



## USA Lacrosse Grievance Policy and Procedures

The USA Lacrosse (“USAL”) Grievance Policy provides a structured process for addressing grievances within our membership. It is intended to promote fairness, transparency, and consistency in resolving disputes. The policy is guided by principles outlined in the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act (“Act”), the Bylaws of the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee (“USOPC”) and USA Lacrosse, and the USOPC’s Compliance Standards for National Governing Bodies (“NGB”), as applicable.

### 1. Jurisdiction

Any member of USAL, by reason of membership, agrees to be subject to these complaint procedures and agrees to be bound by any decision rendered pursuant to these complaint procedures. Additionally, persons other than members, by reason of participation in any competition or event sanctioned by USAL or its member organizations, including each athlete, coach, trainer, agent, athlete support personnel, medical or para-medical personnel, team staff, official, and other person who participates in USAL or USAL competitions or sanctioned events (hereinafter collectively referred to as “Participants”) are subject to these complaint procedures and agrees to be bound by any decision rendered pursuant to these complaint procedures.

### 2.1 Designation of Complaints

The following kinds of grievances may be filed by USAL or Participant with USAL under Chapter 17 of the USAL Bylaws (a “Complaint”):

- a. **Administrative.** An “Administrative Complaint” may pertain to any matter within the purview of USAL, including but not limited to, any alleged violation or grievance concerning: (i) any of USAL’s rules, regulations, or policies; (ii) any provision of USAL Bylaws; (iii) alleged noncompliance with the USOPC’s Bylaws or (iv) alleged non-compliance of the Act.
- b. **Disciplinary.** A “Disciplinary Complaint” may be filed by USAL or any Participant

against another member of USAL, or former member of USAL, if the action occurred while the individual was a member, regarding any alleged violation of any USAL rule or regulation relating to USAL Code of Conduct, Athlete Protection & Safety Policies, and any other applicable conduct under the discretionary jurisdiction of the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

- c. **Right to Participate.** A “Right to Participate Complaint” is one pertaining to any alleged denial, or alleged threat to deny, any member, who is an athlete, coach, trainer, manager, administrator, or other official, the opportunity to compete or participate in a competition protected by the provisions of the Act or the USOPC Bylaws.

## 2.2 Excluded Complaints

The following Complaints are excluded from this Policy:

- a. **Anti-Doping Violations:** A decision concerning an anti-doping violation adjudicated by the independent anti-doping organization designated by the USOPC to serve as the U.S. National Anti-Doping Organization (currently the United States Anti-Doping Agency) shall not be reviewable through, or the subject of, this Grievance Policy.
- b. **U.S. Center for SafeSport Matters:** A matter or decision under the sole or the accepted discretionary jurisdiction of the independent safe-sport organization designated by Congress and/or the USOPC (currently the U.S. Center for SafeSport) shall not be reviewable through, or the subject of, this Grievance policy.
- c. **Field of Play:** The final decision of an official during a competition regarding a field of play decision (a matter set forth in the rules of the competition to be within the discretion of the referee) shall not be reviewable, or subject of, this policy unless the decision is: (i) outside the authority of the official to make, or (ii) the product of fraud, corruption, partiality, or other misconduct of the official. For purposes of this Section, the term “official” shall include any individual with the discretion to make field of play decisions.

## 3. Filing a Complaint

### 3.1 Filing an Administrative and/or Right to Compete Complaint

Any current or former member, or USAL (a “Complainant”) who believes himself/herself to be aggrieved by any action of USAL or by one of its members, may file a Complaint with USAL. If

the Complainant is a minor, the Complaint may be initiated by a parent or legal guardian. To be considered for resolution through this policy, a Complainant must complete the **USAL Grievance Reporting Form** at [[Greivance Policy USAL .pdf](#)] in its entirety.

A complaint that is not filed in accordance with this Section shall render the filing void.

### **3.2 Filing an Athlete Protection & Safety Complaint**

Complaints are reported and filed in accordance with **USAL's Athlete Protection & Safety Policy** and the SafeSport Code. Further details are available on the [USAL Athlete Protection & Safety webpage](#).

Any Complaint related to Sexual Misconduct is under the exclusive jurisdiction of the U.S. Center for SafeSport and should be reported directly to the Center at:

Phone: 833-5US-SAFE (587-7233)

Online Reporting Form: [Report a Concern | U.S. Center for SafeSport](#)

### **3.3 Filing Fee**

Each Complaint shall be accompanied by filing fee (\$50 individual/\$150 Organization), except with respect to matters related to Athlete Protection & Safety violations, the U.S. Center for SafeSport, or if filed by USAL.

The Complainant may request that the filing fee be reduced or waived for reasons of significant hardship by e-mailing the **Judicial Committee at [insert email]**. If such a request is made, the USAL Judicial Committee shall determine whether to reduce or waive the filing fee.

Please note the filing fee is non-refundable regardless of the outcome.

### **3.4. Time Bar**

Complaints must be filed within the following timeframes:

- (a) Administrative Complaint – **60** days since the occurrence of the alleged violation or grievance, except as provided below.
- (b) Disciplinary Complaint – **60** days since the occurrence of the alleged violation or grievance, except as provided below.
- (c) Complaints alleging misconduct under USAL's Athlete Protection & Safety policies or SafeSport related matters are not subject to any statute of

limitations.

#### **4. Processing of Administrative and Right to Participate Complaints**

Upon USAL receiving a Complaint, the Complaint shall be distributed and served as follows:

(a) USAL shall perform an initial review of materials provided with the Complaint to determine if:

(i) The Complaint complies with the provisions of Sections 3.1, 3.3, and 3.4;

(ii) The Complaint falls within the Judicial Committee's jurisdiction;

(iii) The Complaint is not redundant or imprudent considering existing or available collateral proceedings (e.g., civil, criminal, or administrative actions); and

(iv) The Complaint is otherwise appropriate for the Judicial Committee's consideration.

If USAL determines that the Complaint does not meet these criteria, the Complaint may be dismissed without further processing under this Policy. This decision may be made in consultation with the Judicial Committee.

(b) If the Complaint is not dismissed under Subsection (a), USAL may initiate an investigation. A USAL designee, who shall be a disinterested party, will serve as the primary investigator or if appropriate, in consultation with the CEO, USAL may appoint an independent investigator external to USAL to conduct the investigation.

In cases where the CEO is implicated in the Complaint, the Chair of the Judicial Committee may directly appoint an independent investigator external to USAL.

(c) The primary investigator will gather statements from the Complainant, Respondent, and any witnesses identified by either party and collect all relevant documentation, evidence, and/or policies. Upon completion of their investigation, the investigator will prepare a written summary of their findings to be submitted to the Judicial Committee. If requested, the investigator may also provide a recommendation regarding the appropriate disposition of the Complaint.

(d) If, based on the written summary, the Judicial Committee determines there is insufficient cause (i.e., no reasonable basis or likelihood) to believe that the Complaint has merit or raises issues suitable for resolution under this Policy, the Complaint may be administratively dismissed. This decision may be made in consultation with the CEO and will conclude further processing under this Policy.

(e) If the Complaint is not dismissed under Subsection (d), the Chair of the Judicial Committee may attempt to resolve informally the dispute, which may include consultation with the CEO.

(i) The Chair of the Judicial Committee will contact both the Complainant and Respondent to inquire about their desired resolutions.

(ii) If the proposed resolution is not mutually agreed upon by the Complainant and Respondent, the matter will proceed to Subsection (g).

(iii) If an informal resolution is reached, the resolution will be documented in writing by USAL and acknowledged in writing by both parties.

(f) If the Complaint is not resolved under Subsection (e), the Chair of the Judicial Committee may appoint a Hearing Panel composed of at least three (3) disinterested and impartial individuals to hear and render a decision to the matter (the "Hearing Panel"). These appointments shall be subject to the following:

(i) The Chair of the Judicial Committee may appoint themselves or any other member of the Judicial Committee to the Hearing Panel.

(ii) The Chair of the Judicial Committee will designate one member of the Hearing Panel to serve as Chair.

(iii) The Hearing Panel will include at least 33.3% Athlete Representation, as defined by the USOPC Bylaws for Athlete Representatives on an NGB Board or "Designated Committee".

All Hearing Panel appointees should immediately disclose any conflict that they have (and that may arise during the process) and follow procedures as outlined in **USAL's Conflict of Interest Policy** [[COI Policy USAL Final.pdf](#)]. It may be necessary for a Hearing Panel member to recuse themselves from the Hearing. In the event that any party or Hearing Panel appointee raises an issue under the **USAL Conflict of Interest Policy**, the Chair of the Judicial Committee will consider the issue and, if deemed necessary, require replacement of the Hearing Panel appointee.

(iv) If the selected Athlete Representative is unavailable, the AAC will vote on an eligible Athlete Representative to serve on the Hearing Panel.

(v) The Chair of the Judicial Committee is responsible for confirming the availability of

all Hearing Panel appointees.

(vi) The identities of the Hearing Panel members will be disclosed to the Complainant and the Respondent within a reasonable timeframe prior to the Hearing date.

## **5. Processing of Disciplinary Complaints**

USAL shall process the report pursuant to [USAL's Athlete Protection & Safety Policy](#) and [SafeSport Code](#).

- (a) The contents of this Section are inapplicable to any complaints that fall under the exclusive jurisdiction or accepted discretionary jurisdiction of the U.S. Center for SafeSport.
- (b) If, based on the investigation, the USAL Athlete Protection & Safety Manager and Legal Counsel determine that there is insufficient cause (i.e., no reasonable basis or likelihood) to believe that the Complaint has merit or raises issues suitable for resolution under the Athlete Protection & Safety Policy or this Policy, the Complaint may be dismissed. This decision will conclude further processing under this Policy. USAL will document the closure.
- (c) If, based on the investigation, the USAL Athlete Protection & Safety Manager and Legal Counsel believe that the Complaint has merit or that the underlying facts and circumstances give rise to an issue that is appropriate for resolution under the Athlete Protection & Safety Policy or this Policy, the Athlete Protection & Safety Manager and Legal Counsel, may attempt to resolve informally the matter that is the subject of the Complaint.
  - (i) The Athlete Protection & Safety and/or Legal Counsel will contact both the Complainant and Respondent to inquire about their desired resolutions.
  - (ii) If an informal resolution is reached, the resolution will be documented in writing by USAL and acknowledged in writing by both parties.
- (d) If an informal resolution cannot be reached, the Chair of the Judicial Committee will appoint a Hearing Panel, following the procedure set forth in **Section 4 (g) above**.

## **6. Pre-Hearing Process, Submissions, and Decisions for Administrative, Disciplinary, and Right to Participate Complaints.**

- (a) The Chair of the Hearing Panel will select a date and time for the hearing to occur at the earliest convenient date for all parties, not to exceed **40 days** after the Hearing Panel

has been appointed. The Chair of the Hearing Panel may choose to conduct the hearing by conference call or other similar electronic means.

- (b) Not less than **14 days** prior to the hearing, the Chair of the Hearing Panel shall send the parties a written copy of the procedures to be followed at the hearing. Those procedures shall include those set forth in **Section 7**.
- (c) The Chair of the Hearing Panel will communicate information about the hearing schedule along with the identity of the other members of the Hearing Panel to all parties no more than **3 days** before the hearing is scheduled.
- (d) Decisions rendered about the Complaint and the form of any sanction shall be made by majority vote of the Hearing Panel. The Hearing Panel shall report its decision in the form of written findings of facts and conclusions. The decision will be sent to both parties. Subject only to any right to arbitration as specified in **Section 9**, the decision of the Hearing Panel is final and binding upon all parties. Decisions will be made and provided to all parties within **30 days** of the hearing date.

## **7. Hearing and Appeals Procedures**

- (a) The hearing shall be closed to the public, except for the Hearing Panel, the parties and their counsel (if applicable).
- (b) The Complainant and Respondent have the right to be assisted in the presentation of one's case during the hearing, including the assistance of legal counsel, if desired; however, the Respondent and/or Complainant are responsible for all financial fees associated with legal counsel.
- (c) With the exception of expedited procedures, the Hearing Panel shall have the authority to decide all motions and address all matters raised during the proceeding. The Hearing Panel may establish timelines and implement any rules it deems necessary to govern the process and conduct of the hearing.
- (d) Both parties shall be afforded reasonable opportunity to:
  - (i) Present arguments in support of their case;
  - (ii) Call witnesses to testify at the hearing, including those under the control of the opposing party;
  - (iii) Confront and cross-examine witnesses; and
  - (iv) Present and examine evidence.
- (e) Members of the Hearing Panel will have the right to question parties or witnesses at

any time.

- (f) The burden of proof shall be on the Complainant, in which the burden shall be at least a preponderance of evidence unless an applicable rule of law provides for a higher burden of proof.

### **7.1. Red Light Determinations**

- (a) The process of Appeal for a Red Light Determination shall be in accordance with the Background Screening Requirements Section in the Athlete Protection & Safety Policy.
- (b) A Red Light Determination finding means criminal history has been sourced that does not meet the screening criteria. When the National Center for Safety Initiatives (“NCSI”) sources criminal history information attributable to the applicant, NCSI will send that information to the applicant. Pursuant to the Fair Credit Reporting Act, that individual will be provided with an opportunity to correct potential errors in their record or to provide additional information. NCSI will research issues that are raised and revise the report if any inaccuracies are found. The applicant will be notified accordingly. Please be sure to respond immediately if NCSI contacts you for additional information

### **8. Temporary Measures**

- (a) USAL may, at any point before the matter is final, impose Temporary Measures. Generally, Temporary Measures are implemented based on the severity of the Complaint, the evidentiary support for the Complaint, and/or the perceived risk(s) to athletes or the sports community.
- (b) When the allegations involved child sexual abuse, the age of those allegations is not relevant to this determination.
- (c) A Temporary Measure shall be effective immediately upon notice, unless otherwise stated, and will remain in effect until expressly removed.
- (d) Temporary Measures set forth by the U.S. Center for SafeSport or USOPC will supersede any Temporary Measures set forth by USAL and adopted immediately upon issuance.
- (e) Temporary Measures that do not materially affect the Respondent's opportunity to participate (e.g. suspension) are not subject to review and may not be appealed. Any Temporary Measures by USAL that materially affect the Respondent's opportunity to participate, must first be reviewed by the Judicial Committee. Upon issuance of a Temporary Measure that affects the Respondent's opportunity to

participate, the Respondent has **7 days** to request a hearing in written form (e-mail is acceptable). If the Respondent does not make such a request in **7 days**, the decision is no longer subject to review. Any appeal hearing will follow the same procedures as outlined in **Section 7**.

- (f) Subject only to any right to arbitration as specified in **Section 10**, the decision of the Hearing Panel is final and binding upon all parties. Decisions shall be provided to all parties within **14 days** of the hearing date
- (g) Any financial burden associated with temporary measures imposed by USAL, unless otherwise stated, shall be borne solely by the individual subject to those measures.

## **9. Expedited Procedures**

**10. With respect to a Right to Participate Complaint *only*, every effort will be made to expedite the proceedings, including, but not limited to, modifications made by the Chair of the Hearing Panel to the procedures set forth above to resolve the Complaint prior to the start of an event. Arbitration**

USAL agrees to submit to final and binding arbitration in any controversy involving the opportunity of any amateur athlete, coach, trainer, manager, administrator, or official to participate in amateur athletic competition in lacrosse upon demand of the USOPC or any aggrieved amateur athlete, coach, trainer, manager, administrator, or official using an established major national provider of arbitration and mediation services based in the United States and designated by the USOPC with concurrence of the National Governing Bodies' Council. The arbitration shall be conducted in accordance with the Commercial Rules of the provider for the arbitration or mediation services, or as modified pursuant to the Act.

## **11. General**

All notices, reports, and decisions under this Policy shall be made in writing and delivered by electronic mail, creating a record of receipt. Participation in these procedures shall be deemed to constitute an agreement to be bound by the provisions of this Policy. If, during a hearing conducted pursuant to this Policy, the Hearing Panel discovers that a Respondent has engaged in a USAL Athlete Protection & Safety Policy and/or U.S. Center for SafeSport Code violation, those issues shall be resolved as set forth in the USAL Response and Resolution Policy. USAL shall have the sole discretion to conduct the proceedings noted in this Policy in person and/or electronically.

### **Anti-Retaliation**

USAL prohibits retaliation against anyone who reports misconduct or provides information

about misconduct as fully detailed in **USAL's Whistleblower and Anti-Retaliation Policy**. Retaliation includes threatening, intimidating, harassing, coercing or any other conduct that would discourage a reasonable person from engaging in or participating in the complaint process when the action is reasonably related to the report or engagement with the process. Retaliation may be present even where there is a finding that no violation occurred.

### **For Athletes with Questions Regarding USAL's Grievance Policy and Procedures**

The Athlete Ombuds provides cost-free, independent, and confidential advice regarding athlete rights; resolving disputes or grievances; and any sport rule, policy, or process, including NGB-athlete agreements, codes of conduct, or team selection procedures. The Athlete Ombuds can also help athletes connect with legal counsel or mental health resources, if needed. Athletes may contact the Athlete Ombuds at:

Phone: 719-866-5000 or 888-ATHLETE

Email: [ombudsman@usathlete.org](mailto:ombudsman@usathlete.org)

Website: [www.teamusa.org/athlete-ombudsman](http://www.teamusa.org/athlete-ombudsman)