After the filing of a Section 9 complaint with the USOPC, or simultaneously upon filing, the individual may file a demand for arbitration with the arbitral body designated by the USOPC for a final and binding decision in the matter.

§11.6 Section 10 of the USOPC Bylaws. For Non-Compliance Complaints, a complainant may file a complaint with the USOPC under Section 10 of the USOPC Bylaws and follow the procedures set forth therein.

SECTION 12. CONTACT INFORMATION

These Procedures are administered by USFA's General Counsel, whose name and contact information can be found here: <https://www.usafencing.org/fencesafe-report>.

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.

¹ While a Section 9 complaint is presented here as an option that may be pursued by an aggrieved party following review of an Opportunity to Participate complaint under these Procedures, this provision is not intended to imply that an individual must exhaust remedies under these Procedures before filing a Section 9 complaint with the USOPC. An individual may proceed directly to a Section 9 rather than first seeking relief under these Procedures.

EMAIL: ombudsman@usathlete.org

WEBSITE: www.usathlete.org



Referees' Commission

Created: August 2026

Purpose

The Referees' Commission (RC) is responsible for the recruitment, development and evaluation of referees; the appointment of referees to national competitions and to such international competitions as USA Fencing is allowed; for maintenance of the Rules of Competition; for the creation of ethical standards for referees and for the creation and maintenance of an Ethics Subcommittee of the Referees' Commission to provide for the disposition of complaints alleging violation of those standards; for providing a method of addressing grievances between referees that are not within the exclusive jurisdiction of another authority; for representing and advancing the interests of the referee corps; and for advising the USFA on matters of concern to referees and regarding refereeing.

Structure & Composition

The Referees' Commission is organized under the leadership of a Chair, Vice-Chairs of Domestic Grassroots Development, Domestic National Development Rules and Examinations, International Development and Assignment, and Ombudsman, and three athletes. Athlete members are chosen by the Athlete Council.

Appointments & Terms

The Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Referees' Commission are elected by experienced referees. The standards for electors and the method for nominating candidates for these positions are determined by the Board of Directors consistent with the Bylaws.

Responsibilities & Deliverables

Chair

- Oversee the duties of the Vice-Chairs of the Referees' Commission, RC Ethics Committee, and RC DEIB Committee
- Assist with reports to the board of all members of the RC
- Assist with the selection of referee candidates for the FIE exam
- Coordinate election activities for the RC Nominating Committee and RC Elections
- Maintain and update all codes, policies, and standard operating procedures for the Referees' Commission

- Prepare agendas and preside at meetings of the Referees' Commission
- Serve as an intermediary between the Referees' Commission and the National Office and Board of Directors with regards to matters of interest to the referee cadre

Rules and Examinations

- Maintain and promote the USA Fencing Rules of Competition and advise on proposed rule changes
- Respond to questions about the Rules on behalf of the Referees' Commission
- Oversee custom mask approvals as delegated by the Referees' Commission
- Oversee the creation, maintenance, and administration of written referee exams and associated study guides

Domestic Development – National

- Develop and implement continuing education and professional development programs for national-level referees
- Establish and maintain development pathways for national referees

Domestic Development – Grassroots

- Oversee Certified Referee Observer and Certified Referee Instructor programs
- Review, maintain, and distribute referee seminar materials
- Review, maintain, and distribute referee observation forms
- Recruit and assist clubs, divisions and other local organizations with the recruitment of new referees
- Develop and implement new referee improvement and retention practices
- Monitor progress in attaining Strategic Plan goals for referee recruitment and diversity

Ombudsman

- Work to keep the Referees' Commission abreast of concerns within the referee cadre
- Work to help individuals within the referee cadre get their complaints addressed and direct referees to appropriate resources
- Provide recommendations for policy improvements to ensure fair governance and ethical practices

International Assignments and Development

- Lead the selection of referees for international licensing exams
- Oversee the selection and assignment of referees to international competitions as needed by USA Fencing
- Coordinate with national weapon squad managers to maintain assignments
- Identify and develop national-level referees for international refereeing opportunities

Domestic Assignments

- Train and manage the Hiring Panel, Assigners, and Referee Coordinators
- Oversee the assignment and hiring of referees of the national tournaments held each season
- Coordinate communication with Referees, National Office, and Assigners
- Prepare reports to the Board of Directors and state the progress toward the Strategic Plan approved to the Board

Operating Guidelines

The Referees' Commission shall enforce all codes and policies of the Referees' Commission.

The RC Ethics Committee shall follow the published procedures outlined in the Referee Commission Complaint and Hearing Procedures.

The Referees' Commission shall meet as a body at least semi-annually, and more frequently if needed, to coordinate the work of the Vice-Chairs, establish goals for the Commission and its subgroups, and monitor achievement of those goals.

The Referees' Commission establishes, implements, and maintains a system of referee evaluation and rating.

2025 NGB Bylaws Audit Checklist

The NGB must complete the following bylaw checklist that outlines where the elements listed below are within the bylaws. Please complete the column titled, "Location in NGB Document(s)" with the specific location within the documents and/or policies (i.e., article, section, paragraph, page) demonstrating the NGB bylaws include the following minimum standards. If multiple documents and/or policies are used, please explain and reference the specific document.

Please do not leave boxes blank. If the policy is missing an element, please note that it is "not applicable" or provide an explanation, as needed.

#	Standard Reference	Requirement	Location in NGB Document(s) (i.e. Article, Section, Pg #, link, etc.)	Auditor Notes (For Auditor Use Only)
A description of the Board's responsibilities and functions, including but not limited to:				
1	1, a - f	Selection, compensation, evaluation, and termination of the CEO/ED	Article VII, Section 7.2b	1 P. 11 – Article VII, Section 7.2b
2		Review and approval of the NGB's strategic plan and budget	Article VII, Section 7.2c	1 P. 11 – Article VII, Section 7.2c
3		Focus on long-term objectives and impacts rather than on day-to-day management	Article VII, Section 7.2	1 P. 11 – Article VII, Section 7.2
4		Oversight of the financial activities throughout the fiscal year	Article VII, Section 7.2g	1 P. 11 – Article VII, Section 7.2g
5		Review and approval of the audited financial statements, the organization's financial and control policies, and the selection of independent auditors	Article VII, Section 7.2h	1 P. 11 – Article VII, Section 7.2h
6		Ensure that athlete safety rules, policies, and procedures comply with the requirements of the USOPC and U.S. Center for SafeSport	Article VII, Section 7.2k	1 P. 11 – Article VII, Section 7.2k
The number and type of Board positions, including but not limited to:				
i	2, a-c	Athlete representation requirements consistent with standard A.1 a & b	See Pages 6-8 below	
ii		At least one board position that can provide an independent perspective consistent with standard A.1 c	See Pages 8-10 below	
iii		At least one dedicated board position for affiliated members, as defined in §220522(12) of the Act and consistent with Standard A.1 c	See Pages 10-11 below	
The criteria, and election and selection procedures for all board members, including but not limited to:				

7	3, a – b	Board of directors or other governing board members must be selected without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, or sex, except that, in sports where there are separate male and female programs, it provides for reasonable representation of both males and females on the board of directors or other governing board in accordance with §220522(9) of the Act	Article VII, Section 7.8	1	P. 16 – Article VII, Section 7.8
8		Requirements for administering election to ensure handled fairly, consistently, and appropriately. (e.g. free of conflicts, voter eligibility is reviewed and validated, election procedures are followed consistently)	Article IX, Section 9.1	1	P. 21 – Article IX, Section 9.1
9	4	A process for removal of Board members	Article X	1	P. 24-26 – Article X
10	5	The board member terms and term limits – must explicitly require term limits. (See Implementation Guide for additional information)	Article VII, Section 7.4.d; Article VII, Section 7.6	1	Pg. 14 – Article VII, Section 7.4.d Pg. 15 – Article VII, Section 7.6
11	6	Attendance requirements for board members	Article VII, Section 7.17.b	1	P. 18 – Article VII, Section 7.17.b
12	7	The compensation terms for board members	Article VII, Section 7.9	1	P. 16 – Article VII, Section 7.9
13	8	A requirement that the NGB covers travel costs for athlete representatives to attend in-person Board meetings	Article VII, Section 7.9	1	P. 16 – Article VII, Section 7.9

Identifies elements of all designated committee(s), including but not limited to

14	9, a - g	Election and selection procedures for committee members	Article XI, Section 11.6	1	P. 27 – Article VII, Section 11.6
15		Expressly require and state committee member terms and term limits	Article XI, Section 11.20; Article XI, Section 11.21	1	P. 35 – Article XI, Section 11.20 & Section 11.21
16		Expressly state the number of committee members on each committee	Article XI, Section 11.7b; Article XI, Section 11.8b; Article XI, Section 11.9b; Article XI, Section 11.10b; Article XI, Section 11.11c; Article XI, Section 11.12b; Article XI, Section 11.13c; Article XI, Section 11.14c; Article XI, Section 11.15c	1	P. 27-34 – Article XI, Section 11.7 – Section 11.15.c
17		Expressly state attendance requirements for committee members	Article XI, Section 11.18	1	P. 35 – Article XI, Section 11.18
18		Process for removal of committee members	Article X	1	P. 25 – Article X, Section 10.5

19		Expressly state compensation terms for committee members	Article XI, Section 11.19	1	P. 35 – Article XI, Section 11.19	
20		Roles and responsibilities for each committee	Article XI, Section 11.7.a; Article XI, Section 11.8.a; Article XI, Section 11.9.a; Article XI, Section 11.10.a; Article XI, Section 11.11.a; Article XI, Section 11.12.a; Article XI, Section 11.13.a; Article XI, Section 11.14.a; Article XI, Section 11.15.a	1	P. 27-34 – Article XI, Section 11.7 – Section 11.15.c	
				Total	Elements	Percentage
				20	20	100%

Athlete representation requirements consistent with standard A.1 a & b				
Board of Directors				
1	Athlete representation requirements must equal at least 33.3% of all NGB boards of directors, executive boards, and other governing boards. At least 20% of voting board members must be NGB 10 Year Athlete representatives. The remaining athlete representatives that bring total athlete representation to 33.3% must be either NGB 10 Year or NGB 10 Year+ Athlete representatives. At least half of these athlete representatives will have obtained NGB 10 Year or NGB 10 Year+ Athlete representative eligibility through having been selected to compete at an event that, at the time of election/selection, is on a Delegation Event program. The NGB's representative on the Team USA Athletes' Commission must be a voting member of the NGB board. (This individual is included toward the 20% 10 Year Athlete representation of the board's voting members)	Article VII, Section 7.4a	1	P. 12 – Article VII, Section 7.4a.
2		Article VII, Section 7.3a	1	P. 12 – Article VII, Section 7.3a P. 12 – Article VII, Section 7.3b. Includes note “USFA shall update Appendix II to the latest version of Section 8.5, or its successor.” P. 12 – Article VII, Section 7.3a
3		Article VII, Section 7.3a		P. 12 – Article VII, Section 7.3b. Includes note “USFA shall update Appendix II to the latest version of Section 8.5, or its successor.” P. 12 – Article VII, Section 7.4a.ii.A
4		Article VII, Section 7.4.a.ii.A	1	P. 12 – Article VII, Section 7.4a.iii
5	Composition & Eligibility, 1-3	Article VII, Section 7.4.a.iii		
6		Article VII, Section 7.4	1	P. 12 – Article VII, Section 7.4
7	Election, 1-3	Article VII, Section 7.4.B		P. 12 – Article VII, Section 7.4.a.ii.B. – this mentions how Athlete Directors shall be elected. P. 20 – Article VIII Athlete Council, Section 8.3

		Note: This election process is defined by the NGB and is different than that of the athlete representative seats reserved for Team USA Athletes' Commission Representatives and Alternates ex officio.		Point to the Athlete Council's selection procedures / process that ensures the correct pool of athletes are voting. <i>8/28/26 Review</i> Present 7.3 c – added that all athlete directors will be elected by NGB 10-year athletes in draft updates. P. 20 – Article VII, Section 8.1
8		The NGB AAC and the NGB's nominating and governance committee must develop a process to jointly identify and vet candidates to serve as the NGB 10 Year and NGB 10 Year+ Athlete representatives.	Article VIII, Section 8.1	Explain or point to the election process the NGB AAC follows and the process of how the functional nominating committee (CommComm) and AAC work together to identify and vet candidates. <i>8/28/26 Review</i> Present – 8.2 c – draft updates added under Qualification to Serve
9		Team USA Athletes' Commission Representatives and Alternates must be elected consistent with the Team USA Athletes' Commission Bylaws and any applicable procedures published by the Team USA Athletes' Commission. Note: NGB Bylaws must ensure that it is clear that the athlete representative seats reserved for the Team USA Athletes' Commission Representative and Alternate are ex officio as a result of the individuals' election as the Team USA Athletes' Commission Representative and Alternate. This avoids a situation where an individual resigns from their Athletes' Commission role but could remain an elected member of the NGB board.		Missing – include this language in the composition of the board (Section 7.4) or Athlete Council or Elections section “All Athlete Directors, excluding the Team USA Athletes' Commission representative and alternate who serve <i>ex officio</i> after being elected pursuant to the Team USA Athletes' Commission's procedures, shall be directly elected by the voting pool of member athletes that meet NGB 10 Year Athlete eligibility as defined by the USOPC Bylaws.” – see page 19 Section 7.6.b. in USOPC Bylaws template <i>8/28/26 Review</i> Present 7.3 c – Above language recommendation included.
Designated Committees				

10	Composition & Eligibility, 1, a & b	Athlete representatives must equal at least 33.3% of all NGB Designated Committees.	Article XI, Section 11.4.a	1	P. 26 – Article XI, Section 11.4.a Designated Committees defined as: Audit Committee, Budget Committee, Election Committee, Nominating Committee, Ethics Committee, Grievance and Discipline Committee.
11		At least half of the athlete representatives must be NGB 10 Year Athlete representatives. The remainder must be either NGB 10 Year or NGB 10 Year+ Athlete representatives.	Article XI, Section 11.4.a	1	P. 26 – Article XI, Section 11.4.a + reference to Appendix II (USOPC Bylaws)
12		For Designated Committees which oversee the selection of athletes, coaches, and/or staff for Para sport Protected Competitions, at least half of the athlete representatives must have gained eligibility through a Para sport event.	Article XI, Section 11.4.a	1	P. 26 – Article XI, Section 11.4.a + reference to Appendix II (USOPC Bylaws)
13	Selection, 1-2	The NGB AAC and the NGB's nominating and governance committee must jointly develop a process to identify and vet candidates to serve as the NGB 10 Year and NGB 10 Year+ Athlete representatives.			Consider adding to P. 20 Article VII Athlete Council See note in item #8 above 8/28/26 Review Present – 11.4.a
14		Following the vetting process, the athlete representatives (inclusive of both NGB 10 Year and NGB 10 Year+ Athlete representatives) to the NGB's Designated Committees must be selected by the NGB AAC from the vetted candidates. Note: For any Designated Committees which are required to be populated by board members, the board chair or board, rather than the NGB AAC, may select from the athlete representatives seated on the board.		1	P. 26 – Article XI, Section 11.4.a "Athlete members selected by the Athlete Council..."
Other NGB Committees					

15	Composition & Eligibility, 1	NGB Actively Engaged Athlete representatives must equal at least 33.3% of all Other NGB committees.	Article XI, Section 11.4.a	1	P. 26 – Article XI, Section 11.4.a
16	Selection, 1-2	The NGB AAC and the NGB's nominating and governance committee must jointly develop a process to identify and vet candidates to serve as the NGB 10 Year and NGB 10 Year+ Athlete representatives.			See note in item #8 above 8/28/26 Review Present – 11.4.a
17		Following the vetting process, all athlete representatives to the NGB's Other Committees must be selected by the NGB AAC from the vetted candidates.		1	P. 26 – Article XI, Section 11.4.a "Athlete members selected by the Athlete Council..."

Independent and Affiliate Representation consistent with Standard A.1 c					
NGBs must have at least one voting board member who can provide an independent perspective as defined by the NGB's bylaws. The definition of independent perspective must include, but is not required to be limited to, the following criteria:					
	<i>A member cannot provide an independent perspective if, within the preceding two (2) years:</i>				
1	the individual is/was employed by or held any governance position (whether a paid or volunteer position) with the NGB, the IF, the international regional sport entity, or any sport family entity (such as a foundation or professional league) connected to the NGB (see exception in the Implementation guide, 1, a., i)	Article VII, Section 7.4.b.iv.C	1	P. 13 – Article VII, Section 7.4.iv.C	
2	1, a - i	an immediate family member of the individual is/was employed by or held any governance position (whether a paid or volunteer position) with the NGB, the IF, the international regional sport entity, or any sport family entity connected to the NGB;	Article VII, Section 7.4.b.iv.C	1	P. 13 – Article VII, Section 7.4.iv.C
3		the individual is/was affiliated with or employed by the NGB's outside auditor or outside counsel;	Article VII, Section 7.4.b.iv.D	1	P. 13 – Article VII, Section 7.4.iv.D
4		an immediate family member of the individual is/was affiliated with or employed by the NGB's outside auditor or outside counsel as a partner, principal, or manager;	Article VII, Section 7.4.b.iv.D	1	P. 13 – Article VII, Section 7.4.iv.D
5		the individual is/was a member of the NGB's Athletes' Advisory Council or any constituencies with representation on the board;	Article VII, Section 7.4.b.iv.E	1	P. 13 – Article VII, Section 7.4.iv.E

6		the individual receives or received any compensation from the NGB, directly or indirectly;	Article VII, Section 7.4.b.iv.F	1	P. 13 – Article VII, Section 7.4.iv.F
7		the individual is/was an executive officer, controlling shareholder, or partner of a corporation or partnership or other business entity that does business with the NGB;	Article VII, Section 7.4.b.iv.H	1	P. 13 – Article VII, Section 7.4.iv.H
8		the individual is/was the parent or close family member or coach of an athlete who has competed in a Protected Competition;	Article VII, Section 7.4.b.iv.G, Article VII, Section 7.4.b.iv.B	1	P. 13 – Article VII, Section 7.4.iv.G & Section 7.4.iv.B
9		the individual is/was a member of the NGB in a membership category that participates in Protected Competitions.	Article VII, Section 7.4.b.iv.A	1	P. 13 – Article VII, Section 7.4.iv.A
10	2	The member must maintain an independent perspective by maintaining the requirements above for their entire term and any successive term, with exceptions related to their service on the board. (See exceptions in the Implementation Guide, A.1 c, 2, a&b)	Article VII, Section 7.4.b.v	1	P. 13 – Article VII, Section 7.4.v

X/10 Elements present

NGBs must provide for reasonable and direct representation for any organization that:

		Conducts a national program or regular national amateur athletic competition in the applicable sport on a level of proficiency appropriate for the selection of amateur athletes to represent the United States in international amateur athletic competition	Article VII, Section 7.4.c	1	P. 14 – Article VII, Section 7.4c
		Ensures that the representation reflects the nature, scope, quality, and strength of the programs and competitions of the applicable organization in relation to all other programs and competitions in the sport in the United States.	Article VII, Section 7.4.c	1	P. 14 – Article VII, Section 7.4c
11	1 - 2	If there are no organizations that meet the definition in the Act, the affiliated organization board seat may remain vacant or be otherwise filled by another board member, so long as the board seat remains immediately available if an affiliated organization qualified to elect a member is identified, or the NGB Bylaws require the creation of a seat when an affiliate organization meeting the criteria is identified.	Article VII, Section 7.4.c	1	P. 14 – Article VII, Section 7.4c

X/1 Elements present

Additional Notes:

Appendix – link to USOPC page (<https://www.usopc.org/governance-documents>) that hosts the USOPC Bylaws to maintain most up to date version.
Update “USOPC Athlete Advisory Council” to “Team USA Athletes’ Commission”

MOTION (Dr. Rodgers at the request of Mr. Alperstein as the liaison to the Referees' Commission): To revise, reorganize, and update Referees' Commission nomination and election procedures as adopted by the Board in December 2021 and in effect since then. The procedures going forward unless and until revised by the Board of Directors shall be as follows:

PROCEDURES FOR REFEREES' COMMISSION POSITION ELECTIONS

The procedures set forth herein shall be utilized for all future Referees' Commission member elections unless and until change by the Board of Directors.

Referees' Commission Nominating Committee Composition and Selection

In each season for which there is a Referees' Commission position election, there shall be constituted a Referees' Commission Nominating Committee comprising the following nine (9) individuals:

- a. Three (3) active referees who have worked at least one North American Cup, July Challenge or National Championship event during the current or previous season. The three referees shall be selected by a vote of all referees who are eligible to run for the Nominating Committee (*i.e.*, who meet the criterion in the previous sentence) in an election overseen by the National Office. Eligible voters will select their top three choices for the Nominating Committee. The three referees with the most votes will serve on the Nominating Committee. If there is a tie between two or more candidates for the third position, the winning candidate will be selected by a random draw.

Solicitations of interest in serving as a referee member on the Referees' Commission Nominating Committee shall be published on the USA Fencing website no later than December 1 of the calendar year preceding the election and the application period shall end no earlier than December 14 of that year. Those interested in serving on the Referees' Commission Nominating Committee may apply by sending an email to nominations@usafencing.org with "RC Nominating Committee" in the subject line.

The National Office will conduct the election for the Nominating Committee and will provide no less than two weeks for the submission of ballots, ending no later than 5:00 pm MST December 31 of the year preceding the election to fill the vacancies on the Referees' Commission.

- b. Two (2) members of the Referees' Commission to be selected by and from the members of the Referees' Commission who are not running for an open position.
- c. Three (3) athletes to be selected by the USA Fencing Athlete Council.
- d. One (1) Board member to be selected by the Board of Directors.

The Chair of the Referees' Commission will select one of the Referee's Commission members of the Nominating Committee as its chair.

If there is a vacancy on the Nominating Committee, the body which selected the vacating member shall fill that vacancy except in the case the active referees, in which event the candidate receiving the next highest vote total shall be seated.

Nominating Committee Duties

After the application period, the Nominating Committee is responsible for establishing a deadline for the submission of applications for open positions on the Referees' Commission and for vetting and ranking of candidates who have an interest in serving on the Referees' Commission in the positions to be filled. The Nominating Committee will review the applications and credentials for each candidate and will interview the candidates best qualified for the position for which they applied. The Nominating Committee will then select at least two candidates to run for each position (unless there is only one qualified applicant). Should the Nominating Committee determine that insufficient qualified individuals have applied for the open positions, it has the authority to approach and solicit applications from referees the Committee feels have the ability to perform the duties and who meet the qualifications of such position or positions.

Election Procedures

The open positions on the Referees' Commission will be filled by the majority vote of referees who have worked at least one regional or national level event in the current or preceding season. Should no candidate for a position receive a majority of the votes cast, a runoff of the two candidates (and ties) receiving the most votes will be conducted. In case of a tie in the final balloting, the winning candidate will be selected by a random draw. The election shall be held under the auspices of the Election Committee, who shall report the results to the Board of Directors.

Rationale: The Referees' Commission has requested a restatement of the procedures used to fill positions on the Commission. USA Fencing's Bylaws provide in Section 11.12.b.ii:

The Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Referees' Commission shall be elected by experienced referees. The standards for electors and the method for nominating candidates for these positions shall be determined by the Board of Directors consistent with these Bylaws, and Nominees for the positions shall be elected by a vote of the electors that is conducted by the Election Committee, and notwithstanding Section 9.9 of these Bylaws, such election shall be by simple majority.

In December 2021 the Board adopted procedures that have been in effect since then. The proposed restatement of the procedures makes minor changes and reorganizes the procedures but preserves the methods that were adopted in 2021. The only change of substance in this proposed restatement is to allow the nominating committee to put forward more than two candidates for an open position and to provide for a runoff election should no candidate receive a majority of votes in the initial balloting.

Attached as an appendix to the agenda is a redlined version of the procedures adopted in 2021 showing the proposed reorganization, edits, and amendments.

PROCEDURES FOR REFEREES' COMMISSION POSITION ELECTIONS

The procedures set forth herein shall be utilized for all future Referees' Commission member elections unless and until change by the Board of Directors.

Referees' Commission Nominating Committee Composition and Selection

In each season for which there is a Referees' Commission position election, there shall be constituted a Referees' Commission Nominating Committee comprising the following nine (9) individuals:

- a. Three (3) active referees who have worked at least one North American Cup, July Challenge or National Championship event during the current or previous season ~~(except that for the Nominating Committee to be selected in 2021, eligibility shall be extended to active referees who have worked at least one North American Cup, July Challenge or National Championship event during the current or two previous seasons.)~~. The three referees shall be selected by a vote of all referees who are eligible to run for the Nominating Committee (*i.e.*, who meet the criterion in the previous sentence) in an election overseen by the National Office. Eligible voters will select their top three choices for the Nominating Committee. The three referees with the most votes will serve on the Nominating Committee. If there is a tie between two or more candidates for the third ~~place~~position, the winning candidate will be selected by a random draw.

Solicitations of interest in serving as a referee member on the Referees' Commission Nominating Committee shall be published on the USA Fencing website no later than December 1 of the calendar year preceding the election and the application period shall end no earlier than December 14 of that year. Those interested in serving on the Referees' Commission Nominating Committee may apply by sending an email to nominations@usafencing.org with "RC Nominating Committee" in the subject line.

The National Office will conduct the election for the Nominating Committee and will provide no less than two weeks for the submission of ballots, ending no later than 5:00 pm MST December 31 of the year preceding the election to fill the vacancies on the Referees' Commission.

- b. Two (2) members of the Referees' Commission ~~will~~to be selected by and from the members of the Referees' Commission who are not running for an open position.

- c. Three (3) athletes to be selected by the USA Fencing Athlete Council.
- d. One (1) Board member to be selected by the Board of Directors.

The Chair of the Referees' Commission will select one of the Referee's Commission members of the Nominating Committee as its chair.

If there is a vacancy on the Nominating Committee, the body which selected/~~elected~~ the ~~previous~~vacating member shall fill that vacancy except in the case of the active referees, in which event the candidate receiving the next highest vote total shall be seated.

~~Solicitations of interest in serving on the Referees' Commission Nominating Committee shall be solicited on the USA Fencing website no later than December 1 of the calendar year preceding the election and the application period shall end no earlier than December 14 of that year. Those interested in serving on the Referees' Commission Nominating Committee may apply by sending an email to nominations@usafencing.org with "RC Nominating Committee" in the subject line.~~

~~The procedures set forth above shall be utilized in the 2022 election of Referees' Commission members and for all future Referees' Commission member election unless and until change by the Board of Directors.~~

Nominating Committee Duties

After the application period, the Nominating Committee is responsible for establishing a deadline for the submission of applications for open positions on the Referees' Commission and for vetting and ranking of candidates who have an interest in serving on the Referees' Commission ~~on~~in the positions to be filled. The Nominating Committee will review the applications and credentials for each candidate and will interview the candidates best qualified for the position for which they applied. The Nominating Committee will then select at least two candidates to run for each position (unless there is only one qualified applicant). Should the Nominating Committee determine that insufficient qualified individuals have applied for the open positions, it has the authority to approach and solicit applications from referees the Committee feels have the ability to perform the duties and who meet the qualifications of such position or positions.

Election Procedures

The open positions on the Referees' Commission will be filled by the majority vote of referees who have worked at least one regional or national level event in the current or preceding season. In case of a tie Should no candidate for a position receive a majority of the votes cast, a runoff of the two candidates (and ties) receiving the most votes will be

conducted. In case of a tie in the final balloting, the winning candidate will be selected by a random draw. The election shall be held under the auspices of the Election Committee, who shall report the results to the Board of Directors.
~~shall report~~

BYLAWS
UNITED STATES FENCING ASSOCIATION
AMENDED AND RESTATED

Effective On September 19, 2026

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ARTICLE I NAME, ORGANIZATION AND JURISDICTION

Section 1.1. **Name.** As provided by the Articles of Incorporation, the organization shall be known as the “United States Fencing Association,” (sometimes referred to as “USFA”). USFA operates under the trade name “USA Fencing,” and may adopt and operate under other assumed or trade names.

Section 1.2. **Incorporation.** The United States Fencing Association has been incorporated and organized and is operating under the Colorado Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act.

Section 1.3. **Compliance with Law.** No Bylaw or other regulation adopted by the United States Fencing Association shall be inconsistent with the Articles of Incorporation of this organization or in contravention of the Colorado Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act, the Ted Stevens Amateur and Olympic Sports Act 36 U.S.C §§ 220501 – 220543 or any other applicable governmental statute, rule or regulation.

Section 1.4. **Tax Exemption.** The United States Fencing Association has qualified and shall at all times remain qualified as a tax-exempt organization under the Internal Revenue Code of the United States.

Section 1.5. **Recognition as National Governing Body.** The United States Fencing Association is and shall continue to be recognized by the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (“USOPC”) the Fédération Internationale d’Escrime (“FIE”) and Worldability Sport (“WAS”) as the National Governing Body (“NGB”) for the sport of fencing in the United States.

Section 1.6. **Autonomy.** The USFA shall be autonomous in the governance of the sport of fencing and shall not delegate its authority or control of that sport.

ARTICLE II PURPOSES

The purposes of the USFA shall be:

Section 2.1. To serve as the National Governing Body for able bodied and paralympic fencing (“Fencing”) in the United States, and in that capacity to fulfill the lawful obligations imposed on national governing bodies and to enjoy the privileges and prerogatives accorded national governing bodies by United States Law, the USOPC, FIE and WAS.

Section 2.2. To provide local, regional and national competitive opportunities for fencers of all levels of ability under uniform rules and regulations and to strive for improvement in all aspects of organizing and conducting fencing competition.

Section 2.3. To select, support and prepare individuals and teams to represent the United States in international fencing competitions.

Section 2.4. To develop, support and promote fencing referees and other tournament officials in domestic and international competition.

Section 2.5. To promote the sport of fencing in the United States and around the world and to disseminate information about fencing so that people may be exposed to and enjoy its many physical, mental and social benefits.

Section 2.6. To provide support in the form of information and programs to fencing instructors and to organizations and groups that offer fencing opportunities.

Section 2.7. To make available information and opportunities that will allow fencing practitioners to enhance their skills and to increase the enjoyment and benefit they derive from the sport.

Section 2.8. To provide assistance and support to other organizations that promote fencing or conduct fencing competitions in a manner consistent with the purposes, goals and means of the USFA.

Section 2.9. To ensure that the principle of anti-discrimination on the grounds of race, disability status, gender, gender identity, color, ethnicity, religion, political opinions, family status or other innate attribute, is respected.

Section 2.10. To foster good will and harmonious relationships with fencers and fencing organizations in foreign countries for the betterment of the sport of fencing.

Section 2.11. To create, assist and oversee supporting or affiliated organizations.

ARTICLE III FISCAL YEAR; FINANCES

Section 3.1. **Fiscal Year.** The fiscal year of the USFA shall commence on the first day of August and end on the following thirty-first day of July, unless the Board of Directors shall by resolution specify other commencement and ending dates.

Section 3.2. **Endorsement of Instruments and Agreements.** All checks, drafts or other orders for the payment of money, obligations, notes or other evidence of indebtedness, and all other contracts, conveyances and instruments signed or issued on behalf of the USFA, shall be signed or endorsed by such officers or agents of the organization as the Board of Directors shall specify by resolution.

Section 3.3. **Depositories for Funds.** All funds of the USFA not otherwise committed shall be deposited from time to time to the organization's credit in such banks, other insured depositories, or investment vehicles as shall be determined by the Board of Directors.

Section 3.4. **Loans and Security Interests.** The USFA may obtain loans and encumber or pledge its assets as collateral for such loans only with the prior authorization of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE IV MEMBERSHIP

Section 4.1. **Classes.** The membership of the USFA shall be divided into classes as established from time to time by the Board of Directors. Members of each class shall possess such rights and be subject to such regulations as the Board of Directors may determine.

Section 4.2. **Good Standing.** Subject to the provisions of Section 5.6 of these Bylaws, a member is in good standing for the purposes of voting if their dues are timely paid, they have met the requirements for the class of membership to which the individual belongs, and they are not under disciplinary sanction.

Section 4.3. **Rights of Members.** All individual members who are in good standing shall be entitled to exercise all rights reserved to the membership class to which they belong. The Board of Directors may from time to time prescribe regulations with respect to particular categories of competitions. The right to vote shall be reserved to those individual members who (a) belong to a membership class the attributes of which include the right to vote; (b) have attained their 18th birthday and are in good standing as of sixty (60) days preceding the date on which voting opens; and (c) are in good standing on the date balloting opens. The National Office shall prescribe the method or methods by which a member's date of birth may be established. Members who are eligible to vote may hold elected or appointed positions within the USFA if they are in good standing and have met all requirements established for each such position. All rights and privileges of membership shall cease upon death, resignation, expulsion, suspension or failure to pay dues.

Section 4.4. **Members Do Not Share in Assets.** Membership shall not entitle any member to share in the assets of the USFA, all of which are hereby declared to be irrevocably dedicated to the charitable purposes set forth in Article II of these Bylaws.

Section 4.5. **Membership is Open.** Membership in the USFA may not be denied to any individual or organization on grounds of race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, color, religion or national origin, or other innate attribute, provided, however, that this provision shall not preclude the USFA from conducting competitions to which entries are limited on the basis of geography, age, gender, skill level or disability or from establishing qualifying criteria for the entry into competitions.

Section 4.6. **Membership Anti-doping Obligations.** It is the duty of all Athletes, Athlete Support Personnel and other Persons (as those terms are defined in the World-Anti Doping Code), by virtue of their participation in the Olympic, Paralympic, Pan American, Parapan American or Youth Olympic Games, participation in an Event or Competition organized or sanctioned by an NGB, PSO or HPMO, participation on a national team, utilization of a USOPC Training Center, receipt of benefits from the USOPC or USFA, inclusion in the Registered Testing Pool, or otherwise subject to the World Anti-Doping Code to comply with all anti-doping rules of WADA, the FIE, WAS, the USOPC, and of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), including the USADA Protocol for Olympic and Paralympic Movement Testing (USADA Protocol) and all other policies and rules adopted by WADA, the FIE, WAS, and USADA. If it is determined that an Athlete, Athlete Support Personnel, or other Person may

have committed a doping violation, the individual agrees to submit to the results management authority and processes of USADA, including arbitration under the USADA Protocol, or to the results management authority of the FIE or WAS, if applicable or referred by USADA. In addition, Athletes agree to submit to drug testing by the FIE, WAS, and/or USADA or their designees at any time and understand that the use of methods or substances prohibited by the applicable anti-doping rules make them subject to penalties including, but not limited to, disqualification and suspension.

Section 4.7 Safe Sport.

a. As a member National Governing Body of the USOPC, the USFA is required to adhere to the SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement.

Section 4.8 Membership Safe Sport Obligations.

As a condition of membership in the USFA and of participation in any competition, event or activity sanctioned by the USFA or its member organizations, each USFA member (including parents and legal guardians of members under age 18) agrees to comply with and be bound by the safe sport rules, policies and procedures of the Code, the Center and the USFA and to submit, without reservation or condition, to the jurisdiction of the Center for the resolution of any alleged Code violations that may fall within its exclusive authority or become subject to its discretionary authority. Each member further agrees that any sanctions imposed by the Center shall extend to their participation in all USFA competitions, events and activities and may be posted or otherwise publicly published along with information regarding the misconduct involved.

ARTICLE V FEES AND DUES

Section 5.1. Dues to be Fixed by Board of Directors. The schedule of dues of the USFA shall be established from time to time by the Board of Directors.

Section 5.2. Dues Allocated to Affiliated Units. In its discretion, the Board of Directors may designate such affiliated units as it deems necessary (“Affiliated Units”) and may allocate a portion of the dues collected in any one year from all classes of individual competitive memberships to such Affiliated Units of the USFA in such amount or proportion as the Board of Directors determines, and shares of dues so allocated shall be paid by the USFA National Office to the appropriate administrators of such Affiliated Units as are in good standing. These funds are to be used by such units in the discharge of their designated functions on behalf of the USFA. The Board of Directors may revise or discontinue the allocation at any time.

Section 5.3. Accounting for Dues to Affiliated Units. An Affiliated Unit must be in good standing, having filed a satisfactory financial report for the prior membership year and such other reasonable reporting as required by the Board, to be eligible to receive any payments from the USFA. If no satisfactory financial report is filed for two consecutive years, all sums previously set aside for such Affiliated Unit shall be forfeited.

Section 5.4. **Membership Year.** The membership year shall commence on August 1 and end on the following July 31. All dues are payable upon application for membership and thereafter on or before the next membership year begins.

Section 5.5. **Extended Membership Year for New Members.** A new member whose dues are paid during the last four months of the membership year shall be entitled to membership through the next membership year.

Section 5.6. **Privileges on Receipt of Dues.** A member is not admitted to membership and a member is not in good standing until the member's dues and fees have been received by the USFA. Payment of dues to a duly appointed agent of the USFA will render a member eligible to compete. However, no person will be eligible to vote in USFA affairs unless the person's dues for the membership year in which the person seeks the right to vote are received by the USFA National Office on or before sixty (60) days preceding the date on which voting opens.

ARTICLE VI OFFICERS AND NON-VOTING MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Section 6.1. **Officers.** The national officers of the USFA shall consist of a Chair of the Board of Directors and a Treasurer.

- a. Qualifications for Officers. Only voting members in good standing may hold office in the USFA. No person may hold a position as a national officer of the USFA while simultaneously holding office in any organization recognized by the USOPC as the National Governing Body of another sport. No person may hold a position as a national officer of the USFA while serving as an officer of any Affiliated Unit of the USFA. National officers shall also meet the special qualifications of each office set forth below and shall subscribe to the Qualifying Affirmation set forth in Article VII below.
- b. Chair of the Board of Directors. The principal duties of the Chair of the Board of Directors shall be to foster the formulation of policy; to develop financial and membership support; and to conduct relations between the USFA and the USOPC, the FIE, WAS and other authorities whose jurisdictions affect the functions and purposes of the USFA. For the purpose of liaising with international authorities such as the FIE and WAS, the Chair of the Board shall be considered the equivalent of the President of USFA. The Chair of the Board shall preside over meetings of the Board of Directors and shall be a voting member of said body. Pursuant to the By-Laws of the US Fencing Foundation ("USFF"), the Chair will serve as a non-voting ex-officio member of the USFF Board of Trustees. The Chair of the Board shall have such authorities, powers and duties as are assigned to that office by these Bylaws or as are necessary and normally appurtenant to the powers and duties herein specified. The Chair of the Board of Directors shall be elected from among the voting members-of the Board of Directors by a majority vote of the Board of Directors, which election shall be conducted at each annual meeting held in odd numbered years.
- c. Treasurer. The Treasurer is a non-voting member of the Board of Directors, unless they

hold an additional voting role. They shall oversee the accounting for all moneys and other assets of the USFA and shall at each meeting of the Board of Directors submit a report of the financial transactions of the USFA from the time of the preceding report or for the entire fiscal year. The Treasurer shall confer with independent auditors selected by the Audit Committee and shall report on their findings. The Treasurer shall submit to the Board and the Audit Committee a standard set of monthly financial statements. The Treasurer shall assist the Chair of the Board and the Board of Directors in the formulation of proposed budgets. The Treasurer shall chair the Budget Committee and serve as a voting member of that committee. The Treasurer shall serve as a non-voting member of the Board of Directors. Only persons who have demonstrated competence in financial control and management may hold the office of Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be selected by the Board and approved by a majority vote of Directors present and voting. No person may assume the position of Treasurer until they have executed the Qualifying Affirmation provided in Article VII.

- d. **Treasurer Candidates.** At least fourteen (14) days before presenting the nomination of candidates for Treasurer to the Board of Directors, the nominating Director shall provide written notice thereof to the chairperson of the Nominating Committee, along with a summary of credentials of the person nominated. Candidates for Treasurer shall be reviewed by the Nominating Committee to ensure:
 - i. The prospective candidate meets the qualifications of that position; and
 - ii. The prospective candidate shall have in writing indicated their willingness to serve and acceded to the Qualifying Affirmation prescribed in these Bylaws;
 - iii. The prospective candidate shall pass a Background Check and complete a Conflict-of-Interest form to be cleared by the Ethics Committee.

Section 6.2. Non-voting Members of the Board. In addition to officers, there may be such additional positions as provided for in these Bylaws or by the Board of Directors.

- a. **Special Board Members.** The Board of Directors may, from time to time and in its discretion, appoint one or more Special Board Members to address strategic needs in the organization, subject to majority approval of Directors present and voting. There will be a maximum of two (2) Special Board Members at one time, but no minimum. Special Board Members shall serve as non-voting members of the Board of Directors, advise the Board of Directors, and perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Board of Directors. No person may assume the position of Special Board Member until they have executed the Qualifying Affirmation provided in Article VII, have passed a Background Check, and have completed a Conflict-of-Interest form to be cleared by the Ethics Committee. No Special Board Member may serve on the Board if they are an employee of the organization. No Special Board Member may be engaged in a contractual relationship with USFA unless reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee and the Board of Directors in advance of being placed on the ballot or the contract being signed, whichever comes first. Tournament officials (e.g. referees, bout committee staff, etc.) are excluded from the restriction on contractual relationships.

- b. Secretary. The functions of the Secretary of the Board of Directors consist of preparing and distributing agendas for all meetings of the Board of Directors; preparing, maintaining and distributing records of the proceedings of the Board of Directors; communicating, as directed, the directives, inquiries and messages of the Board of Directors; and such other and additional duties as may be assigned to the Secretary by these Bylaws, the Board of Directors or the Chair of the Board. The Chair of the Board, with the approval of the Board of Directors, shall appoint a person or persons, who is/are either members qualified to hold office or are employed by the USFA, to perform these functions. The person or persons discharging these functions shall serve as a non-voting member of the Board of Directors and shall serve at the pleasure of the Chair of the Board.
- c. Parliamentarian. For each meeting of the Board of Directors there may be a Parliamentarian, who may be appointed for each meeting or as a standing position, to advise the Board on matters of procedure and who serves at the pleasure of the Board. No person may assume the position of Parliamentarian until they have executed the Qualifying Affirmation provided in Article VII, have passed a Background Check, and have completed a Conflict-of-Interest form to be cleared by the Ethics Committee. The person appointed as Parliamentarian shall serve as a non-voting member of the Board of Directors and shall serve at the pleasure of the Board.
- d. Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”) shall be a non-voting ex-officio member of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors may, by majority vote of those present, exclude the CEO from a meeting or portion thereof. The CEO will not attend portions of a meeting that discuss the Chief Executive Officer except as permitted by the Board. Pursuant to the By-Laws of the US Fencing Foundation (“USFF”), the CEO will serve as a non-voting ex-officio member of the USFF Board of Trustees.

Section 6.3. **Terms of Officers and Non-voting Members of the Board.**

- a. Chair of the Board of Directors. The Director appointed as the Chair of the Board serves at the pleasure of the Board of Directors until they are no longer qualified or until a new Chair of the Board is approved by a majority of the Board. Once a new Chair of the Board is so approved, the former Chair will continue to serve any remainder of their term as a Director.
- b. Treasurer and Special Board Members. Unless otherwise removed as provided in these Bylaws, Special Board Members and the Treasurer shall serve terms of approximately two years, from adjournment of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors at which they are appointed until adjournment of the second annual meeting following their appointment
- c. Terms Not Limited. The Chair of the Board’s term in office is subject to and not greater than their term as a Director, including limits placed thereon in these Bylaws. An individual may serve as Treasurer or Special Board Member for no more than eight (8) consecutive years. There is no limit on terms for Secretary or Parliamentarian.

Section 6.4. **Vacancy of Officers and Non-Voting Members of the Board.** Vacancies in the offices of Chair of the Board, Treasurer, as well as the positions of Secretary and Parliamentarian shall be filled through the procedures prescribed in this Section.

- a. Chair of the Board. A vacancy in the office of the Chair of the Board shall be filled as follows:
 - i. During temporary absences or unavailability of the Chair of the Board, whether due to illness, disability or other cause, the Board of Directors may appoint a Director who meets the qualifications of the office of Chair of the Board to fulfill the duties of that office until the Chair of the Board is able to resume the performance of those duties.
 - ii. If a vacancy in the office of Chair of the Board occurs by reason of resignation of that office, or removal while the person who had been serving as Chair remains a Director, the Board of Directors shall elect a Director who meets the qualifications of the office of Chair of the Board.
 - iii. If a vacancy in the office of Chair of the Board occurs by reason of resignation from the Board of Directors, death, removal from the Board of Directors, disability, or other cause which prevents the person who had been serving as Chair from continuing to serve as a Director, the Board of Directors shall fill the vacancy as provided in these Bylaws and shall select a qualified member to serve as Chair of the Board.
- b. Treasurer, Secretary, and Parliamentarian. A vacancy in office of Treasurer or the position of Secretary, whether arising from resignation, death, removal or otherwise, shall be filled by the Board of Directors. In filling the vacancy, the Board may appoint any member of the USFA who meets the qualifications of the position. Filling the role of Parliamentarian is optional.

Section 6.5. **Custodian of Records.** The National Office of the USFA shall serve as the custodian of records of the actions by the members, the Board of Directors, Resource Groups, Task Forces, Councils, and Committees of the Board, and shall publish on the official website of the USFA such records of the proceedings of those bodies as the Board of Directors or these Bylaws may prescribe.

ARTICLE VII BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 7.1. **Responsibility.** The Board of Directors is vested with the full powers and responsibility for the management and policies of the USFA, subject to these Bylaws.

Section 7.2. **Functions of the Board.** The Board of Directors oversees USFA's fulfillment of its purposes and its compliance with its legal obligations as described in Article II hereof, including but not limited to USFA's obligations under the Ted Stevens Amateur and Olympic

Sports Act, 36 U.S.C §§ 220501 – 220543, and it promotes the corresponding interests of its membership by developing and adopting policies and by providing guidance and strategic direction to the National Office and to the Committees of the Board as constituted under Article XI hereof. The Board shall oversee the management of USFA and its affairs but may delegate operational responsibility to its staff or others. The Board shall select a well-qualified Chief Executive Officer and oversee the Chief Executive Officer in the operation of USFA. The Board shall focus will in normal circumstances be on long-term objectives and impacts rather than on day-to-day management, empowering the Chief Executive Officer to manage a staff-driven organization with effective Board oversight. In addition, the Board performs the following specific functions, among others:

- a. implements procedures to orient new Board Directors, educate all Directors on the business and governance affairs of USFA, and evaluate Board performance;
- b. selects and when it so determines, may terminate the Chief Executive Officer and provide for management succession; and subject to contractual provisions, shall provide performance and compensation reviews of the Chief Executive Officer no less frequently than annually;
- c. reviews and approves USFA's strategic plan and the annual operating plans, budget, business plans, and corporate performance standards;
- d. sets policy and provides guidance and strategic direction to management on significant issues facing USFA;
- e. reviews and approves significant corporate actions;
- f. oversees effective governance;
- g. approves capital structure, financial strategies, borrowing commitments, and long- range financial planning;
- h. reviews and approves financial statements, annual reports, financial and control policies, through the Budget Committee and, through the Audit Committee, selects independent auditors;
- i. monitors USFA's compliance with laws and regulations and the performance of its broader responsibilities;
- j. ensures that the Board and management are properly structured and prepared to act in case of an unforeseen corporate or societal crisis;
- k. ensures that USFA adopts and maintains athlete safety rules, policies and procedures that comply with the authorized requirements of the USOPC and U.S. Center for SafeSport;
- l. encourages that there is diverse representation and plurality of identities and backgrounds on the Board, Committees, Task Forces, Councils, and Resource Groups; and
- m. encourages diversity at all levels of USFA and supports meaningful efforts to

accomplish that diversity by adopting norms that favor open discussion and favor the presentation of different views.

Section 7.3. Athlete Representation on the Board, and Committees. The USFA shall, at all times, comply with USOPC requirements for the representation of athletes on the Board and all USFA Committees, Task Forces, and Resource Groups.

- a. Athletes selected to serve on the Board, Task Forces, Resource Groups, and Committees shall meet the requirements established by the USOPC as set forth in Section 8.5 of the USOPC Bylaws, as amended or revised, a current copy of which shall be attached hereto as Appendix II.
- b. The USFA shall update Appendix II to the latest version of Section 8.5, or its successor.

b.c. All Athlete Directors, excluding the Team USA Athletes' Commission representative and alternate who serve *ex officio* after being elected pursuant to the Team USA Athletes' Commission's procedures, shall be directly elected by the voting pool of member athletes that meet NGB 10 Year Athlete eligibility as defined in Appendix II.

Section 7.4. Composition and Qualifications. The Board of Directors shall include twelve (12) Directors, and such other persons as are designated non-voting members by these Bylaws. Directors shall be citizens or permanent residents of the United States. Prior to their selection or election, Directors shall disclose any felony convictions, and any other period of ineligibility to serve in sport organizations, such as findings of anti-doping violations or SafeSport violations that were not reversed on appeal. In addition, all candidates for the Board of Directors must pass a Background Check and have a Conflict-of-Interest form reviewed by the Ethics Committee before being placed on a ballot or agenda. No voting Director may serve on the Board if they are an employee of the organization. No voting Director may be engaged in a contractual relationship with USFA unless reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee and the Board of Directors in advance of being placed on the ballot or the contract being signed, whichever comes first. Tournament officials (e.g. referees, bout committee staff, etc.) are excluded from the restriction on contractual relationships. The voting Directors shall be classified and qualified as provided in this Section.

- a. Athlete Directors. There shall be four (4) Athlete Directors comprising not less than 33 1/3% of the elected and appointed Directors. All Athlete Directors shall be voting members of USA Fencing in good standing:
 - i. No person shall serve as an Athlete Director unless they meet the requirements of Athlete Directors as provided in Appendix II.
 - ii. The four (4) Athlete Directors shall be selected of as follows:
 - A. USFA's representative(s) to the **Team USA Athletes' Commission**; and
 - B. The remaining Athlete Directors shall be elected according to the methods established by the Athlete Council.
 - iii. If not otherwise seated as a Director, USFA's alternate representative(s) to the **Team USA Athletes' Commission** shall sit with the Board of Directors as a non-voting member.

- b. At-Large Directors. There shall be eight (8) At-Large Directors. Four (4) At-Large Directors shall be elected by the membership, and four (4) At-Large Directors shall be appointed by the Board of Directors. Of the appointed At-Large Directors, at least two (2) must meet the requirements for independence as outlined in Section 7.4.b. iv.
- i. The Nominating Committee will determine whether a position for an appointed At-Large Director shall be filled by an independent individual or from the general membership, and this decision shall be published with the call for nominations preceding the election cycle for member-elected Directors. The Nominating Committee shall then nominate qualified individuals (per Section 9.3) to serve as appointed At-Large Directors subject to confirmation by the Board of Directors. At least fourteen (14) days before presenting their At-Large Director nominations to the Board, the Chair of the Nominating Committee shall provide written notice thereof to the Chair of the Board, along with a summary of credentials of the person nominated.
 - ii. At-Large Directors to be appointed from the general membership by the Board of Directors shall be voting members of the USFA in good standing.
 - iii. At-Large Directors to be elected by the membership shall be voting members of the USFA in good standing. The slate of candidates to be elected by the membership shall be selected by the Nominating Committee or added by valid petition per Section 9.3.
 - iv. To be independent, within the two years preceding their nomination no person may serve who:
 - A. has been, or who has an immediate family member, who has been a member of the USFA;
 - B. has been, or who has an immediate family member, who has been a coach of a USFA member;
 - C. has been, or has an immediate family member who has been, employed or held a paid or volunteer governance position with USFA, the FIE, WAS, any international fencing federation or any sport family entity of fencing;
 - D. has or has an immediate family member who has been affiliated as an owner, member, employer, employee, or agent of the USFA's outside auditor or legal counsel;
 - E. has been a member of the USFA's Athlete Advisory Council or any constituent group with representation on the Board;
 - F. has or has an immediate family member who has directly or indirectly received compensation or support from the USFA;

- G. has or has an immediate family member who has participated in a fencing competition;
 - H. has or has an immediate family member who has been affiliated as an owner, member, employer, employee, controlling shareholder, or agent of any person, organization or entity that has done business with or been a member of the USFA during that period; or
 - I. has not been independent from the sport of fencing per the judgment of the Nominating Committee.
- v. It shall not be a precondition of selection as an At-Large Director selected for their independent qualifications that the person in question be a member of the USFA at the time of their nomination or confirmation, but no person may assume or continue the position of independent At-Large Director except as a USFA member in good standing. At-Large Directors selected for their independent qualifications must maintain the qualifications as specified in this Subsection 7.4.b for their entire term and any successive terms, except to the extent that they became a USFA member as a condition or appointment or to the extent that they hold any governance position with the USFA, FIE, or WAS in connection with their position as an At-Large Director and any reimbursement of expenses related thereto.
- c. Amateur Fencing Organization Director. As required by the Ted Stevens Amateur and Olympic Sports Act, 36 U.S.C §220522 and the USOPC, USFA will establish an Amateur Fencing Organization Director position under the following conditions. Amateur Fencing Organizations, high-performance management organizations, or Paralympic sports organizations (collectively referred to as Amateur Fencing Organizations) are those that conduct national programs or regular national amateur athletic competitions in the sport of fencing on a level of proficiency appropriate for the selection of amateur athletes to represent the United States in international amateur athletic competitions in the sport of fencing; and ensures that the representation reflects the nature, scope, quality, and strength of the programs and competitions of the amateur sports organization in relation to all other programs and competitions in the sport of fencing in the United States. The Board of Directors shall determine whether an organization satisfies the criteria in this Section. If the seat reserved for such Amateur Fencing Organization has voting rights on the USFA Board, then an additional Athlete Director position, as defined in as defined in this Article, and an additional At-Large Director position will be automatically created to ensure that Athlete Directors comprise not less than 33 1/3% of the elected and appointed Directors. If there is one (1) Amateur Fencing Organization, then that organization shall select a qualified individual to serve as the Amateur Fencing Organization Director. If there is more than one (1) Amateur Fencing Organization, then the Amateur Organizations as a group shall select a qualified individual to serve as the Amateur Fencing Organization Director.
- d. Terms Limited. Except as may be required under Sections 7.4.a.ii.A and 7.4.a.iii, no

individual may serve as a Director of any class for more than eight (8) consecutive years. This limitation shall apply to all terms of Directors commencing after September 1, 2020.

Section 7.5. Qualifying Affirmation, SafeSport, Background Screening, and Conflict-of-Interest Declarations. No person shall be qualified for selection or service as an officer or Director of the USFA except upon execution of a writing acceding to the following statement: “As [Chair of the Board] [Treasurer] [Special Board Member] [Director] [other] of the United States Fencing Association I agree and undertake to adhere to high ethical standards and to avoid conflicts of interest as outlined in the Conflict-of-Interest Policy of USA Fencing. I acknowledge my fiduciary duties of loyalty and care to the United States Fencing Association and understand that those duties supersede my personal interests and the interests of any individual, group, faction or entity. I pledge to devote the full extent of my knowledge, experience and ability in good faith to advance the purposes, objectives, integrity and betterment of the United States Fencing Association.”

Before being placed on a ballot or agenda for election or appointment for the Board of Directors or as an officer, one must pass a Background Screening and have a Conflict-of-Interest form reviewed by the Ethics Committee.

Each member of the Board of Directors shall have an active SafeSport clearance prior to the start of the USA Fencing fiscal year, as well as a completed Conflict-of-Interest declaration submitted to the Secretary of the Board. No member of the Board who has failed to complete these requirements shall be permitted to participate and vote in meetings until compliant.

Section 7.6. Terms of Directors.

- a. Athlete Directors. Athlete Directors shall serve terms of four years commencing on the first day of September in the year in which they are elected.
- b. At-Large Directors. At-Large Directors shall serve terms of four years commencing on the first day of September in the year in which they are elected or appointed. Two (2) At-Large Directors shall be elected and two (2) At-Large Directors shall be appointed in year two of the Quadrennium and two (2) At-Large Directors shall be elected and two (2) At-Large Directors shall be appointed in year four of the Quadrennium. For the purposes of this section, a Quadrennium shall commence upon the earlier of the close of the Olympic Games in which fencing is contested or the first day of September in the last year of the Quadrennium and shall continue until the earlier of the close of the following such Olympic Games or the final day in August in the last year of the Quadrennium. The acceleration or delay of the Olympic Games shall not affect the term of the Quadrennium.
- c. Amateur Fencing Organization Director. The Amateur Fencing Organization Director shall serve terms of four years if and when the position becomes effective.
- d. Tenure. Once Directors have assumed their positions on the Board of Directors, they shall serve until their successor has been selected and qualified or until the position is

vacated or eliminated as provided elsewhere in these Bylaws.

Section 7.7. Vacancies on the Board of Directors. Except for vacancies among the Athlete Directors, for which provision is elsewhere made in these Bylaws, vacancies on the Board of Directors, whether resulting from death, disability, resignation, disqualification, removal or otherwise, shall be filled for the balance of the vacated term by a resolution of the Board of Directors appointing to the vacant position a person who meets the qualifications specified by these Bylaws for the position being filled. The Chair of the Board of Directors shall determine a timeline for replacement. The appointment must be made from a list of qualified candidates provided by Nominating Committee pursuant to requirements listed in Section 7.4 with at least as many candidates as there are positions to be filled. The vacated term to be completed by a Director selected pursuant to this section shall not be counted for the purposes of term limits.

Section 7.8. Anti-Discrimination. Directors shall be selected without regard to race, color, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability status, national origin, or other innate attribute. It is the policy of the USFA that there shall be reasonable representation of both genders on its Board of Directors.

Section 7.9. Compensation. Directors of the Board shall not receive compensation for their services as Directors, although the reasonable expenses of Directors may be paid or reimbursed in accordance with USFA's policies. USFA will pay the travel costs to attend the Board meetings for the Athlete Directors. USFA Directors are not disqualified from receiving compensation for services rendered to or for the benefit of USFA in any other capacity. Athlete Directors shall be entitled to obtain compensation from USFA in connection with their capacity as athletes, including all benefits to which all elite athletes are eligible.

Section 7.10. Quorum. At any meeting of the Board of Directors a quorum shall be a majority of the Directors then in office. On failure of a quorum, a lesser number shall have the power to adjourn the meeting to a given time and place. The date, place and time of each meeting shall be designated by the Chair of the Board.

Section 7.11. Regular Meetings. The Regular Meetings of the Board of Directors shall consist of one Annual Meeting and two Scheduled Meetings. Regular Meetings shall be conducted with not less than thirty (30) days' notice.

- a. Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors shall be convened during the months of September or October on a date and at a place and time designated by the Chair of the Board.
- b. Scheduled Meetings. One Scheduled Meeting shall be conducted during the Winter and Summer of each year. The Winter Meeting shall be conducted during the month of February and the Summer Meeting shall be conducted during either June or July on a date and at a place and time designated by the Chair of the Board. Scheduled Meetings may be conducted in conjunction with nationally organized tournaments.
- c. Regular Meeting Agendas. Not less than five days prior to any Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors, there shall be delivered to each Director, officer, and the

Parliamentarian an agenda of matters proposed to be considered at such meeting. A Director may propose motions not on the agenda at the Annual Meeting, but business not mentioned in the agenda may not be acted on at a Scheduled Meeting unless a majority of the members of the Board of Directors then in office vote to consider the matter. There shall be updates presented at each Regular Meeting regarding operations and finances (either written or verbal), and the Chair may also provide an update.

Section 7.12. Special Meetings.

- a. Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by the Chair of the Board, on at least ten days' written notice to each Director. Special meetings shall be called so as to ensure that no period longer than four months elapses between meetings of the Board of Directors. Special meetings of the Board of Directors shall also be convened upon the written request of four or more Directors that is timely delivered to all Directors, that states the reason for the meeting and that specifies the time and place of the meeting. Special meetings may be conducted in person or otherwise in compliance with these Bylaws.
- b. Not less than five days prior to any Special Meeting of the Board of Directors, there shall be delivered to each Director an agenda of matters proposed to be considered at such meeting. Business not mentioned in the agenda may not be acted on at a Special Meeting unless a majority of the Directors then in office vote to consider the matter.
- c. Any notice required or allowed in this Section may be communicated by email, and agendas may be delivered by email or facsimile or by email directing the recipient to a specified page of the USFA website where the agenda has been posted.

Section 7.13. Emergency Meetings. In cases of true urgency, the Chair of the Board may call Emergency Meetings of the Board of Directors on not less than 24 hours' written notice to each Director. The notice required by this Section may be communicated by email, text or facsimile and shall state the nature of the emergency, the reasons the matter is urgent, and actions proposed to be considered at the Emergency Meeting.

Section 7.14. Meetings of the Membership. Annual meetings of the membership shall not be required. Special meetings of the membership shall be held if convened and noticed as provided in Colorado Revised Statutes § 7-127-102.

Section 7.15. Waiver of Notice. Notice of any Annual Meeting or special meeting of the Board of Directors may be waived as provided in the Colorado Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act.

Section 7.16. Board Transparency. Except for privileged or confidential matters taken in executive session, the Board of Director's actions shall be available to members. Regular, Special and Emergency meetings of the Board, except with respect to matters discussed in executive session, shall be open to members of the USFA, provided that the member bears the cost of attendance. Minutes of each meeting, except with respect to matters discussed in executive session, shall be published on the USFA website and otherwise be made available to members of the USFA. Minutes of each meeting shall include attendees at meetings, potential conflicts of interest, motions made and actions taken, Directors who recuse themselves due to an

apparent conflict-of-interest, and a non-confidential description of any actions taken by the Board during executive session. Every reasonable effort will be made to publish the minutes within thirty (30) days of the Board meeting.

Section 7.17. Conducting and Participating in Meetings.

- a. Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, in the discretion of the Chair of the Board, meetings of the Board of Directors may be conducted telephonically, by video conference or by any means that allows all participants to hear the proceedings and to participate fully therein.
- b. Directors are expected to use diligent efforts to prepare for and attend meetings of the Board of Directors. Directors are required to attend no fewer than two-thirds (2/3) of all Board meetings held in any twelve-month period.
- c. Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, a specific question or matter that might be considered at a meeting of the Board may be submitted to a vote by mail, facsimile, email or other means at the discretion of the Chair of the Board or upon resolution of the Board of Directors, unless one or more Directors makes an effective written demand that such action not be taken without a meeting. If the matter to be submitted for such a vote is to be considered privileged or confidential, as if taken up in executive session, the notice of the submission shall so state and the Directors shall act accordingly. In the conduct of such votes, the Secretary shall provide notice thereof to each Director containing a clear statement of the question to be voted upon and the date on which voting shall be closed, with a request that each Director cast their vote thereon and communicate it to the Secretary and the Chair of the Board prior to the closing date. The notice shall also state that a failure to respond by casting a vote, abstaining in writing, or demanding in writing that such action not be taken without a meeting, will have the same effect as abstaining in writing. The closing date shall be the earlier of three business days after the provision of notice of the vote to be taken or upon receipt of votes or abstentions from all Directors. The question or matter submitted for decision under this Subsection 7.17.c shall be approved if the affirmative votes equal or exceed the minimum number of votes that would be necessary to take such action at a meeting at which all of the Directors then in office were present and voted. Once a matter has been submitted for a vote under this Subsection 7.17.c, it may not be withdrawn after the vote of at least one Director has been received by the Secretary.

Section 7.18. Delegation of Authority. The Board of Directors may by resolution delegate elements of its authority to individuals, Committees, Task Forces or Commissions, in compliance with this Section.

- a. All delegations by the Board of Directors shall state the specific authority or power being delegated and the limitations thereon.
- b. All acts of any delegate of the Board of Directors shall be reported to the Board of Directors by the person or body to whom the delegation was made.

Section 7.19. **Legal Counsel.** The Board of Directors shall appoint annually legal counsel to advise and represent the USFA, its Directors, officers and administrators.

Section 7.20. **Operations Manual, Athlete Handbook, Rules of Competition and Website.** The Board of Directors shall provide for the creation and maintenance of an Operations Manual, an Athlete Handbook and Rules of Competition to provide information about the policies, procedures, and operations of the USFA. Such documents shall include, but need not be limited to: procedures for handling disciplinary issues; resolution of grievances by individuals or organizational members; removal from a team or declaring an athlete, coach, trainer, manager, administrator or official ineligible to participate; and the sanctioning and conduct of fencing competitions. The Operations Manual, Athlete Handbook and Rules of Competition shall be published in a manner that makes them generally and easily available to members of the USFA, including on a website maintained by the USFA for that purpose. All members shall be deemed to have notice of the contents thereof.

Section 7.21. **Disciplinary Powers and Procedures.** The ultimate disciplinary power of the USFA shall be vested in the Board of Directors.

- a. The adjudication of disciplinary matters by the Grievance and Discipline Committee, Referees' Commission or any other body given disciplinary authority by the Board of Directors or these Bylaws shall be presumed to have the full authority of the Board of Directors and shall be self-executing without further action by the Board of Directors unless appealed. If appealed, the suspension, expulsion, denial of continuation of membership or denial of readmission to membership shall be upheld if approved by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Directors voting, provided that at least a majority of the total number of Directors in office cast an affirmative or negative vote on the question. Any other legal sanction may be affirmed or imposed by the Board of Directors upon a majority vote.
- b. Sanctions shall be imposed by the Board of Directors or such designated committee or commission only after adherence to procedures for the protection of the due process rights of the accused. The procedures to be used with respect to resolving disputes on matters of discipline, grievances, eligibility or participation shall be set forth in the Operations Manual, the Athletes Handbook or the published procedures of the designated committees or commissions. All tribunals affecting any individual's participation in protected competition constituted under this section shall include no less than one-third Athlete members as defined in Appendix II.
- c. The imposition of competitive penalties within the Rules of Competition shall not be considered disciplinary action.

Section 7.22. **Procedures for the Conduct of Meetings of the Board of Directors.**

- a. In the absence of the Chair of the Board or the Treasurer, the Board may by resolution appoint a Director who meets the qualification of the position to preside. In the direction

of the Board of Directors, the appointment may be made in advance of any specifically known need therefore.

- b. Unless otherwise provided in these Bylaws, the majority vote of Directors voting on a matter shall be the act of the Board of Directors. The Chair of the Board may, but shall not be required to cast a vote, and on matters requiring no more than a simple majority vote of Directors in attendance, the Chair's failure to vote shall diminish the number of persons counted as present and voting for determination of a majority vote.
- c. Unless otherwise provided by these Bylaws, the Colorado Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act or resolution of the Board of Directors, procedures at meetings shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised).
- d. Directors may not vote by proxy.

Section 7.23. **Transition.** The terms of the At-Large Directors elected as officers in 2020 shall end in and be filled by election in 2024. The term of the At-Large Director elected in 2020 shall be extended from two (2) years to three (3) years, and that position will be filled by election in 2023. The three At-Large Directors elected in 2023 shall serve three (3) year terms ending in 2026. Upon conclusion of the transition in 2026, these Bylaws shall be automatically amended to remove this Section.

The terms of the Independent Directors appointed in 2025 shall be extended from two (2) years to three (3) years, and those positions will be filled by appointment in 2028. Upon enactment of these amended bylaws, those Independent Directors shall become At-Large Directors. Upon conclusion of the transition in 2028, these Bylaws shall be automatically amended to remove this Section.

ARTICLE VIII ATHLETE COUNCIL

Section 8.1. **Athlete Council.** The Athlete Council shall establish procedures for the selection of athletes to positions in the USFA that are reserved for athletes; shall advise the Chair of the Board and the Board of Directors with respect to issues of concern to athletes; and shall undertake such projects as the Athlete Council shall determine to be in the interest of USFA athletes and as are assigned to it by the USFA.

Section 8.2. **Terms, Classification and Composition.** The Athlete Council shall be composed of ten or eleven athletes as follows:

- a. Term: Members of the Athlete Council shall be selected following the selection of the Team USA Athletes' Commission Representative and Alternate. Members of the Athlete Council shall be seated for one Quadrennium or until replaced, whichever is later. For the purposes of this section, a Quadrennium shall commence upon the earlier of the close of the Olympic Games in which fencing is contested or the first day of September in the last year of the Quadrennium and shall continue until the earlier of the close of the following such Olympic Games or the final day in August in the last year of the

Quadrennium. The acceleration or delay of the Olympic Games shall not affect the term of the Quadrennium.

- b. Classification of Members. Members of the Athlete Council shall fall into the following categories:
 - i. Team USA Athletes' Commission Representative(s) and Alternate(s).
 - ii. Weapon Representatives. One member of the Athlete Council shall be selected to represent each of the six internationally recognized weapon and gender categories, making a total of six Weapon Representatives. Such members shall be selected by those athletes qualified to serve in each recognized weapon and gender category as specified below.
 - iii. Should a member of the Athlete Advisory Council be elected to serve as a member of the USOPC AAC Leadership group, that member shall become an ex-officio voting member of the Athlete Advisory Council.
- c. Qualification to Serve: All members of the Athlete Council must satisfy the criteria set forth in Appendix II. With respect to the selection of NGB 10-Year and NGB 10-Year+ Athlete Representatives, the Athlete Council and the Nominating Committee shall jointly develop a process for identifying and vetting candidates to serve in those positions as outlined in Appendix III. Prior to the selection, representatives shall disclose any felony convictions and any other period of ineligibility to serve in sport organizations, such as findings of violations of anti-doping codes or SafeSport violations that were not reversed on appeal.

Section 8.3. **Selection of Athlete Council Representatives.** The procedures for selection of members of the Athlete Council shall assure representation as provided in this Article and shall be determined by the Athlete Council in advance of the selection process. If the Athlete Council cannot or chooses not to adopt selection procedures, the Board of Directors shall do so.

Section 8.4. **Vacancies.** Vacancies in the membership of the Athlete Council that arise for any reason other than the expiration of a member's term shall be filled by a vote of the remaining members of the Athlete Council. Such selection shall assure compliance with the requirements set forth above. Individuals selected to fill vacant positions shall serve the remainder of the vacated term.

ARTICLE IX ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

Section 9.1. **Method of Balloting.** The Board of Directors shall provide for a secure and accurate method of electronic voting that assures compliance with the voting qualifications, requirements and procedures set forth in these Bylaws, that protects the secrecy of each member's vote and that prevents the casting of illegitimate ballots. Such method may, but need not, be the only method for the casting of ballots, unless otherwise provided by these Bylaws. Ballots not cast by electronic means shall be returned to the Election Committee or its designee at the expense and

risk of the voter. To ensure the validity and security of electronic voting, no more than two members may use the same email address.

Section 9.2. **Proxy Voting Disallowed.** Each member participating in elections must cast their own ballot. Balloting by proxies in elections is not allowed.

Section 9.3. **Nomination of At-Large Director Candidates.** Candidates for At-Large Directors may be nominated by either of the following methods:

- a. Nominations by the Nominating Committee.
 - i. For candidates from the general membership that are to be appointed by the Board of Directors, the Nominating Committee shall nominate at least as many qualified candidates as there are Directors to be selected, and shall announce its nominees no later than January 15 of the calendar year in which the appointment is to be held.
 - ii. For independent candidates to be appointed by the Board of Directors, the Nominating Committee shall nominate at least as many qualified candidates for the number as there are Directors to be selected. The Nominating Committee shall announce its nominees no later than July 1 of the calendar year in which the selections are to take place.
 - iii. For candidates that are to be directly elected by the membership, the Nominating Committee shall nominate at least as many qualified candidates as there are Directors to be selected plus two additional candidates (n+2) and shall announce its nominees no later than January 15 of the calendar year in which the elections are to be held. Any candidates put forth by the Nominating Committee for appointment from the general membership that are not successfully chosen by the Board of Directors may be added to the ballot for election at the discretion of the Nominating Committee by March 1.
 - iv. All nominees must be announced by publishing the names of the nominees and any report issued by the Committee on the USFA website.
- b. Nominations by Petition. Additional candidates may be nominated by petition for positions to be directly elected by the membership, provided that:
 - i. The prospective candidate submits an application and fully participates in the standard nomination process; and
 - ii. The prospective candidate identifies the position for which they seek selection and meet the qualifications of that position; and
 - iii. Prior to or simultaneously with the submission of supporting petitions, the prospective candidate shall have in writing indicated their willingness to serve, completed a background check, submitted conflict-of-interest disclosures, and acceded to the Qualifying Affirmation prescribed in these Bylaws; and
 - iv. The petitions submitted in support of the prospective candidate include

subscriptions from no fewer than 6% of voting members in good standing who have among them named all separate regions and 4% of separate officially recognized clubs as their primary affiliation and whose identity and intent are not reasonably subject to doubt. There must be a minimum number of signatures from each region no fewer than 6% of the minimum threshold of overall signatures (e.g. if 6% of voting members in good standing would be 100 signatures, then there must be at least 6 signatures from each region). The number of required total and regional signatures and clubs will be calculated by the USFA National Office based on the number of eligible voters at the end of the previous fiscal year and will be published with the call for nominations

- c. The National Office shall authenticate petitions and the signatures thereon and the Election Committee shall determine whether each person nominated by petition meets the qualifications laid down in these Bylaws for the office being sought; and shall only allow the names of those candidates who submit complying petitions and meet such qualifications to appear on the ballot

Section 9.4. Delivery of Petitions. No petition shall serve to nominate a candidate for any USFA position unless the original petition, an electronic transmission of the original petition in a format designated by the USFA National Office, and all other documents required by this Article are received by the National Office of the USFA not later than 5:00 p.m. Mountain Time of the last business day of March of the year in which the election is to be conducted. Proof of mailing of the original petition by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested, or by private delivery service guaranteeing delivery within two days and providing proof of delivery, postage or shipping prepaid, properly addressed to the intended recipient, not less than ten days before due, shall raise a presumption of timely delivery to the addressee. All petitions must be conducted on paper with hand-written signatures; electronic petitions are not permitted.

Section 9.5. Submissions by Nominees. The signed Qualifying Affirmation, completed background check, conflict-of-interest disclosures, agreement to be a candidate and submission to binding arbitration of candidates nominated by the Nominating Committee shall be submitted to the National Office of the USFA by the Nominating Committee with the announcement of its nominations. The signed Qualifying Affirmation, completed background check, conflict-of-interest disclosures, agreement to be a candidate and submission to binding arbitration of candidates nominated by petition shall be submitted to the National Office of the USFA with the petition that purports to make that nomination.

Section 9.6. Proceedings of the Election Committee. Formal Meetings of the Election Committee shall be open, except for deliberations in arbitration and consultations with legal counsel regarding matters within the protection of the attorney-client privilege. Reasonable notice of meetings of the Election Committee shall be given by posting on the official USFA website. Candidates for office or their designated representatives may attend such meetings at their own expense.

Section 9.7. Electioneering. The Election Committee shall prescribe reasonable rules for the posting of electioneering materials by candidates for office on the USFA website, which

materials shall be subject to reasonable approval by the Election Committee to exclude profane, illegal or defamatory materials.

Section 9.8. **Timing of Elections.** The Election Committee shall establish the dates for balloting in all USFA elections, provided that:

- a. The period during which ballots may be cast shall not be less than two weeks in duration; and
- b. The period for casting ballots for Directors in a regular election shall end no later than June 25; and
- c. In the event a recall vote is required, the Election Committee shall establish dates for the period during which ballots may be cast that are as expeditious as possible while adhering to the general principles set forth in this Article, provided that strict compliance with time frames and dates stated herein is not required.

Section 9.9. **Ranked Preferential Voting.** In elections by the membership to fill positions in the USFA the Election Committee shall provide a method of ranked preferential voting, and the candidate (if only one is to be elected) or candidates (if more than one is to be elected) receiving the greatest preference shall be elected. In case of a tie, the Chair of the Election Committee shall draw lots to determine the winner.

Section 9.10. **Method of Selecting Elected At-Large Directors.** The elected At-Large Directors shall be selected in balloting conducted under the supervision of the Election Committee.

Section 9.11. **Consent to Arbitrate.** No person may be elected to a position in the USFA or appear on the ballot therefore who has not agreed in writing, in such form as may be prescribed by the Election Committee, to submit to binding arbitration by the Election Committee of all disputes arising out of the election as the sole, final and exclusive means of resolving such disputes.

Section 9.12. **Arbitration Rules.** In arbitrating disputes, the Election Committee shall conduct a self-administered arbitration and, to the extent practical, shall follow the Election Rules of the American Arbitration Association and shall preserve the due process rights of the parties.

ARTICLE X

REMOVAL OF OFFICERS, MEMBERS OF THE BOARD, AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Section 10.1. **Exclusive Procedure.** Officers, Directors and committee members may be removed from the positions to which they have been duly selected only by the procedures set forth in this Article or by judicial proceedings in compliance with the Colorado Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act.

Section 10.2. Removal for Cause. No Director may be removed except for cause. “Cause” shall include but shall not be limited to: (i) the commission of a crime injurious to the USFA’s image, reputation or operation or that involves dishonesty, breach of trust, or physical harm to any person; (ii) engaging in conduct that is in bad faith and materially injurious to the USFA, including but not limited to, misappropriation of property, profiting from a undisclosed conflict-of-interest, advancing the undisclosed conflict interest of another, or placing one’s own gain or advantage above that of the USFA; (iii) willfully refusing to implement or follow a lawful policy or rule or directive of the USFA; (iv) engaging in misfeasance, malfeasance or dereliction demonstrated by a pattern of willful failure faithfully to perform the duties of the position outlined in Article V, Section 7.2 of these amended bylaws; (v) fraud or deception in demonstrating the Director’s qualification to serve on the Board of Directors; (vi) failure to pass a required background check or otherwise failing to meet the requirements of the position from which the person is being removed; or (viii) failure to attend more than two-thirds (2/3) of the meetings of the Board during any twelve (12) month period, unless the Director is able to demonstrate to the other Directors of the Board that the presence of exigent circumstances caused and excused the absences. Unless such voting is part of a violation of a USA Fencing policy, no Director shall be subject to removal or to not being re-nominated based on how they vote as a Director.

Section 10.3. Removal of Directors. Directors may be removed only by the group that elected or appointed them. A director may be removed only if the number of votes cast to remove the Director would be sufficient for an initial election or appointment. Directors may be removed in the following manner:

- a. A Director appointed by the Board of Directors may be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of Directors present at any duly noticed meeting of the Board provided notice of the motion seeking removal and grounds for said removal are included in the published agenda for the meeting and the Director in question is given an opportunity to address the Board before the vote to remove is taken.
- b. A Director elected by members may be removed by the membership category or body that elected such Director in a recall election. A recall vote is initiated by a majority affirmative vote of Directors present at any duly noticed meeting of the Board provided notice of the motion seeking removal and grounds for said removal are included in the published agenda for the meeting and the Director in question is given an opportunity to address the Board before the vote to initiate a recall is taken.

Section 10.4. Removal of Non-voting Board Members. The Treasurer, Secretary, Parliamentarian, or Special Board Members of the USFA may be removed by the Board of Directors, with or without cause, as follows:

- a. The Treasurer may be removed only after having been provided notice and an opportunity to be heard by the Board of Directors and upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Directors present and voting.
- b. The Special Board Members, Secretary, or Parliamentarian may be removed by a duly adopted resolution of the Board of Directors.

Section 10.5. **Removal of Committee Members.** Any committee member of the USFA may be removed by the Board of Directors, with or without cause, by a duly adopted resolution of the Board of Directors.

Section 10.6. **Removal of the Chair of the Board of Directors.** The Chair of the Board of Directors serves at the pleasure of the Board and may be removed from and replaced in that position at any time provided notice of the motion seeking removal is included in the published agenda for the meeting at which removal or replacement will be sought and the person holding the position is given an opportunity to address the Board before the vote to remove or replace is taken. The person holding the position of Chair of the Board of Directors continues to serve as a Director unless removed from the Board itself in compliance with Section 10.3 of these Bylaws.

Section 10.7. **Financial Obligations.** It is the duty of every member to remain in good financial standing with the USFA. Notwithstanding any provision of these Bylaws to the contrary, the membership rights of any member who is more than ninety (90) days in arrears on any amount owed to the USFA will be administratively suspended without further action than notice given to the member's email address or mailing address of record. Such suspension is not considered disciplinary action and is not contingent on any procedures regarding the same. However, any member who contests such action may file a complaint and have the validity and amount of the claimed balance due established under the procedures prescribed for the resolution of grievances.

ARTICLE XI COMMITTEES AND COUNCILS

Section 11.1. **Committees.** All Committees shall be "Committees of the Board." A "Committee of the Board" is a committee created by these Bylaws or that is created by and that may be disbanded by resolution of the Board of Directors.

Section 11.2. **Operational Resource Groups.** Committees of the USFA that are charged with supporting operations will be classified as an Operational Resource Group and further defined as one of the following:

- a. Commission: A "Commission" is a committee of the USFA that is charged with operational support. Commissions may (i) comprise members who are not subject to annual reappointment; (ii) be populated other than by appointment of the Chair of the Board; and (iii) be authorized to select its own Chair.
- b. Resource Group: A "Resource Group" is a committee of the USFA constituted for the purpose of providing ongoing support and guidance to the USFA or any of its bodies or constituencies.

Section 11.3. **Task Force.** A "Task Force" is a Committee of the Board or USFA constituted for a single or specific purpose that is limited in scope or in time. A task force is disbanded automatically upon fulfillment of its purpose or upon expiration of its stated duration.

Section 11.4. **Composition.** All individuals serving on committees shall be members of the

USFA in good standing who meet the qualifications for elected At-Large Directors, and unless otherwise provided in these Bylaws, may, but need not be, Directors.

- a. Athlete Representation. All committees shall include no less than one-third Athlete members selected by the Athlete Council who meet the qualifications required by Appendix II, as applicable. On any committee that oversees selection of athletes, coaches, or staff for para fencing Protected Competitions, at least half of the athlete members must have met the requirements set forth in Appendix II by competing in a para fencing event. With respect to the selection of NGB 10-Year and NGB 10-Year+ Athlete Representatives, the Athlete Council and the Nominating Committee shall jointly develop a process for identifying and vetting candidates to serve in those positions as outlined in Appendix III.
- b. Gender Representation. Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws and to the extent practicable while maintaining standards for qualified committee personnel, it shall be the goal of USA Fencing to appoint committee members whose gender reflects their proportion within the general membership of USA Fencing. For the purposes of achieving this aspiration, non-binary individuals shall be considered to be of the gender with which they identify.
- c. Para fencing Community Representation. Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws and to the extent practicable while maintaining standards for qualified committee personnel, it shall be the goal of USA Fencing to include in each committee's membership at least one representative from the para fencing community. For the purposes of achieving this aspiration, "para fencing community" shall include para fencing athletes, referees, coaches, and others who have demonstrated knowledge of para fencing and support for para fencing athletes.
- d. Ethnic Diversity. Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws and to the extent practicable while maintaining standards for qualified committee personnel, USFA shall strive for ethnic diversity in committee membership and shall encourage committee participation by members who belong to minority ethnic groups.

Section 11.5 **Liaisons**. All committees will have an ex-officio Board Liaison and Staff Liaison:

- a. Board Liaison. Board Liaisons will be selected from among the Board of Directors (voting or non-voting members) per Section 11.6. They may be either a non-voting or a voting member of the committee depending on their designation upon appointment. They will sponsor any motions from the group and provide mutual insight and facilitate knowledge sharing between the Board of Directors and their assigned group.
- b. Staff Liaison. Staff Liaisons will be selected from among the National Office staff by the Chief Executive Officer. They are non-voting members of their assigned committee. They will facilitate meetings, keep attendance, and liaise with the National Office for any operational needs.

Section 11.6. **Appointments.** Unless otherwise provided by these Bylaws or a resolution of the Board of Directors, the Chair of the Board, with the approval of the Board of Directors, shall appoint the members of committees and designate the Board Liaisons and Chairs thereof (Chairs are optional for Resource Groups).

Section 11.7. **Audit Committee.**

- a. Purpose. The Audit Committee shall have primary responsibility for reviewing and overseeing the financial procedures, controls, reports, and regulatory filings of the USFA, and reporting on the foregoing to the Board of Directors. The Audit Committee, with approval of the Board, shall annually select a qualified auditor to certify the financial reporting of the USFA. The Board of Directors may assign other duties consistent with and related to the functions specified in this Subsection 11.7.a.
- b. Composition. The Audit Committee shall consist of four members chosen by the Board of Directors and two Athletes who meet the qualifications required in Appendix II. Of the members selected by the Board, at least two shall be Directors who are not officers and at least one shall be an Independent Director; provided, however, that the Treasurer may not serve on the Audit Committee. Members shall serve staggered terms of two years. The Board of Directors shall select the Chair of the Audit Committee. The Board of Directors and the Athlete Council shall provide for staggered terms of the members each body selects by limiting one half of its initial appointees after the effective date of these Bylaws to a one-year term and the other half will have an initial two-year term.

Section 11.8. **Budget Committee.**

- a. Purpose. The Budget Committee shall have primary responsibility for working with the professional staff and exercising oversight in the development and formulation of the USFA's annual budget; presenting the budget to the Board of Directors for its review, revision and approval; monitoring budgetary performance; recommending variances to the budget; and reporting on the foregoing to the Board of Directors at each meeting of the Board.
- b. Composition. The Budget Committee shall consist of six voting members: the Treasurer, who shall be Chair of the Budget Committee; three other members of the Board of Directors elected by the Board; and two athletes who meet the qualifications required in Appendix II, one of whom shall be female and one of whom shall have qualified as a Parafencer. The Chief Executive Officer of the USFA, or another staff member designated by the Chief Executive Officer, shall be a non-voting member of the Budget Committee. Members shall serve terms of one year.

Section 11.9. **Election Committee.**

- a. Purpose. The Election Committee shall be responsible for fairly administering the elections by the membership of national officers and positions on the Board of Directors specified in these Bylaws; for deciding issues raised and encountered during the

conduct of elections; and for overseeing balloting on other matters as provided by these Bylaws or by resolution of the Board of Directors. Among its duties, the Election Committee shall validate the submissions of all candidates for nomination by petition; shall enforce such electoral rules not inconsistent with these Bylaws as the Board of Directors may adopt; shall make such additional electoral rules as are necessary and not inconsistent with rules adopted by the Board of Directors or specified in these Bylaws; shall provide a template form of petition that may be used by any candidate; shall decide challenges to qualifications of candidates and compliance with election procedures; shall provide for the distribution, validation and tallying of ballots; shall certify the results of elections; and shall arbitrate, after notice and an opportunity to be heard, the grievances of any interested party concerning electoral procedures.

- b. Composition. The Election Committee shall consist of six members, four of whom are selected by the Board of Directors at its Annual Meeting and two athletes, who meet the requirements in Appendix II, selected by the Athlete Council. Each member of the Election Committee, however chosen, shall serve a term of two years commencing with adjournment of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors, but shall continue to serve until their successor has been elected and qualified. If there is a vacancy on the Election Committee, the body that selected the member who is no longer serving shall select the successor. No person may serve on the Election Committee who is candidate for office or other elected position within the USFA or who holds a position for which an election or preparations for an election can be reasonably anticipated while such person is a member of the Election Committee, provided that any person who irrevocably renounces their right to seek reelection is not disqualified from service. The Election Committee shall select one of its members to serve as chair on an annual basis. The Board of Directors and the Athlete Council shall provide for staggered terms of the members each body selects by limiting one half of its initial appointees after the effective date of these Bylaws to a one-year term and the other half will have an initial two-year term.
- c. Proceedings. The proceedings of Election Committee shall be open, except for personnel matters, deliberations in arbitration and consultations with counsel concerning legal matters within the protection of the attorney-client privilege. Meetings shall be announced with sufficient advance notice that candidates or their representatives may, at their own expense, attend in person or by electronic means.

Section 11.10. **Nominating Committee.**

- a. Purpose. The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for selecting candidates for elected positions and offices in the USFA as specified in these Bylaws, and in so doing shall take care to select candidates who possess experience and knowledge pertinent to the purposes, interests and needs of the USFA.
- b. Composition. The Nominating Committee shall comprise six members of whom two athletes, who meet the requirements in Appendix II, shall be selected by the Athlete Council for two-year staggered terms and four shall be selected by the Board of Directors, with one drawn from each of the following groups for staggered two-year terms. A maximum of two voting members of the Nominating Committee may be

current members of the Board of Directors. The composition of the four voting members selected by the Board of Directors must be as follows:

- i. A current or former At-Large Director, a current or former officer, or a current or former member of a Committee, Resource Group, or Council, who have at least four years of service in said position;
- ii. Either a coach with a demonstrated record of producing fencers who perform at a high level or a principal of an established operating fencing club;
- iii. Active officials (referees, armorers, bout committee members, Referees' Commission members) who have regularly staffed national tournaments during the two years preceding their appointment; and
- iv. Someone who meets the independent requirements outlined in Section 7.4.b.iv, including but not limited to current or past Independent Directors or independent At-Large Directors.

The Chief Executive Officer or another member of the professional staff designated by the Chief Executive Officer shall serve as a resource at the request of the Nominating Committee. No person may serve on the Nominating Committee whose position on the Board of Directors would be up for re-nomination by the Nominating Committee while such person would be a member of the Nominating Committee, provided that any person who irrevocably renounces their right to seek reelection or reappointment is not disqualified from service. Such determination of eligibility or renouncement and subsequent resignation or removal shall take place by September 1 before the relevant election or appointment. The Nominating Committee shall annually select its chair. Any vacancy on the Nominating Committee shall be filled by a person of the same qualifications as the vacating member.

Section 11.11. **Ethics Committee.**

- a. Purpose. The Ethics Committee shall promote and help sustain a culture of ethical conduct throughout the USFA. The Ethics Committee shall review all USFA codes of conduct, conflict-of-interest regulations and disclosures, and other policies and reports addressing prescribed and recommended standards of behavior of USFA members, contractors and employees. The Ethics Committee may recommend to the appropriate promulgating authority proposals for adoption, revision and improvement of codes and policies concerning ethical conduct of persons associated with the USFA. The Ethics Committee shall prescribe standards and forms for the disclosure of actual, apparent and potential conflicts of interest, and shall not less frequently than annually review such disclosures and make a report thereof to the Board of Directors.
- b. Operations. The Ethics Committee shall:
 - i. address inquiries regarding the applicability, compliance or non-compliance with promulgated ethical standards that are referred to it by the National Office, Board of Directors, USFA members, or undertaken on its own initiative

- ii. review on an ongoing basis all USFA codes of conduct, conflict-of-interest regulations, and other policies addressing prescribed standards of behavior of USFA members, contractors and employees, and shall recommend to the Board of Directors revisions thereto;
 - iii. review and opine on conflict-of-interest concerns referred to it by those charged with the initial review of conflict-of-interest disclosures; and
 - iv. refer to the Grievance and Disciplinary Committee (or its designated administrator) or to another appropriate body any recommendations for commencement of disciplinary proceedings that the Ethics Committee deems advisable.
- c. Composition. The Ethics Committee shall consist of six members, four of whom shall be chosen by the Board of Directors and two athletes, who meet the requirements in Appendix II. Of the members chosen by the Board, at least one shall be an individual who meets the criteria for Independent Directors and at least one shall be a licensed attorney who is actively practicing law. The athlete members shall be selected by the Athlete Council. The Board of Directors shall select the Chair of the Ethics Committee. Each member of the Ethics Committee, however chosen, shall serve a term of two years commencing with adjournment of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors. If there is a vacancy on the Ethics Committee, the body that selected the member who is no longer serving shall select a successor who qualifies for and meets the requirements of the vacant position. The Board of Directors and the Athlete Council shall provide for staggered terms of the members each body selects by limiting one half of its initial appointees after the effective date of these Bylaws to one-year terms.

Section 11.12. **Referees' Commission.** The Referees' Commission is both a Committee of the Board and an Operational Resource Group.

- a. Purpose. The Referees' Commission shall be responsible for:
- i. the recruitment, development and evaluation of referees;
 - ii. the appointment of referees to national competitions and to such international competitions as USA Fencing is allowed;
 - iii. for maintenance of the Rules of Competition;
 - iv. for the creation of ethical standards for referees and for the creation and maintenance of an Ethics Subcommittee of the Referees' Commission to provide for the disposition of complaints alleging violation of those standards;
 - v. for providing a method of addressing grievances between referees that are not within the exclusive jurisdiction of another authority;
 - vi. for representing and advancing the interests of the referee corps; and

vii. for advising the USFA on matters of concern to referees and regarding refereeing.

b. Composition.

- i. The Referees' Commission shall be organized under the leadership of a Chair, Vice-Chairs of Domestic Grassroots Development, Domestic National Development Rules and Examinations, International Development and Assignment, and Ombudsman, and three athletes.
- ii. The Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Referees' Commission shall be elected by experienced referees. The standards for electors and the method for nominating candidates for these positions shall be determined by the Board of Directors consistent with these Bylaws, and Nominees for the positions shall be elected by a vote of the electors that is conducted by the Election Committee, and notwithstanding Section 9.9 of these Bylaws, such election shall be by simple majority.
- iii. Athlete members, who meet the requirements in Appendix II, of the Referees' Commission shall be selected by the Athlete Council.
- iv. The Vice-Chairs may constitute advisory groups to assist them in the discharge of their obligations. Advisory groups shall be populated by persons chosen by the Vice-Chairs on consultation with the Chair of the Referees' Commission, but shall not be considered members of the Referees' Commission and shall not vote on matters that come before it.
- v. The Chair of the Referees' Commission may constitute and appoint additional subcommittees to assist the Referees' Commission in meeting its obligations and achieving its goals and may disband such subcommittees in the Chair's discretion. Subcommittees shall be populated by persons chosen by the Chair on consultation with the Vice-Chairs of the Referees' Commission. Subcommittee members need not be members of the Referees' Commission and shall not be considered members of the Referees' Commission.

Section 11.13. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Committee.

- a. Purpose. The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Committee serves to create and provide meaningful opportunities to advise the organization, and increase the presence and protection of underrepresented communities within USFA governance. The DEIB Committee will advocate for interests of underrepresented groups relating but not limited to race, disability status, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, religion, political opinions, family status or other innate attribute.
- b. Operations. The DEIB Committee shall:
 - i. Advise the Board and National Office on any matters concerning or relating to

diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. The DEIB Committee will make recommendations regarding Bylaws, policies, processes, and practices;

- ii. Assist the Board of Directors with diverse representation on the Board, Committees, Councils, Task Forces, and Resource Groups in ensuring that diverse perspectives and views are included in governance matters;
 - iii. Identify qualified candidates for leadership positions to be considered in the selection process on the Board, Committees, Councils, Task Forces, and Resource Groups;
 - iv. Educate and prepare interested individuals to serve in USFA governance; and
 - v. Address inquiries regarding the applicability, compliance or non-compliance with anti-discrimination standards.
- c. Composition. The DEIB Committee shall consist of six members, three of whom shall be chosen by the Board of Directors, one of whom shall be selected by the DEIB Committee, and two athletes, who meet the requirements in Appendix II. Board of Directors shall choose individuals whose demographics are underrepresented in leadership, prioritizing the qualified candidates identified by the DEIB Committee. Membership shall be comprised of a diverse range of identities including, but not limited to: expertise, status as an athlete, roles within the USFA community, and statements of interest.

Section 11.14. **Grievance and Discipline Committee.**

- a. Purpose. The Grievance and Discipline Committee shall be responsible for the administration and adjudication of all grievances and disciplinary complaints falling within its jurisdiction as prescribed by the Board of Directors and not assigned by these Bylaws to another authority.
- b. Operations. The Grievance and Discipline Committee shall operate under procedures adopted by the Board of Directors. To the extent not inconsistent with Board of Directors prescribed procedures, the Grievance and Discipline Committee may adopt such practices and procedures as it deems appropriate and useful to the discharge of its duties.
- c. Composition. The Grievance and Discipline Committee shall consist of six members, four of whom shall be chosen by the Board of Directors, and two athletes who meet the requirements in Appendix II. Of the members chosen by the Board of Directors, none shall be a member of that body and at least two shall be licensed or retired attorneys. The athlete members shall be selected by the Athlete Council. The Chair of the Grievance and Discipline Committee shall be selected by the Board of Directors and shall be a licensed or retired attorney. Each member of the Grievance and Discipline Committee, however chosen, shall serve a term of two years commencing with adjournment of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors at which they are selected, and there shall be at least one licensed or retired attorney in each two-year cohort. If there is a vacancy on the

Grievance and Discipline Committee, the body that selected the member who is no longer serving shall select a successor who qualifies for and meets the requirements of the vacant position to fill the balance of the term of the vacating member. The Board of Directors and the Athlete Council shall provide for staggered terms of the members each body selects by limiting one half of its initial appointees after the effective date of this Section 11.14 to one-year terms.

Section 11.15. Coaches Committee.

- a. Purpose: The Coaches' Committee provides the voice of the coaching community to USA Fencing, working in concert with the Board of Directors, and, where appropriate, the National Office to provide advice on matters that affect the Coaching Community of USA Fencing. The Coaches' Committee shall be responsible for:
 - i. Representing and advancing the interests of the USA Fencing coaching community;
 - ii. Advising USA Fencing on matters of concern to coaches and regarding coaching;
 - iii. Promoting the growth and excellence of fencing in the United States;
 - iv. Supporting development of the culture of Fencing within the coaching community – in particular the retention of athletes into coaches and the fostering of an outstanding and positive culture within Fencing;
 - v. Providing a direct voice to the Coaching Community and sounding board for coaching issues;
 - vi. If requested, provide high performance director with feedback on national coach selection;
 - vii. Requesting changes to the National Office, the Tournament Committee, the Sports Performance Resource Group, the Hall of Fame Committee, and the Referees' Commission regarding coaching-related topics; and
 - viii. Identifying and reporting issues regarding the coaching community and providing constructive ideas for resolution.
- b. Composition: The Coaches' Committee shall comprise nine members and be organized as follows:
 - i. 6 members appointed by the Board of Directors, of whom
 - A. No fewer than one member identifies as a lesser represented gender; and
 - B. One member is approved by the Paralympic Development Resource Group; and
 - C. Must have a Coach membership type with USA Fencing as of July 31st of the membership year immediately prior to appointment; and

- ii. Three athletes who meet the requirements in Appendix II, selected by the Athlete Council

Section 11.16. **Meetings.** Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, every committee shall meet from time to time at the call of the Chair thereof, and it shall be the duty of the Chair to call a meeting upon the written request of a majority of the members of the committee, of the Board or of the Chair of the Board. Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, in the discretion of the chair, meetings of committees may be conducted telephonically, by video conference or by any means that allows all participants to hear the proceedings and to participate fully therein.

Section 11.17. **Committee Reports.** Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, the Chair of each Committee shall render a full report of its activities upon the request of the Chair of the Board or the Board of Directors and in any event not less than three weeks prior to the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors.

Section 11.18. **Committee Member Attendance.** Committee members are expected to attend all scheduled committee meetings of which they are a member. Each committee member is required to attend no less than two-thirds (2/3) of the committee meetings of which they are a member during any twelve (12) month period.

Section 11.19. **Compensation.** Committee members shall not receive compensation for their services as committee members. USFA committee members are not disqualified from receiving compensation for services rendered to or for the benefit of USFA in any other capacity. Each committee member shall be bound by the Conflict-of-Interest Policy of USFA.

Section 11.20. **Terms of Service.**

- a. Unless otherwise provided in these Bylaws and except for the Referees' Commission, appointed committee members shall serve terms approximating two years, from the date of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors nearest their appointment until the later of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors in the second calendar year thereafter or their successor has been elected and qualified.
- b. In the event a committee member is selected to fill a vacancy resulting from the removal, resignation, or ineligibility to serve of a committee member, the newly selected individual shall serve the unexpired portion of the vacated term, but for the purposes of Section 11.21, the individual shall be deemed to have commenced service on the date of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors nearest their appointment.
- c. Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Referees' Commission shall serve terms commencing on August 1 of the year in which they are selected and ending on July 31 four years later, with the Chair, Ombudsman, and Vice-Chairs of Domestic Development – Grassroots and Domestic Development – National being selected in the years when the Summer Olympic Games are regularly scheduled to be held and the other members of the Referees' Commission selected in the even numbered years between regularly scheduled Summer Olympic Games. The acceleration or delay of the Olympic Games shall not affect the terms of Referees' Commission members.

- d. The Board of Directors and the Athlete Council shall provide for staggered terms for the members each body selects by designating one half of its appointees chosen in 2024 to serve two-year terms.

Section 11.21. **Term Limits.** Beginning with the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors in 2024, and unless otherwise provided in these Bylaws, a committee member shall be permitted to serve up to eight (8) consecutive years on a given committee, after which they are ineligible for service on that committee for a period of one (1) year. After a one (1) year gap in service, the individual shall be eligible for reappointment to that committee and the limitation period shall begin to run anew. The board of Directors may in its discretion exempt particular individuals from the limitations set forth in this section.

Section 11.22. **Councils.** The Board of Directors may from time to time authorize the formation and dissolution of groups to be known as “councils” to provide forums for individuals or constituencies who share a special interest in the governance or operation of the USFA. Councils are not committees and shall not have decision-making authority, governance authority, or the authority to bind the USFA in any manner, and therefore, do not have the ability to directly affect elite athletes. Councils may be formed to facilitate communication with, and discussion by, constituencies with specialized knowledge or interests, and such councils may make recommendations to the Board of Directors, committees, or the CEO. Athlete representation on councils is optional, recognizing that some councils (such as those composed primarily of parents or other non-athlete stakeholder groups) may not require athlete involvement. However, a council may not be used to perform the functions of any committee, the board of directors or the executive nor may a council be structured or used in a manner that effectively circumvents the athlete-representation requirements applicable to committees and Boards of Directors under these Bylaws, state law, federal law, or relevant USOPC, FIE or WAS requirements.

ARTICLE XII INDEMNIFICATION

Section 12.1. **Right to Indemnification.** The USFA shall indemnify its present and former Directors, officers, employees, committee members, agents, official representatives and any other person serving or who has served the USFA in any capacity at its request against expenses actually and reasonably incurred by such person (including but not limited to judgments, costs and legal fees and expenses) in connection with the defense of any pending or threatened litigation to which such person is, or is threatened to be made a party, because of that person’s service in any of the enumerated capacities. The right of indemnification shall extend to expenses of litigation that is compromised or settled, including amounts paid in settlement, if USFA has approved such settlement. For the purposes of this Article, “litigation” shall include both judicial proceedings and arbitrations. The right to indemnification shall accrue only to persons who acted in good faith and in a manner reasonably believed at the time by such person to be in, and not opposed to, the best interests of the USFA. The termination of litigation by judgment, order, settlement, conviction or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent shall not in and of itself create a presumption that the person seeking indemnification did not act in good faith or in a manner reasonably believed at the time to be in the best interest of the USFA.

Section 12.2. **Approval of Payment.** At a meeting at which a quorum of disinterested Directors

has been obtained, the Board of Directors, acting by majority vote of the disinterested Directors present and voting on the matter, shall determine by resolution whether a person seeking indemnification has met the criteria and standards of conduct set forth above and if so, the amount to be indemnified. Such determination shall be final. If a quorum of disinterested Directors cannot be obtained, or if a majority of the disinterested Directors who constitute a quorum shall so resolve, such determination can be made by the Board upon the opinion in writing of independent legal counsel that indemnification is proper in the circumstances because the person seeking indemnification meets the criteria and standard of conduct set forth above and has demonstrated that the amounts to be reimbursed or paid are properly eligible for payment under that Section.

Section 12.3. **Advance Payment of Expenses.** Any expenses incurred by any person qualified for indemnification in connection with the defense of litigation may be paid by the USFA in advance of a final disposition of such litigation upon receipt of a written undertaking by such person to repay any amounts advanced if it is ultimately determined that the person or the expenses are not eligible for indemnification under this Article.

Section 12.4. **Insurance.** The USFA shall continuously maintain one or more policies of insurance reasonably anticipated to provide coverage for the obligations described in this Article. This requirement states a minimum amount of the coverage to be obtained and does not restrict the USFA from procuring insurance that provides broader coverage. The Board of Directors shall review and establish the minimum level of coverage each year as part of its approval of the Budget for the ensuing year.

Section 12.5. **Amendment.** No repeal or modification of this Article shall adversely affect any right to indemnification that shall have accrued to any person who meets the criteria stated in Section 1 of this Article as of the effective date of such repeal or modification.

ARTICLE XIII EFFECTIVE DATE AND AMENDMENTS

Section 13.1. **Effective Date.** Upon approval of these Bylaws by the Board of Directors in accordance Section 13.2, these Bylaws shall take effect. Thereafter Reference to “Bylaws” shall mean these Amended and Restated Bylaws.

Section 13.2. **Amendments by the Board of Directors.** These Bylaws may be amended or repealed, and new Bylaws may be adopted, by the Board of Directors acting in accordance with the procedures specified in this Section.

- a. **Procedure.** Any Director may move the adoption of amendments to these Bylaws or the adoption of new bylaws. Not later than 45 days before the date of any meeting of the Board at which an amendment or new bylaw is to be considered, or such shorter time as the Board may deem necessary by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote, a general notice of the proposed change shall be published prominently on the USFA’s website. Such notice shall set forth the text of the proposed amendment, the date, time, and place of the meeting of the Board of Directors at which the change is to be considered, and provide a means by which general comments of the membership relating to the

proposal may be communicated for distribution to the Board of Directors not less than five days before the meeting. Amendments and new bylaws shall be adopted upon the affirmative vote of not fewer than two-thirds of the Directors then in office.

- b. Effect. Amendments and newly adopted bylaws approved by the Board of Directors shall take effect at the close of the meeting at which they are adopted unless otherwise specified in the adopting resolution. Such resolution may specify that the amendment or newly adopted provisions shall take effect immediately or at a later time.

ARTICLE XIV IRREVOCABLE DEDICATION OF ASSETS

Section 14.1. **Charitable Purposes.** The property of the USFA is irrevocably dedicated to charitable purposes, and no part of the net income or assets of the USFA shall inure to the benefit of any private person.

Section 14.2. **Dissolution.** Upon the dissolution or winding up of the USFA, its assets shall be first applied to the payment, or provision for the payment, of all its debts and obligations. Any assets thereafter remaining shall be distributed to one or more nonprofit funds, foundations or corporations that are organized and operated for charitable purposes and that have established tax exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended. The use and disposition of real or personal property owned by the USFA in any and all States and Territories of the United States of America upon dissolution or winding up shall be limited to the purposes stated in Section 1 of this Article in such manner as to satisfy the requirements of the laws of such States and Territories for exemption of the property from property taxation in such jurisdictions.

ARTICLE XV ARBITRATION

The USFA shall submit to binding arbitration conducted in accordance with the applicable rules of the American Arbitration Association in any controversy (1) involving its recognition as a national governing body for the sport of fencing, as may be lawfully provided for Bylaws of the USOPC and 36 U.S.C. § 220529, or (2) involving the opportunity of any athlete, coach, trainer, manager, administrator, or official to participate in amateur athletic competition in the sport of fencing, as lawfully provided for in the Bylaws of the USOPC.

APPENDIX I

SafeSport Code

APPENDIX II

USOPC Bylaws

APPENDIX III

[Athlete Identification and Vetting Process](#)

June 19, 2026

Report from the Election Committee to the USA Fencing Board of Directors

From: David Hitchcock, Chair

To: Phil Andrews, CEO USA Fencing

Cc: April Alford, Oppong Hemeng, Mark Segal, Gerek Meinhardt OLY (Athlete), Elizabeth Tartakovsky OLY (Athlete), Bruce Mitchell (Board Liaison), Bryan Wendell (Staff Liaison)

1. This year the election committee (EC) oversaw the Board of Directors (At Large), Referee's Commission, and Hall of Fame (HOF) election processes.
2. On February 9, the EC met and voted to establish the election dates from May 13-31, 2026.
3. On April 9, 2026, the EC received a copy of the USA Fencing Ethics Committee 2026 Election Conflict of Interest (COI) Review. This review identified concerns with two of the candidates on the ballot.
4. On April 15, 2026, the EC met formally determine whether the individual (Jason Liu) nominated by petition meets the qualifications laid down in the Bylaws for the At-Large Director position.
 - a. While the EC is empowered to review the petition candidates, with the assistance of the National Office the committee also assessed the qualifications of the nominated candidates. It was discovered that one nominated candidate (Redacted) has not completed SafeSport training and a Background Check, and was subsequently removed from the ballot. It was also discovered that none of the candidates (nominated or petition) has provided proof of US citizenship or permanent legal resident status to the National Office as required by the bylaws. The committee strongly urges that the Nominating Committee and National Office obtain proof of all of these requirements prior to releasing the final candidate slate to the membership.
 - b. After a careful review of the bylaws, COI report, and the qualifications for candidacy as an At-Large Director, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved that the petition candidate (Jason Liu) had met the qualifications listed in the bylaws for inclusion on the ballot for At-Large Director for the 2026 election.
5. Once again, we utilized eBallot as the election system. The ballots were tested prior to the start of the election with no issues noted.
6. The election commenced on May 13.

7. There was one issue brought to the attention of the EC during voting. After investigation, it was determined that two members who were suspended after the eligible voter list was created on March 13, but before the commencement of voting on May 13, had received ballots. These ballots were invalidated in the eBallot system and any votes cast by these individual were not counted. The National Office will add an additional step to the process in future years to ensure that any suspended members are removed from the voter rolls before the election commences.
8. The voting ended on May 31.
 - a. The Referee Commission and Hall of Fame results were transmitted to the respective committees on June 1.
 - b. All Board candidates were notified by the Election Committee Chair of their individual results on June 1 ahead of the public announcement.
9. A total of 3,323 of 16,780 eligible members cast ballots, representing a turnout of 19.80%. By comparison, the 2024 election drew 2,334 votes from 12,092 eligible members, a turnout of 19.30%. See these links for more details.
 - a. <https://www.usafencing.org/news/2026/june/01/2026-usa-fencing-election-results-nona-lim-and-greg-husisian-elected-to-board-of-directors>
 - b. <https://www.usafencing.org/news/2026/june/04/a-closer-look-at-the-2026-usa-fencing-election>
10. Based on an inquiry from one of the unsuccessful Board candidates, the EC met on June 10, 2026 to audit the results of the election.
 - a. During this meeting three members of the EC, with assistance from National Office staff, conducted an audit of the election results. Based on that audit, the EC concludes that the 2026 election was conducted in accordance with established procedures and that the results are accurate.
 - b. This audit did discover one irregularity. Three ballots were sent to a single email address that was shared by three voters, exceeding the two-per-email limit. These voters were members of the same household.
 - c. To avoid this issue in the future, future election preparations will include an eligibility review to identify and remediate email sharing issues prior to balloting with notice to affected voters.
11. As my tenure on the Committee ends, I would like to thank the EC membership for their friendship and hard work, the CEO and Board for their support, and most especially the National Office liaison (Bryan Wendell) for his tireless and dedicated service to the EC over the years. It has been my honor to serve on this committee and to support our great fencing family in this small way.

Sincerely,

David Hitchcock

USA Fencing DEIB Committee Meeting Agenda & Action Items

I. Welcome & Opening Remarks

- **Special Welcome:** Extending a warm welcome to **Bryce Louie** and **Kaitlyn Litten** for joining us today!
- **Setting the Stage:** Celebrating our recent progress and establishing a positive, forward-looking tone for this season's inclusion goals.
- **Observances:** Honoring and recognizing Juneteenth and Pride Month.

II. Fencing the Gap (FTG) Updates & Applications

- **Application Review:** Evaluating incoming Fencing the Gap applications. As a reminder, FTG will award **five (5) club-level grants of \$5,000 each** this season.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Connecting selected clubs to broader strategic goals for grassroots and community impact.

III. Championing Inclusion & Accommodations

- **Uniforms & Religious Observances:** Ensuring all religious attire accommodations—such as safety-compliant 350N fabric skirts—are fully respected, standardized, and welcomed on the strip.
- **Inclusive Spaces at Tournaments:** Planning for designated private prayer spaces at national tournaments to accommodate the diverse religious needs of athletes, officials, and families.

IV. Referee Empowerment & Equity

- **Referee Support:** Opening the floor to discuss strategies for equitable pay distribution, with a focused effort on supporting, uplifting, and retaining newer referees.

V. Future Grant Opportunities & Brainstorming

- **Domestic Referee Grants:** Reviewing the framework of the Engel Grant (which currently assists with Personal Coach expenses for international events) to explore creating a similar, much-needed grant to support referees attending domestic events.

VI. Open Forum & Next Steps

- **Community Messaging:** Outlining clear communication strategies to update the broader fencing community on FTG progress and tournament accommodation initiatives.

Action Items & Follow-Up Notes

Venue Logistics & Safety

- **Kaitlyn Litten & Jay:** When coordinating walkway safety solutions, suggest placing clear direction/wayfinding signage on the back/opposite side of the "Treat Referees Like Humans" A-frame signs throughout venue halls.

Policy Clarifications: Referee Scheduling & Travel (National Events)

- **Kaitlyn Litten** followed up with National Events regarding official scheduling protocols, flight bookings, and overnight stays for referees.

Summary of Findings:

1. **Work Schedules:** Referees should not be working past their designated schedule. The Hiring Manager (who hires referees for each event) determines daily shift leads and departures, and communicates these directly to the National Office.
2. **Flight Policy:** Official policy mandates that no departure flights be scheduled prior to 5:00 PM on event days, unless an exception is granted for personal reasons.
3. **Overtime / Extended Hours:** If a referee is needed past their original schedule to cover remaining events, the Hiring Manager will notify the National Office so official travel adjustments can be made.
4. **Current Status:** Overtime extensions are exceedingly rare. Referees are informed of their flight schedules, and Hiring Managers cut referees with ample time to reach the airport. If a referee remains at the venue past their cutoff for personal reasons or coaching, it falls outside official duty.

Grant Scope Clarification

- Based on the materials submitted by **Dawn** and **Phil**, alongside the query raised by **Harrison**:
 - The grant under review is specifically intended to assist clubs in funding coach travel to **North American Cups (NACs)** if the club lacks the resources to cover these costs independently.
 - Based on current National Events scheduling protocols, referee shift overruns do not require separate funding mechanisms.

Black Card Review Group
2025-2026 End-of-Season Review
Submitted to USA Fencing's Board of Directors
3 September 2026

Per [USA Fencing's Black Card Policy](#), the Black Card Review Group (BCRG) met via Zoom on August 19, 2026, to conduct our annual review of both given and rescinded Black Cards. The group also discussed our current policies and procedures, both in terms of the issuing of Black Cards and the BCRG itself. A summary of our discussion is below.

Review of Recorded Cards for the Season

The group reviewed a spreadsheet of all the Black Cards reported to and recorded by the National Office during the 2025-2026 season, provided by Morgan Boland. A summary of the results is provided below:

- 62 total cards across all USA Fencing-sanctioned tournaments.
 - 7 Level 2 Black Cards were awarded
 - 3 were downgraded to a Level 1 card after review by the BCRG
 - 2 were due to probation violations (second Level 1 card earned during probationary period)
 - 5 Black Cards were rescinded
- Cards by Age:
 - 28 minors (8 under the age of 13)
 - 34 adults
- Cards by Recipient:
 - 32 fencers
 - 16 coaches
 - 12 parents
 - 1 coach/parent
 - 1 non-fencer or N/A
- Cards Awarded to Fencers:
 - 28 minors; 4 adults
 - 25 in men's events; 5 in women's events; 2 in mixed events
 - 12 in foil; 17 in epee; 3 in saber

The 2025-2026 season saw a similar number of regional and national events compared to previous seasons, which includes 100 regional events, 9 national events, and 2 IIRCs. The 2023-2024 season had 110 events, while the 2024-2025 season featured 109 (98 regionals, 9 national tournaments, and 2 IRCs). This season saw a notable increase in the number of black cards awarded (62 compared to 46) and a slight increase in Level 2 cards awarded (7 compared to 5). Another notable trend was the increase in the number of rescinded black cards recorded (5 compared to 1). During our discussion, representatives from the Referees' Commission (RC) shared that this may be attributed to a focus by assigners this season to ensure that rescinded cards were properly recorded and submitted.

As with previous seasons, 2025-2026 saw a significant number of Black Cards awarded to younger fencers, with a slight increase compared to the 2024-2025 season. This may be attributed to the overall demographics of USA Fencing (i.e., the number of minors relative to the total number of fencers) and the number of tournaments that allow for minor athletes (i.e., youth circuits compared to ROCs). As with last season, the National Office provided us with additional demographic information, which allowed us to note that of the 28 cards awarded to minor athletes, eight of those cards were awarded to fencers under the age of 13. Both trends speak to problematic cultural issues that we must address. We encourage the Board to share this information with the Parents' Council and Coaches Committee to generate some positive change in this area through the work of these groups.

Despite the overall increase in cards awarded, we can highlight some positive trends. The very low numbers of repeat offenses by carded individuals suggest, seven years on, the black card policy is achieving its goal of reducing continuous offenses within the community. We welcome the lack of cards for property damage and the continued decrease in cards for physical violence against another person.

Discussion on Process and Procedures

The BCRG briefly discussed the revised Black Card Policy, currently under review by the Board. We believe that the process detailed in the new policy will be beneficial to the fencing community and the work of our group. The Chair of the BCRG recently revised our *Workflow* document, which will be reviewed, edited if necessary, and then implemented following the Board meeting.

In last year's Annual Review meeting, we agreed that a fillable version of the Black Card Form would alleviate challenges in deciphering handwritten forms. Tanner Gonzaales created a new version of this form, which was in use during the season. We noted that this version is most useful for straightforward situations where a simple narrative can fit within the limited space of the form. For more complicated situations, tournament officials still found it easier to submit a handwritten form with additional narratives written on the back. The BCRG discussed the possibility of an online form that could provide more space/flexibility and still be printed for review. This will be investigated in the coming season.

The BCRG also discussed a need for clarity regarding when a black card should be issued for an event (i.e., a single day) and when one should be issued for the totality of a tournament. This can be addressed through additional education of tournament officials. However, these efforts first require a shared definition for how and when these distinctions should be applied. This will be a topic of conversation at the upcoming RC annual meeting and will be discussed by the entire BCRG. The BCRG also discussed the number of cards that were downgraded from a Level 2 to a Level 1. When a card is downgraded, the 12-month probationary period remains in force for the carded individual. The BCRG is beginning conversations regarding the need for the group to be empowered by the Board to vacate the 12-month probationary period for Level 1 cards under our purview. This conversation will also continue as the season progresses.

The revised Black Card Policy, under review by the Board, includes, for the first time, a process for identifying and appointing a BCRG Chair. The incumbent was appointed Chair upon the creation of this group in 2019 and will be cycling off with the end of the 2025-2026 season. Once identified, the new Chair will be onboarded by the incumbent, who has also prepared a suite of documentation for the BCRG and the National Office to ensure the continued smooth management of this group.

We are very grateful for Tanner Gonzales's support of this group during his tenure with USA Fencing. We deeply appreciate Morgan Boland's assistance since Tanner's departure, as well as Jess Saxon's work on developing a revised policy that provides clarity and consistency between the BCRG and other groups/processes within USA Fencing.

Referees' Commission Annual Meeting – Denver, CO

General Session Agenda Topics

Day 1 – August 29th, 2026

In-Person Attendees:

Donald Alperstein, Phil Andrews, Bradley Baker, Jason Chang, Bobby Gibbs, Glen Hollingsworth, Mikayla Jassem, Kelly Koehler, Tasha Martin, Sean Shumate, Matt Tucker, Jelena Zeljkovic

Remote Attendees (RC members and National Office staff only):

Tabitha Chamberlin, Lindsay Stapleton, Kathy Walters

8:10 am MST – 5:30 pm MST

8:10 am - Welcome

Welcoming comments from Tasha Martin

8:10 am - Housekeeping

- Review and approve last year's minutes
Reviewed and approved minutes from Winter 2026 and Summer 2025 meetings
- Assign liaison positions
Reviewed and approved
- Updated committee makeup

8:15 am - National Office

Opening remarks

Welcome to Matt Tucker and welcome back to Kelly Koehler and Sean Shumate.
Thank you to Bradley Baker. Welcome to Mikayla Jassem.

Introductory remarks by Mikayla Jassem, USA Fencing Officials Coordinator

- Epicured
Potential "Official Meal Provider" for USA Fencing, supplying food for tournament officials at national tournaments
- Flight Costs
Focus on bookings inside/before 3 weeks prior to tournament. Tracking since 2024-2025. Seeing improvement with more proactive outreach from NO. Continuing efforts in current approach and monitoring.

Discussion of missed approvals for travel itinerary requests

Discussion of follow-up with tournament officials who are hired but not yet booked

ACTION ITEM [GLEN/MIKAYLA]: Coordinate with Cain to get information on timed out (cancelled) itinerary requests.

ACTION ITEM [GLEN/MIKAYLA]: Examine guidance to tournament officials regarding when to submit itinerary requests (e.g., Monday-Thursday).

- Hiring numbers/Monitoring
 - Summer Nationals over hiring has resulted in some budgetary challenges
 - Want to discuss plan moving forward with hiring referees for check-ins and target number to give for a "buffer" with late dropouts, without pushing too far and encountering similar issues
- Referee Report Times page update
 - Will be moving this into FenceLab, where it will be access restricted to help address concerns about being publicly available
 - Link can be shared/posted amongst cadre, and referees will be required to log in before access to then navigate to the shared doc
- Update on Flight Data/Bookings inside 3 weeks
 - General update
 - Help gauge effectiveness of reminder process over last 12 months
- CRO-CRI contact process
 - Updating list on website to remove any that are no longer active
 - Integrating with intake form or other automated process to streamline communication/connection
- New Officials Coordinator - Mikayla Jassem
- Updates on Process for Tax Withholding for International Referees

ACTION ITEM [TABITHA]: Develop and publish policy for tax withholding by October NAC.

ACTION ITEM [TABITHA]: Align information for international referees and practices in USA Fencing finance department. To be completed before Summer National hiring opens.

- Questions from the RC
 - Live streaming project
 - Discussion of current and future plans for Boutcaster project, communication and integration into planning with Referees' Commission, and need for greater communication to referee cadre.
 - ACTION ITEM [TASHA/PHIL]:** Discussion about communication around Boutcaster project.
 - ACTION ITEM [NO]:** Communication prior to October NAC about when cameras are live, what pistes have cameras active, requirements for referees and referee practices, and options for referees (opt-in and opt-out).

Discussion and review with Referees' Commission before communications go out publicly. Communication through multiple channels, including channels other than monthly Referees' Commission call.

- Online referee seminar: Status and funding source
- Review on what referee staffing looks like with new format
- Increasing honorarium or per diem? Overtime pay status?

ACTION ITEM [TASHA]: Appoint working group to establish data collection processes and develop projections for budgetary impact and program design. Initial reporting at Junior Olympics in January.

- Referee protection from abuse

Discussion. Presentation of information from USA Soccer.

ACTION ITEM [TASHA]: Establish working group spanning RC, BCRG, DEIB, National Office.

Potential members: Phil Andrews, Lindsay Stapleton, Bobby Gibbs, Derek Cotton, Harrison Hue

10:45 am - Board of Directors Update – Donald

- Policy/rules regarding Deaf and Hard of Hearing Athlete Assistive Technology Accommodations
- Potential revisions to nomination and election process for Referees' Commission
- Revision of Grievance & Disciplinary Procedures

10:56 am - FIE Update – Kelly

Master list for coming season remains the same: Jason Chang, Jelena Zeljkovic, Kelly Koehler, Laura Schwarz, Adam Brewer, Tyler Jacobson

10:58 am - WAS Update – Sean

Still waiting on information for how many US para referees will be assigned for LA28

11:02 am - Domestic Development – National - Jelena

- General report
Discussion of Referee Continuing Education (RCE) program and experience based on 2025-2026 pilot.
Discussion of potential Elite referee rating category. Continued development of concept for 2026-2027 season.
Discussion of Mentor/Mentee program
- Question: status of referee seminars at SN

ACTION ITEM [PHIL]: Explore repeat of de-escalation training provided previously. Expected format is online delivery.

ACTION ITEM [GLEN]: Send out start-of-season information regarding Referee Continuing Education (RCE) program, requirements, and tracking. Include dates for monthly Referees' Commission meetings and any known planned seminars. Post information on website.

ACTION ITEM [NO]: Explore feasibility of including RCE credit reporting via referee profile on website.

12:00 pm – Domestic Development – Grassroots – Lindsay

Review of CRO/CRI program and trends in 2025-2026, geographic distribution of CRO/CRI, refresh of CRI materials

ACTION ITEM [MATT]: Reach out to DD-G to align plans for referee exam and study guide.

12:45 pm - LUNCH

1:30pm - Rules and Examinations – Matt

- Referee exam

ACTION ITEM [MATT]: Coordinate with National Office on where exam is currently housed and coordinate update.

- Rules updates

ACTION ITEM [MATT with BRADLEY and DONALD]: Motion for Board retreat in September to update Rules with changes in T and O sections since November 2025. Discussion of FIE changes *not* to adopt or to adapt before adopting.

ACTION ITEM [MATT]: Follow up with National Office regarding implications for liability insurance coverage based on athlete attire during lessons and incorporate the results of that discussion into the proposed rules updates.

- US SEMI updates - Kathy

- t.109 – Bobby

Discussion of adjusting culture around coaching during bouts at Elite national events and variability of practice at senior world cups.

2:30 pm - IA&D – Kelly

Overview of structure

Development plans moving forward

ACTION ITEM [JELENA]: Identify domestic development training that could be better repositioned as IA&D.

ACTION ITEM [KELLY]: Mock FIE exam sessions

ACTION ITEM [KELLY]: Training on soft skills and adjustment to international expectations. Could be tied to Elite events and tone-setting domestically.

More online/recorded training replacing early morning NAC time slots

Assignment priority in 2027-2028 will be LA28 prep and post-LA28 prep

ACTION ITEM [GLEN]: Get timeline on adding “I” entry possibility to FIE license fields to represent former FIE licenses that are now inactive or aged out. Update international para ratings as “I,” “B,” “A,” and “P.”

3:45 pm - BREAK

4:00 pm - Domestic Hiring – Sean

2025-2026 Summary

ACTION ITEM [SEAN]: Improved coordination/communication for end-of-day responsibility hand-offs. Tournament-specific WhatsApp?

ACTION ITEM [SEAN with JELENA and LINDSAY]: Have committee established to develop a standardized way to rate referees after the event. Due October 1. Committee to report by January 1 and discussion of report at RC Winter Meeting at JOs.

ACTION ITEM [SEAN]: Set of planned improvements and refinements for the 2026-2027 season listed on last two pages of presentation deck.

5:17 pm - Ombuds - Bobby

- General report
- Publish Zoom call summaries

ADJOURN

RC Dinner – 7:00 pm

Day 2 – August 30th, 2026

8:00 am MST – 5:00 pm MST

8:00 am – Questions from Membership – All

8:30 am - Chair Updates – Tasha

- RC DEIB Committee Update
 - Tracking G3 Yellow Cards Proposal
 - Goals for next season
 - G3 Yellow Card tracking policy and data collection implementation
 - Education with release of G3 YC tracking on what constitutes a G3 YC, Level 1 black card, or Level 2 black card
- Ethics
 - New Chair: Jack Cortizas
 - 32 complaints received (September 2025 – March 2026)
 - 17 active
 - 15 closed
 - Note: these date are subject to change as the new RCEC chair gets caught up
 - Goals for upcoming season
 - Quarterly calls with RCEC members
 - Publish a more straightforward protocol for how complaints are filed
 - Define thresholds: complaint dismissals, mediation, formation of hearing panel
 - Clearly state who is responsible for gathering evidence on complaints
- Quarterly Newsletter

ACTION ITEM [ALL/KELLY]: Submit quarterly updates on events within each Vice Chair's area. Kelly to be responsible for reminding for content; all responsible for writing and submitting their portion of the content. First newsletter will be summary of RC annual meeting to be released September. Subsequent newsletters targeted for December, March, June.
- Website

ACTION ITEM [NO]: Review sitemap of tournament officials area of the website. Identify orphaned pages that need to be reattached to website. Reorganize content.
- Strategic Plan Workgroups Update
 - Para – Sean
 - Women & Refereeing Working Group: survey sent to members, and over 300 women responded. Survey results are being used to inform change, including pushing for an online referee seminar as that was a major barrier listed by respondents. Online seminar is in the operational plan but not a USA Fencing budget item as of June 2026.

- National – Maria Panyi and Tanner
- Data - Bobby

9:15 am - Review of RC Codes and Policies – All

- Dress code
ACTION ITEM [NO]: Communicate updates to dress code in advance of October NAC.
- Proposal to track G3 yellow cards
ACTION ITEM [TASHA/GLEN]: Finalize and establish reporting form and implement by October NAC.
ACTION ITEM [SEAN]: Start-of-season education for assigners and coordinators.
ACTION ITEM [ALL]: Review process and data as of JOs at Referees' Commission winter meeting.
- Number of candidates for RC election
 - Changing “The Nominating Committee will then select two candidates to run for each position (unless there is only one qualified applicant)” to “select at least two candidates.”
ACTION ITEM [DONALD]: Advance motion to the Board of Directors updating the election procedures as discussed at RC annual meeting.

10:15 am - Outstanding items from Day 1 – All

10:15 am - BREAK

10:25 am – Executive Session w/ Working Lunch

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE UNITED STATES FENCING ASSOCIATION

Establishment of the Bylaws Review Committee

Date adopted: _____, 20__

Recitals

WHEREAS, under Section 11.1 of the Amended and Restated Bylaws of the United States Fencing Association (“USFA”), a Committee of the Board may be created by resolution of the Board of Directors, and may be disbanded by resolution of the Board of Directors;

WHEREAS, amending the Bylaws is a serious undertaking for the organization and not a routine one, and the organization would benefit from a robust, predictable process for evaluating potential Bylaw amendments that gives due consideration to feedback from both the Board of Directors and the membership;

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors wishes to establish a standing committee to review the Bylaws on a regular cadence and to develop such a process, while preserving the right of any member or Director to bring forward a proposed amendment for the committee’s consideration; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors has determined that establishing this committee by resolution, without amendment of the Bylaws, is authorized under Section 11.1 of the Bylaws and the Colorado Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act;

Resolutions

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors hereby establishes a standing Committee of the Board to be known as the **Bylaws Review Committee** (the “Committee”), created under Section 11.1 of the Bylaws.

1. Purpose. The Committee is charged with reviewing the USFA Bylaws on a regular cadence and recommending to the Board of Directors whether, and how, the Bylaws should be amended. The Committee is advisory; it does not have authority to amend the Bylaws, which power remains with the Board of Directors under Section 13.2 of the Bylaws.

2. Composition. The Committee shall consist of three (3) members appointed by the Board of Directors, constituted as follows:

- a. one (1) Athlete member, who shall meet the athlete qualifications set forth in Appendix II to the Bylaws and be selected by the Athlete Council;

- b. one (1) Appointed At-Large Director; and
- c. one (1) Elected Director who is not an Athlete Director.

This composition satisfies the requirement of Section 11.4 of the Bylaws that no fewer than one-third of committee members be Athlete members. All members shall be members of the USFA in good standing. Notwithstanding Section 11.6 of the Bylaws, and as permitted by that Section, the members of the Committee shall be appointed by the Board of Directors.

3. Chair and Liaisons. The Board of Directors shall designate a Chair of the Committee. In accordance with Section 11.5 of the Bylaws, the Committee shall have an ex-officio Board Liaison, designated by the Board of Directors, and a Staff Liaison, selected from the National Office by the Chief Executive Officer, which is recommended to be the Board Secretary or General Counsel.

4. Initial Charge. As its first task, the Committee shall develop and recommend to the Board of Directors a written framework governing the review and amendment of the Bylaws, addressing at a minimum:

- a. the **cadence** on which the Bylaws are to be reviewed;
- b. the **process for submission** of proposed Bylaw amendments for consideration, from both the membership and the Board of Directors;
- c. the **process for review** of the Bylaws;
- d. the **process and timing for consideration of member feedback and engagement**;
- e. the **process for legal review**; and
- f. the circumstances under which an **extraordinary exception** to the foregoing process is warranted, and the procedure for invoking such an exception.

5. Guiding Principle. As a suggested starting point, and subject to the Committee's recommendation and the Board's final determination, the Bylaws should be amended no more than once per year, on a regular cadence to be determined by this Committee.

6. Guests and Advisors. The Committee may, at its own volition, engage guests and advisors as germane to the mission of the Committee.

7. Preservation of Existing Rights. Nothing in this resolution limits the right of any member or any Director to bring forward a proposed Bylaw amendment. The Committee's process shall provide a means for any such proposal to be submitted for the Committee's consideration as part of its review, and this resolution does not alter the amendment procedures set forth in Section 13.2 of the Bylaws.

8. Reporting. The Committee shall report to the Board of Directors in accordance with Section 11.17 of the Bylaws and shall present its recommended framework under Section 4 for the Board's consideration.

9. Records. This resolution and the Committee's proceedings shall be recorded in the minutes of the Board and maintained by the National Office as custodian of records under Section 6.5 of the Bylaws.

10. Effective Date. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption unless otherwise specified herein.

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certifies that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Board of Directors of the United States Fencing Association at a meeting held on _____, 20_, *at which a quorum was present and acting throughout, by the affirmative vote of* _____ Directors.

Name: _____

Title: Chair of the Board

Date: _____

USA FENCING
PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT PACKAGE

Petition Process Elimination | Nomination Date Change

For Board Consideration

AMENDMENT SUMMARY

Requested Change	Where Implemented	Core Effect
Eliminate At-Large Director nomination by petition	Art. VII §7.4.b.iii; Art. IX §§9.3–9.5; Art. XI §11.9	NomCom becomes the sole path to the ballot. Section 9.4 (Delivery of Petitions) is deleted and reserved. Election Committee petition-administration duties are removed.
Nomination announcement dates linked to Winter and Summer Meeting dates	Article IX Section 9.3.a.i and Section 9.3.a.iii	NomCom must announce appointed and elected At-Large nominees no later than two weeks before the Winter Meeting (currently January 15), move un-selected appointed nominees to the election ballot by two weeks after the Winter Meeting (currently March 1), and announce independent At-Large nominees by two weeks before the Summer Meeting (currently July 1)

Effective Date: This amendment shall apply to all Director elections, appointment processes, nominations, and ballot-certification processes for which the nomination period opens after the effective date of this amendment.

MOTION

To publish to the USA Fencing membership for a 45 day comment period with the Board of Directors recommendation for approval, the proposed bylaw amendments (highlights below and with red strikethroughs and green annotations as part of a full draft of the proposed bylaw amendments in the appendices) that will remove the current petition process and link nomination timelines to be linked to the Summer and Winter Meetings.

Rationale: The USA Fencing Board of Directors has created a Task Force to implement an independent Nominating Committee which would align the organization with industry best practices. Alongside these upcoming reforms and last year's by-law change that ensured the Nominating Committee must nominate enough qualified candidates for each position plus two extra, the nomination process will be more secure and fair than ever. Additionally, elimination of the petition process would match 73 percent of other NGBs, further strengthening the sport's credibility with sponsors, donors, and the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee.

PART 1. Amendment to Article VII, Section 7.4.b.iii

At-Large Directors Elected by the Membership

Section 7.4.b.iii

iii. At-Large Directors to be elected by the membership shall be voting members of the USFA in good standing. The slate of candidates to be elected by the membership shall be selected by the Nominating Committee ~~or added by valid petition per Section 9.3.~~

PART 2. Amendments to Article IX, Sections 9.3, 9.4, and 9.5

Nomination Date Change; Elimination of Petition Process

Section 9.3. Nomination of At-Large Director Candidates.

Candidates for At-Large Directors ~~may be nominated by either of the following methods~~ shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee as follows:

a. Nominations by the Nominating Committee.

i. For candidates from the general membership that are to be appointed by the Board of Directors, the Nominating Committee shall nominate at least as many qualified candidates as there are Directors to be selected, and shall announce its nominees no later than ~~January 15 of~~ two weeks before the Winter Meeting in the calendar year in which the appointment is to be held.

ii. For independent candidates to be appointed by the Board of Directors, the Nominating Committee shall nominate at least as many qualified candidates for the number as there are Directors to be selected. The Nominating Committee shall announce its nominees no later than ~~July 1 of~~ two weeks before the Summer Meeting in the calendar year in which the selections are to take place.

iii. For candidates that are to be directly elected by the membership, the Nominating Committee shall nominate at least as many qualified candidates as there are Directors to be selected plus two additional candidates (n+2), and shall announce its nominees no later than ~~January 15 of~~ two weeks before the Winter Meeting in the calendar year in which the elections are to be held. Any candidates put forth by the Nominating Committee for appointment from the general membership that are not successfully chosen by the Board of Directors may be added to the ballot for election at the discretion of the Nominating Committee by ~~March 1~~ two weeks after the same Winter Meeting for which they were nominated.

iv. All nominees must be announced by publishing the names of the nominees and any report issued by the Committee on the USFA website.

~~b. Nominations by Petition. Additional candidates may be nominated by petition for positions to be directly elected by the membership, provided that:~~

- ~~i. The prospective candidate submits an application and fully participates in the standard nomination process; and~~
- ~~ii. The prospective candidate identifies the position for which they seek selection and meet the qualifications of that position; and~~
- ~~iii. Prior to or simultaneously with the submission of supporting petitions, the prospective candidate shall have in writing indicated their willingness to serve, completed a background~~

~~check, submitted conflict of interest disclosures, and acceded to the Qualifying Affirmation prescribed in these Bylaws; and~~

~~iv. The petitions submitted in support of the prospective candidate include subscriptions from no fewer than 6% of voting members in good standing who have among them named all separate regions and 4% of separate officially recognized clubs as their primary affiliation and whose identity and intent are not reasonably subject to doubt. There must be a minimum number of signatures from each region no fewer than 6% of the minimum threshold of overall signatures. The number of required total and regional signatures and clubs will be calculated by the USFA National Office based on the number of eligible voters at the end of the previous fiscal year and will be published with the call for nominations.~~

~~e. The National Office shall authenticate petitions and the signatures thereon and the Election Committee shall determine whether each person nominated by petition meets the qualifications laid down in these Bylaws for the office being sought; and shall only allow the names of those candidates who submit complying petitions and meet such qualifications to appear on the ballot.~~

Section 9.4. Delivery of Petitions.

~~No petition shall serve to nominate a candidate for any USFA position unless the original petition, an electronic transmission of the original petition in a format designated by the USFA National Office, and all other documents required by this Article are received by the National Office of the USFA not later than 5:00 p.m. Mountain Time of the last business day of March of the year in which the election is to be conducted. Proof of mailing of the original petition by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested, or by private delivery service guaranteeing delivery within two days and providing proof of delivery, postage or shipping prepaid, properly addressed to the intended recipient, not less than ten days before due, shall raise a presumption of timely delivery to the addressee. All petitions must be conducted on paper with hand-written signatures; electronic petitions are not permitted.~~

Section 9.54. Submissions by Nominees.

The signed Qualifying Affirmation, completed background check, conflict of interest disclosures, agreement to be a candidate and submission to binding arbitration of candidates nominated by the Nominating Committee shall be submitted to the National Office of the USFA by the Nominating Committee with the announcement of its nominations. ~~The signed Qualifying Affirmation, completed background check, conflict of interest disclosures, agreement to be a candidate and submission to binding arbitration of candidates nominated by petition shall be submitted to the National Office of the USFA with the petition that purports to make that nomination.~~

PART 3. Conforming Amendments

Article XI, Section 11.9 — Election Committee

Section 11.9.a. Election Committee — Purpose.

The Election Committee shall be responsible for fairly administering the elections by the membership of national officers and positions on the Board of Directors specified in these Bylaws; for deciding issues raised and encountered during the conduct of elections; and for overseeing balloting on other matters as provided by these Bylaws or by resolution of the Board of Directors. Among its duties, the Election

Committee shall ~~validate the submissions of all candidates for nomination by petition; shall~~ enforce such electoral rules not inconsistent with these Bylaws as the Board of Directors may adopt; shall make such additional electoral rules as are necessary and not inconsistent with rules adopted by the Board of Directors or specified in these Bylaws; shall ~~provide a template form of petition that may be used by any candidate; shall~~ decide challenges to qualifications of candidates and compliance with election procedures; shall provide for the distribution, validation and tallying of ballots; shall certify the results of elections; and shall arbitrate, after notice and an opportunity to be heard, the grievances of any interested party concerning electoral procedures.

Article XI, Section 11.11 — Ethics Committee

Section 11.9.a. Ethics Committee — Purpose.

The Ethics Committee shall promote and help sustain a culture of ethical conduct throughout the USFA. The Ethics Committee shall review all USFA codes of conduct, conflict-of-interest regulations and disclosures, and other policies and reports addressing prescribed and recommended standards of behavior of USFA members, contractors and employees. The Ethics Committee may recommend to the appropriate promulgating authority proposals for adoption, revision and improvement of codes and policies concerning ethical conduct of persons associated with the USFA. The Ethics Committee shall prescribe standards and forms for the disclosure of actual, apparent and potential conflicts of interest, and shall not less frequently than annually review such disclosures and make a report thereof to the Board of Directors. In addition, the Ethics Committee shall review conflicts of interest of candidates for election and individuals under consideration for appointment by the Board of Directors prior to such candidates being announced to the membership for election or submitted to the Board for appointment, and shall provide its findings and recommendations to the appropriate authority before any such ballot or slate of candidates is finalized.

Section 11.10. Nominating Committee.

- a. Purpose. The purpose of the Nominating Committee (“Nom Com”) is to identify and nominate highly qualified candidates for leadership positions within USA Fencing who will advance the long-term interests of the organization and its members. The Committee should strive to ensure diversity of perspective, expertise, geography, competitive experience, and governance background, including representation from both Olympic and Para fencing communities. shall be responsible for selecting candidates for elected positions and offices in the USFA as specified in these Bylaws, and in so doing shall take care to select candidates who possess experience and knowledge pertinent to the purposes, interests and needs of the USFA.
- b. Composition. The Nominating Committee shall comprise ~~seven~~^{six} members: six voting members and one non-voting Independent Governance Advisor. of whom two athletes, who meet the requirements in Appendix II, shall be selected by the Athlete Council for two-year staggered terms and four shall be selected by the Board of Directors, with one drawn from each of the following groups for staggered two-year terms. A maximum of two voting members of the Nominating Committee may be current members of the Board of Directors. The composition of the four voting members selected by the Board of Directors must be as follows:
 - i. Voting Members:
 - Parent Representative. Must be a fencing parent and have at least two years of prior USA Fencing Board or national committee experience; preference given to candidates with National Governing Body or nonprofit board experience.
 - High-Performance Coach. Must have international coaching experience at the Cadet, Junior, or Senior World Cup level.
 - National Tournament Official. Active referee, armorer, or tournament official, with candidates jointly recommended by the Tournament Committee, Referees' Commission, and US-SEMI.
 - Independent Member. Must satisfy the independence requirements outlined in Section 7.4.b.iv; preference given to candidates with recent board-level governance experience.
 - Athlete Representative. Selected through the Athlete Council, must satisfy the USOPC 10-Year Athlete requirement and have at least two years of prior committee experience.
 - Athlete Representative. Selected through the Athlete Council, must satisfy the USOPC 10-Year Athlete requirement; prior committee experience preferred but not required.

- ii. Non-Voting Member:
 - (7) Independent Governance Advisor. Shall provide governance, succession planning, and best-practice guidance; should satisfy independence standards and possess significant governance or board experience.
- c. Eligibility. NomCom members may not be current Board members, must be at least two years removed from Board service before joining the Committee, and may not seek or serve on the Board until two years after completion of NomCom service.
- d. Terms. Members shall serve staggered three-year terms and may serve no more than two consecutive terms. Initial appointments shall be staggered to establish the rotation cycle.
- e. Selection Process. For the initial formation of the Committee, relevant stakeholder groups and councils shall nominate candidates and the Board shall approve the initial membership. Thereafter, the Committee shall be self-perpetuating and select future members from candidate pools submitted by the appropriate stakeholder groups, subject to a limited Board approval/veto role to ensure compliance with eligibility and governance requirements while preserving Committee independence.
- f. Removal. A member may be removed only upon approval of a two-thirds supermajority of the Board. Removal should be limited to failure to perform duties, conflicts of interest, or conduct inconsistent with Committee responsibilities. The Chair shall initiate any recommendation for removal.
- b.g. Chair. The Committee shall annually elect its Chair. The Chair is expected to regularly observe Board meetings, attend the annual Board meeting when practical, and communicate with the Board regarding Committee operations and member performance.
 - ~~i. — A current or former At-Large Director, a current or former officer, or a current or former member of a Committee, Resource Group, or Council, who have at least four years of service in said position;~~
 - ~~ii. — Either a coach with a demonstrated record of producing fencers who perform at a high level or a principal of an established operating fencing club;~~
 - ~~iii. — Active officials (referees, armorers, bout committee members, Referees' Commission members) who have regularly staffed national tournaments during the two years preceding their appointment; and~~
 - ~~iv. — Someone who meets the independent requirements outlined in Section 7.4.b.iv, including but not limited to current or past Independent Directors or independent At-Large Directors.~~

~~The Chief Executive Officer or another member of the professional staff designated by the Chief Executive Officer shall serve as a resource at the request of the Nominating Committee. No person may serve on the Nominating Committee whose position on the Board of Directors would be up for re-nomination by the Nominating Committee while such person would be a member of the Nominating Committee, provided that any person who irrevocably renounces their right to seek reelection or reappointment is not disqualified from service. Such determination of eligibility or renouncement and subsequent resignation or removal shall take place by September 1 before the relevant election or appointment. The Nominating Committee shall annually select its chair. Any vacancy on the Nominating Committee shall be filled by a person of the same qualifications as the vacating member.~~