

Section 1: USA Gymnastics Mission, Purpose, and Code of Ethics

Mission Statement

To build a community and culture of health, safety, and excellence, where athletes can thrive in sport and in life.

Organizational Values

In service of our community, we embody ALL of these values to create change:

- SAFETY – We promote a safe and inclusive environment for our athletes and our community
- INTEGRITY – We act with absolute integrity through values-based actions
- ACCOUNTABILITY – We hold ourselves responsible and accountable for all of our actions
- TRANSPARENCY – We operate and communicate with transparency
- LISTENING – We treat our community with the utmost respect and listen to their challenges and perspectives

Purpose

The purpose of the National Rhythmic Program of USA Gymnastics is to promote, serve, and administer the official gymnastics program for girls and women of all levels of ability throughout the United States. This shall be done by:

- A. Carrying out the purposes and objectives of USA Gymnastics.
- B. Providing for the expansion and improvement of gymnastics program through the training and certification of judges and the education of qualified instructors to conduct appropriate gymnastics programs.
- C. Organizing competitions for girls and women of all ability at local, state, regional, and national events.

Providing for the technical organization and development of specific guidelines, rules and policies, and providing a network of communication necessary for the implementation of these objectives.

Interpretation of this publication is the expressed duty and responsibility of the Rhythmic Program Committee and the President of USA Gymnastics.

USA Gymnastics Code of Ethical Conduct

I. Introduction

The mission of USA Gymnastics is to encourage participation and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of gymnastics. USA Gymnastics grants the privilege of membership to individuals and organizations committed to that mission. USA Gymnastics may, therefore, withdraw the privilege of membership or discipline a member where USA Gymnastics determines that an individual or organization's conduct is inconsistent with the mission of USA Gymnastics or the best interest of the sport and those who participate in it.

To better serve the interests of those who participate in gymnastics, USA Gymnastics has adopted the Code, which follows. This Code is not intended to establish a set of rules that will, by inclusion or exclusion, prescribe the appropriate behavior for members in every aspect of their participation in the sport. Rather, the Code offers general principles to guide the conduct, and the judicious appraisal of conduct, of all USA Gymnastics members (individuals, organizations and clubs/businesses, which are collectively referred to as "Members" and individually as a "Member") in situations that have ethical implications.

This Code cannot further ethical conduct in the sport of gymnastics; that can only come from the personal commitment of the participants in the sport to behave ethically. This Code is offered instead to guide and to affirm the commitment of all Members to safeguard the best interests of the sport by acting ethically at all times.

II. Elements of the Code

A. Participant Relationships.

Members of USA Gymnastics are charged with the responsibility for contributing to an environment that makes participation in the sport a positive and rewarding experience. To achieve that result, each professional and club/business Member has a special obligation to make decisions based on the best interest of the athlete. It is inconsistent with this obligation for any Member to:

1. Fail to follow the safety guidelines established by USA Gymnastics, or otherwise knowingly subject a participant to unreasonable physical or emotional risk.
2. Engage in conduct that is unfair including, in particular, attempting to injure, disable or intentionally interfere with the preparation of a competitor.
3. Engage in conduct toward another participant in the sport that is abusive. USA Gymnastics recognizes that the process for training and motivating athletes varies with each coach and each athlete, but it is nevertheless incumbent on everyone involved in the sport to support

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the development and use of motivational and training methods that avoid conduct that is, or is likely to be perceived as being, abusive.

4. Attempt to intimidate, embarrass or improperly influence any individual responsible for judging or administering a competition.

B. Non-Discrimination.

Any USA Gymnastics activity or event should be open to any Member properly qualified under the rules of that activity or event. It is inconsistent with this obligation for any Member to:

1. Restrict the ability of a Member to qualify for or participate in competition because of the Member's association with a particular organization or individual or because of that Member's race, sex, creed, sexual orientation, age, national origin or mental or physical disability.
2. Discriminate in the provision of resources or opportunities to any Member or prospective Member on the basis of race, sex, creed, sexual orientation, age, national origin or mental or physical disability.

C. Participation.

Every Member participating in a USA Gymnastics activity or event has an obligation to participate to the best of his/her abilities. It is inconsistent with this obligation for any Member to:

1. Knowingly participate as a judge, coach, athlete or administrator in any activity or event where that judge, coach, athlete or administrator is inadequately prepared, unable to participate or fails to participate to the best of his or her ability.
2. Engage in behavior that is so disorderly or inappropriate as to interfere with the orderly conduct of the activity or other Members' participation in, or enjoyment of, the activity or event.

D. Commitment to Integrity.

A Member of USA Gymnastics has a responsibility to uphold the integrity of the sport of gymnastics and the rules and regulations that govern it, and to act honestly, openly, fairly and competently. It is inconsistent with this obligation for any Member to:

1. Knowingly misrepresent the policies or actions of USA Gymnastics or its authorized representatives.
2. Act on behalf of USA Gymnastics or a Member without appropriate authorization.
3. Alter, falsify, or omit any information, record or document to intentionally make a false or exaggerated claim or statement or to mislead.
4. Fail to resort in the first instance to the established procedures for challenging a competitive result, contesting a team selection decision, complaining about the conduct of another Member, or attempting to alter or reverse a policy adopted by USA Gymnastics.
5. Breach the duty to maintain appropriately established confidences of USA Gymnastics or any Member.
6. Knowingly make false certifications on membership or event sanction applications or otherwise regarding the involvement of any person permanently ineligible for USA

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Gymnastics membership, or any person who is listed on a federal or state sex-offender registry, with regard to club/business, event, or advertised activities.

7. Engage in business practices directed toward another Member that are determined by a court, or other similar adjudicatory body, to be unethical, illegal or a breach of contract.
8. Incur expenses in furtherance of USA Gymnastics' business that are unreasonable, unnecessary, or unsubstantiated.
9. Fail to avoid both actual and perceived conflicts of interest in the conduct of business.
10. Participate in the deliberation or decision-making process about any issue for which the Member has a direct financial interest, unless full disclosure of that interest and meaningful consent is obtained prior to participation.

E. Communication.

Members of USA Gymnastics have a duty to communicate honestly and openly with USA Gymnastics and Members. It is inconsistent with this obligation for any Member to:

1. Misrepresent competitive achievements, professional qualifications, education, experience, eligibility, criminal record or affiliations.
2. Knowingly disseminate false or misleading information about another Member.
3. Misrepresent actions taken or not taken in an effort to show compliance with USA Gymnastics' policies or procedures.
4. Withhold from athletes information or resources likely to enhance the athletes' enjoyment of the sport or reduce their risk of injury or illness.
5. Fail to consult with or inform fully the athlete or the athlete's parents about opportunities made available to the athlete involving competitions, commercial activities or recognition.
6. Misrepresent the nature or extent of an injury in order to decline an invitation to participate in or withdraw from a competition, training camp or other similar activity.
7. Misrepresent the nature or extent of an injury in order to participate in (or cause an athlete to participate in) a competition, training camp or other similar activity when such participation is inconsistent with the appropriate medical response to the injury.

This section applies to all forms of communication, including social media.

F. Alcohol and Drug Abuse.

Members of USA Gymnastics must ensure that the sport is conducted in an environment free of drug or alcohol abuse. It is inconsistent with this obligation for any Member to:

1. Use or provide to a third party any drug proscribed by applicable federal, state or municipal law.
2. Assist or condone any competing athlete's use of a drug banned by the International Olympic Committee, United States Olympic Committee, Federation Internationale de Gymnastique, World Anti-Doping Agency, United States Anti-Doping Agency, USA Gymnastics, or National Collegiate Athletic Association, or, in the case of athletes, to use such drugs or refuse to submit to properly conducted drug tests administered by any of those organizations.
3. Provide alcohol to, or condone the use of alcohol by, minors; abuse alcohol in the presence of athletes or at USA Gymnastics' activities; or consume alcoholic beverages while a minor.

G. Criminal Conduct.

Members of USA Gymnastics are expected to comply with all applicable criminal codes. This obligation is violated by any Member who:

1. Has been listed on any State or Federal sexual offender list or registry.
2. Has been declared a sex offender in any applicable State or Federal jurisdiction.
3. Has been convicted of or has entered a plea of guilty or no contest to a criminal charge or indictment directly or indirectly involving or relating to sexual misconduct, child abuse, or conduct that is a violation of a law or regulation specifically designed to protect minors.

Depending on the nature of the crime, this obligation may be violated by any Member who has been convicted of or has entered a plea of guilty or no contest to any felony charge or indictment involving conduct other than that specifically described above.

H. Sexual Misconduct.

Members of USA Gymnastics are expected to promote a safe environment for participants, coaches, officials, volunteers and staff in all gymnastics disciplines, which includes an environment free from sexual misconduct. It is inconsistent with this obligation for any Member to:

1. Solicit or engage in sexual relations with any minor.
2. Engage in any behavior that utilizes the influence of a professional Member's position as coach, judge, official or administrator to encourage sexual relations with an athlete or participant.
3. Engage in sexual harassment by making unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

I. Sexual Relationships.

Professional Members of USA Gymnastics must protect the integrity of the sport and the interests of the athletes they serve by avoiding sexual relationships with athletes except where the capacity and quality of the athlete's consent to enter that relationship is beyond question.

III. Enforcement of Code

Compliance with this Code depends primarily upon understanding and voluntary compliance, secondarily upon reinforcement by peers, and, when necessary, upon enforcement through disciplinary action.

Any Member ('Complainant') who believes that another Member of USA Gymnastics has failed to meet such Member's obligations under this Code is, under all but the most egregious circumstances, encouraged to first address that concern directly to that Member. If that action does not result in a satisfactory resolution, the Complainant may file a written complaint with the President, program director or other appropriate staff member of USA Gymnastics. That complaint must be signed and state specifically the nature of the alleged misconduct.

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Upon review and consideration of the complaint, which may include written notice to both parties and an opportunity for response, and, where appropriate, additional discussions with the parties; the President or his/her designee may:

1. Determine that the complaint does not merit further action, or
2. Refer the complaint, as appropriate, to the state or regional chairs/committees or affiliated organization.

If the complaint has not been disposed of as specified in 1 or 2 above, then, after providing written notice to both parties and an opportunity for response, and, where appropriate, additional discussions with the parties, the President or his/her designee may:

1. Counsel the Member who is the subject of the complaint and record both the complaint and the nature of the counseling in the Member's permanent record, or
2. Impose an appropriate sanction or an appropriate relief, or
3. Process the complaint under Article 9 and/or 10 of USA Gymnastics' Bylaws.

Section 2: USA Gymnastics Membership and Responsibilities

100% of the athletes, coaches and judges participating in a USA Gymnastics Sanctioned Event must be pre-registered Athlete, Introductory Athlete, Professional or Jr. Professional members of USA Gymnastics. Any athlete, coach or judge who is unable to be verified, as a current USA Gymnastics member will be ineligible to participate in USA Gymnastics sanctioned event. In addition, any and all athletes who wish to compete in a USA Gymnastics sanctioned event must be affiliated with current USA Gymnastics Member Club.

Athlete Membership

Only Member Clubs may apply for membership with USA Gymnastics on behalf of an athlete. Athletes who wish to participate in USA Gymnastics sanctioned events MUST be affiliated with a current Member Club.

- A. Athlete membership is effective once a USA Gymnastics athlete member number has been assigned to the competitive athlete.
- B. Introductory athlete membership is available for a fee of \$25 for Levels 1, 2 or 3 and/or any of the Rhythmic Express divisions. Introductory athlete membership may be upgraded to full Athlete member (Level 4 and above) within the same competitive year by completing a regular Athlete

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Member registration form and paying the additional \$32.00. Upgrades are processed by mail or fax only.

- C. Athlete member numbers are assigned only after:
 - 1. Payment of \$57 is received.
 - 2. The athlete membership application form is received fully completed with all required information and signatures.
 - a. Please note, the club is required to keep a copy of the fully completed athlete membership application, regardless of registration method.
- D. Member benefits are paid out upon receipt of application; therefore, memberships are **nonrefundable** and nontransferable.
- E. The athlete membership is valid for one competitive year, from August 1 through the following July 31.
 - 1. Members joining at any time during the year will receive benefits for the remainder of the competitive year.
 - 2. All athlete memberships are automatically null and void each July 31.
- F. Membership forms are available online at usagym.org/forms. For more information regarding Athlete Membership terms, conditions and registration, please contact Member Services at 800-345-4719 or via email at membership@usagym.org.
- G. In order for an athlete to compete she must be affiliated with a member club of USA Gymnastics.

I. Athlete Members Rights and Obligations

All gymnasts have the right to:

- A. Compete in the meet if she has met all the requirements for eligibility (entry, score, and age requirements) and is properly entered.
- B. Use any of the facilities provided by the meet organizing committee.
- C. Use the services of any person connected officially with the meet (i.e. physician, trainer, music manager, etc.).
- D. In the case of a tie, expect her award to be mailed to her club address, free of charge, not later than one (1) month after the completion of the meet, if the award is not available at the meet.
- E. Expect courteous and respectful treatment from all participants and meet personnel.
- F. Expect that the competition site will provide a safe and adequate environment, allowing her to perform to the best of her ability.

The gymnast is obligated to:

- A. Obtain an Athlete or Introductory Athlete Member number (Levels 1-3 or Rhythmic Express) from USA Gymnastics Member Services and be prepared to show her membership card at any USA Gymnastics-sanctioned event in which she participates.

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- B. Be affiliated with a USA Gymnastics Member Club
 - C. Follow the USA Gymnastics Code of Ethical Conduct
 - D. Be competent at the level for which she is competing to perform safely
 - E. Be familiar with the rules of the meet and schedule of the meet events and rotations.
 - F. Be present at the site of the meet for sufficient warm-up.
 - G. Remain in the area of competition designated for gymnasts, as competitors or as observers.
 - 1. Athletes should be in this area only during their training and competition times.
 - H. Obey warm-up regulations, rotation schedules and conform to the regulations of the meet.
 - I. Present herself in the proper attire.
 - 1. Gymnasts must change clothes in the designated changing area or restroom. They may not appear in underwear on the competition floor or warm-up area before, during or after the competition.
 - J. Be well groomed in her appearance:
 - 1. Clean attire.
 - 2. Hair secured away from the face so as to not obscure her vision of the apparatus.
 - 3. No jewelry, with the exception of one pair of stud earrings (one in each ear). All other piercing should be REMOVED, not just covered with tape or Band-Aids.
 - K. Accept the received score without criticism or comment.
 - L. Eat or drink outside of the competition area (exception: water bottles should be allowed, or a water fountain should be accessible in order for athletes to stay hydrated.)
 - M. Be courteous, respectful and polite to all meet officials, coaches, hostesses, competitors and associated persons.
 - 1. The use of cell phones (talking, texting, etc.) or any type of wireless communication device is prohibited while on the field of play (competition area).
 - N. Exhibit self-control and calmness in the case of a fall or injury.
- Be aware that infringement of obligations could lead to deduction and/or expulsion by the Meet Director or Meet Referee.

II. Athlete Residency/Club's State Championships Determination

- A. The physical location of the gymnast's training facility determines the residency of the gymnast.
- B. If the gymnast resides in one state and her training facility is located in another neighboring state, the following regulations exist:
 - 1. A gymnast may compete in the State Championships based upon:
 - a. The state in which her training facility is physically located, OR
 - b. The state in which she actually resides.
 - 2. The gymnast may NOT compete in both State Championships.

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3. The gymnast must compete in the proper Regional meet, based upon the State Meet in which she competed.
- C. A club **MUST** compete in the State Championship(s) of the state in which the training facility is physically located.
1. Clubs that have gyms in different locations (under the same ownership) have the option of competing under one club name or as separate clubs. The decision must be made at the beginning of the competitive year and communicated to the State and/or Regional Administrative Committee Chairman, if appropriate.
 2. If two different clubs (different names/owners) are coached by the same person, the Regional Administrative Committee may decide if the clubs may compete as one combined team in USA Gymnastics qualifying meets and State Championships.

Professional Memberships and Responsibilities

- A. Membership forms are available online at usagym.org/forms. For more information regarding Professional Membership terms, conditions and registration, please contact Member Services at 800-345-4719 or via email at membership@usagym.org.
- B. Member benefits are paid out upon receipt of application; therefore, memberships are **nonrefundable** and nontransferable.
- C. Membership is valid for one competitive year, from August 1 through the following July 31.
1. Members joining at any time during the year will receive benefits for the remainder of the competitive year.
 2. Memberships are automatically null and void each July 31.
- D. Information about the various certifications, programs, and accreditations for professional members is offered in the USA Gymnastics University is available online at: usagymnasticsuniversity.org.
- E. Professional Members coaching at sanctioned events must have a minimum certification level of Instructor Certified in USA Gymnastics University. Instructor Certification can be achieved by completing the U100 Fundamentals of Gymnastics Instruction course.

I. Professional Membership

- A. Professional Membership is open to any coach, judge or gymnastics professional who is a minimum of 18 years of age. Completion of USA Gymnastics Safety/Risk Management Certification and NCSI Criminal Background Check are requirements for Professional Membership.
1. Professional members that wish to coach on the floor of sanctioned competitions must also have the U100: Fundamentals of Gymnastics Instruction “Instructor Certification”.
- B. The annual fee for Professional Membership in one discipline is \$89.00.
- C. USA Gymnastics Professional Members must hold a Professional Membership for each and every discipline in which he or she is participating.

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1. An additional \$15 per discipline will be applied.

II. Junior Professional Membership

- A. Junior Professional Membership is available only for coaches or judges who are 16-17 years of age and are coaching/judging USA Gymnastics-sanctioned events.
 1. Safety/Risk Management Certification is also a requirement for Junior Professional Membership.
 2. A Professional Member must accompany Jr. Professional Members in order to be on the field of play (competition area) as a coach.
 - a. Jr. Professional members who wish to coach on the floor of sanctioned competitions must also have the U100: Fundamentals of Gymnastics Instruction "Instructor Certification".
- B. The annual Jr. Professional Membership fee is \$89.00.
- C. Once the individual turns 18 years of age, he/she may apply for a Professional Membership.
 1. Please note: Jr. Professional Members are no longer required to upgrade their membership to Professional membership upon the date of their 18th birthday, if the current Jr. Professional membership has not yet expired. They will be required to renew as a Professional Member once the Jr. Professional membership has expired; however, as long as they have a Jr. Professional Membership, they are required to be accompanied by a Professional Member.

III. Professional Member Behavior Policy

- A. Any falsification of official documentation (scores, athlete date of birth, athlete member number, etc.) will result in the removal of the athlete from competition and may result in disciplinary action against the responsible Professional member.
- B. At USA Gymnastics Sanctioned Events, unacceptable coach behavior is defined as:
 1. Verbal, emotional, sexual, or physical abuse of a gymnast.
 2. Abuse of alcohol or drugs. (Refer to meet director responsibilities for actions)
 3. Inappropriate remarks or comments, harassment, and/or gestures directed toward any official or meet personnel during the competition. No coach has the right to demand a last minute change in the course of the meet or to jeopardize the athlete/competition in any way, unless there has been a violation of the *Rules and Policies*.
 4. Contact with other persons outside of the competitive floor area during the actual warm-up and course of competition. (Exceptions: USA Gymnastics or club doctor, trainer, other credentialed personnel)
 5. Derogatory remarks to the press in regards to USA Gymnastics, its designated representatives, meet officials or personnel.
 6. Violating any of the coaches' or judges' specific responsibilities as listed later in this chapter.
- C. Unless otherwise specified, such above described behavior will be penalized as follows:

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1. **First Offense:** Verbal warning will be issued by the Meet Referee/Technical Director and/or designated representative of USA Gymnastics. The warning must be documented and recorded by the Meet Referee or USA Gymnastics representative on the sanction report form.
2. **Second Offense:** Withdrawal of floor credential, necessitating ejection from the competitive floor area (or possibly the entire competitive arena).

IV. Coaches' Specific Responsibilities

All Coaches are obligated to:

- A. Maintain a USA Gymnastics Professional or Jr. Professional (if 16-17 years old) membership. Safety Certification is a pre-requisite for Professional and Jr. Professional memberships. U100: Fundamentals of Gymnastics "Instructor Certification" is also required for anyone that intends to coach at a sanctioned competition. A Criminal Background Check is required of all Professional members. Jr. Professional members are exempt from the Criminal Background Check.
 1. At sign-in at all USA Gymnastics-sanctioned events, all Professional and Jr. Professional members must be prepared to produce their current Membership card listing valid dates for membership, Safety Certification, U100 Certification and Criminal Background check certification or an event-specific credential (indicating that the Meet Director checked their memberships and pre-requisites prior to the competition). Members must also be prepared to show proof of valid membership in the field of play (competition area) if so requested.
 2. If upon renewing a membership, the member is unable to print a new Membership Card, a receipt to confirm that their membership and pre-requisites are up-to-date may be printed in lieu of the card. A temporary certificate for successfully completing the Safety/Risk Management certification and/or U100 Certification may also be printed as proof of compliance.
- B. Follow the USA Gymnastics Code of Ethical Conduct.
- C. Function ONLY as a coach during a competition. They may not serve in a dual capacity (i.e. Coach/Judge, Coach/Announcer, etc.).
- D. Be professional
 1. Display good sportsmanship.
 2. Dress in attire reflecting the best image of gymnastics.
 3. At State meets and above, the coaches' dress code is as follows:
 - a. Athletic shoes with rubberized soles. Athletic warm-up pants or "Docker-style" pants (No jeans).
 - b. Athletic or tailored shorts that are of a reasonable length. No holes, tears or short shorts.
 - c. Collared shirts, business casual shirts or T-shirts with gym logo. (No spaghetti straps, low-cut tops or midriff revealing shirts).
 - d. No hats or visors.

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4. Be mentally and physically prepared and rested in order to provide the safest environment for the gymnast.
5. The use of cell phones (talking, texting, etc.) or any type of wireless communication device is prohibited while on the field of play (competition area). Coaches are permitted to record their OWN gymnasts' exercise for personal use but should not in any way interfere with the competition.
 - a. Please Note: For all USA Gymnastics Premier Events (including, but not limited to the USA Gymnastics Championships), recording of routines with cell phones, video cameras, or other devices on the field of play is considered disruptive and prohibited in all circumstances.
6. At a USA Gymnastics sanctioned event, no e-cigarettes are allowed on the field of play
- E. Attend all coaches' meetings and be familiar with the meet set-up and organization.
- F. Be present at all warm-up and competition sessions. Be prepared with additional copies of music (CD) in case of problems.
- G. Be respectful of and responsible for his/her athletes at all times during the travel to and from the competition, at the training prior to competition, during the off hours, and during the competition itself.
 1. A Professional Member (or Junior Professional member under the supervision of a Professional Member) must accompany each gymnast to the competition floor. In the case that the coach cannot accompany her athlete to the competition floor, she is responsible to arrange for another Professional Member to fulfill this role.
- H. Follow all guidelines for the competition as stated in the USA Gymnastics *Rules and Policies*, including entry regulations.
- I. Continually update coaching knowledge and experience on a planned regular basis, by means of study, review of films, attending workshops, and participating in clinics, etc.
- J. Treat all competitions the same, regardless of the skill level.
- K. Set an example for the athletes by displaying a positive attitude and exemplary conduct.
- L. Show respect for all gymnasts, coaches, judges, and meet personnel.
- M. Coach gymnasts from their own team only, unless another coach asks for assistance or a gymnast has no coach available. It is inappropriate to conduct a coaching clinic during the competition.
- N. Direct any inquiries regarding apparatus, judging or meet schedules through the Meet Referee, Meet Director, or USA Gymnastics representative.
 1. Refrain from approaching a judge directly.
 2. Instruct their gymnasts and parents to discuss any concerns they may have with the coach.
- O. Inform the gymnasts and gymnasts' parents of all competitive requirements, as well as their rights and obligations.
- P. Obtain an Accident Report Form signed by the Meet Director and/or medical personnel in the case of any injury to a gymnast for whom they are responsible. Accident Report forms will be included in the Sanction packet sent to the Meet Director, who will duplicate and provide copies for the medical

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personnel. The coach or parent of the injured athlete must be sure to secure this form, completed by the medical personnel and signed by the Meet Director, prior to leaving the competition.

- Q. Show respect for the United States flag and the National Anthem. Remember that we teach young people by example.
- R. At a USA Gymnastics sanctioned event, if any Professional Member of USA Gymnastics witnesses action by a coach and believes that the safety of an athlete is in question (for example: risk of catastrophic injury, concussion, etc.), that Professional Member should report the matter to the Meet director.
 - 1. The Jury of Appeals will then promptly review and resolve any issue related to the matter by the following process:
 - a. Discussion
 - b. Decision – by a majority vote
 - 2. A decision by the Jury of Appeals may include a warning to the coach for improper behavior or such other action as the Jury of Appeals determines to be warranted, and may include action to ensure the safety of the athlete. A decision of the Jury of Appeals is final and binding, and is not subject to appeal.
 - 3. The Jury of Appeals is comprised of the following individuals:
 - a. Meet director (unless affiliated with the inquiry, for example, if a question relates to his/her gymnast)
 - b. Meet Referee (President of the Jury)
 - c. If available, one USA Gymnastics representative (Elected State or higher Committee member, or Regional or National Officer)
 - 4. However, the Jury of Appeals for Regional and higher-level competitions is comprised of the following individuals:
 - a. Meet Director (unless affiliated with the inquiry)
 - b. Meet Referee (President of the Jury)
 - c. USA Gymnastics elected Administrative Officers

V. Judges' Specific Responsibilities (see also Chapter 4: Officials)

All Judges are obligated to:

- A. Maintain a USA Gymnastics Professional (or Jr. Professional if 16-17 years old) Membership. A Criminal Background Check and Safety Certification are pre-requisites of Professional Membership; Jr. Professional members are exempt from the Criminal Background check.
 - 1. At sign-in at all USA Gymnastics-sanctioned events, all Professional and Jr. Professional members must be prepared to produce their current Membership card listing valid dates for membership, Safety Certification and the Criminal Background check or an event-specific credential (indicating that the Meet Director checked their memberships and pre-requisites

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prior to the competition). Members must also be prepared to show proof of valid membership in the field of play (competition area) if so requested.

2. If upon renewing a membership, the member is unable to print a new Membership Card, a receipt to confirm that their membership and pre-requisites are up-to-date may be printed in lieu of the card. A temporary certificate for successfully completing the Safety/Risk Management certification may also be printed as proof of compliance.
- B. Maintain USA Gymnastics Judges' Accreditation ratings for the appropriate level of competition
 - C. Follow the USA Gymnastics Code of Ethics.
 - D. Be professional.
 1. Dress appropriately, regardless of the level of competition, in the required uniform (Navy or black skirt/pants and jacket, white blouse/shirt). (Exception: theme invitationals)
 2. Be mentally and physically prepared and rested in order to evaluate all gymnasts as accurately as possible.
 3. Be quick, cooperative and efficient in resolving differences during a conference.
 4. Remain at their event station until the entire competition is completed.
 5. The use of cell phones (talking, texting, etc.) or any type of wireless communication device is prohibited while on the field of play (competition area). Judges may use electronic tablets for gymnastics purposes only on the Field of Play
 - E. Serve only in the capacity of an official during warm-ups and competition. They may not act in a dual capacity.
 - F. Be familiar with the meet setup and organization. No judge has the right to demand a last minute change in the course of the meet or to jeopardize the athlete/competition in any way unless there has been a violation of the *Rules and Policies*.
 - G. Fulfill all assignments according to the contractual agreement. Only dire circumstances should prohibit a judge from fulfilling an assignment. If a judge must cancel an assignment, she/he must notify the appropriate officials at the earliest possible moment.
 - H. Refrain from conversation with other judges and coaches during the competition. In addition, the judges' responsibility does not involve the conduct of the gymnast(s) during warm-up or training. Any conversation or comments with the athlete should be made only if requested by the coach or athlete.
 - I. Show respect for all gymnasts, coaches, judges, meet personnel and volunteers.
 - J. Be confidential about meet matters, their own scores or other judges' scores or opinions.
 - K. Update judging knowledge and experience on a planned, regular basis, which includes studying, practice judging with videos or live athletes, attending courses, and judging as much as possible.
 - L. Treat all competitions the same, regardless of skill level.
 - M. Avoid judging a meet in which any personal bias (positive or negative) towards any competing team and/or individual athlete would affect their ability to judge objectively.
 - N. Set a good example for the athletes by displaying a positive attitude and exemplary conduct.
 - O. Show respect for the United States flag and the National Anthem. Remember we teach by example.

- P. Be considerate of the Meet Director's equipment by refraining from wearing footwear that could be damaging to the mats and/or floor.
- Q. Refrain from soliciting invitations to judge specific competitions by making direct contact with the Meet Director.

Section 3: Foreign Participants

The US Olympic Committee recognizes USA Gymnastics as the governing body for the sport of gymnastics in the United States. As such, USA Gymnastics has authority over all gymnastics competitions, exhibitions, and training exchanges hosted in the United States.

USA Gymnastics is a member of the Federation of International Gymnastics (FIG), the International governing body for gymnastics. As such, USA Gymnastics and all its members are subject to the FIG rules and regulations governing gymnastics exchanges between countries. All exchanges involving foreign athletes are under the jurisdiction of the FIG and the host Federation.

With the increased opportunities for participation in events involving foreign athletes, both in the United States and abroad, USA Gymnastics has the responsibility to inform its Professional members of the FIG regulations governing these activities. The FIG and its member federations have jurisdiction over international events (events involving more than one country's athletes). Violations of the FIG regulations can result in restrictions of the member federation and/or its athletes. While USA Gymnastics realizes the cultural enrichment that these types of events provide to our members, strict compliance to the FIG Regulations MUST be followed.

The USA Gymnastics National office must be notified of any competitions in the U. S. involving athletes, coaches and/or judges who are non-citizens and also reside in and/or represent a foreign country.

I. Foreign Memberships

Athletes, Coaches, and/or Judges from Countries other than the United States

- A. A foreign athlete/coach/judge membership must be obtained by submitting a completed membership form along with a fee of \$30 to the USA Gymnastics member services department.
- B. All Foreign memberships are null and void each July 31st.
- C. Foreign Memberships do NOT receive benefits of membership other than the required insurance coverage at the sanctioned event(s).
- D. The Foreign Participant Membership form is available in Forms Section at [usagym.org/forms](https://www.usagym.org/forms).

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CONTACT THE USA GYMNASTICS MEMBER SERVICES DEPARTMENT FOR ASSISTANCE AND DIRECTION.
DO NOT DIRECTLY CONTACT ANY FOREIGN FEDERATION, CLUB, ATHLETE, COACH OR JUDGE.

II. Duties and Responsibilities of USA Gymnastics Professional Members in regards to International Exchanges.

- A. Excerpt from the Statutes of the Federation Internationale de Gymnastique (FIG)

VII. OFFICIAL EVENTS OF THE FIG

ART. 35.3: INTER-FEDERATION EVENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FEDERATIONS. Federations may organize events among themselves in accordance with the Statutes and Regulations of the FIG. It is, however, forbidden for gymnasts or judges of a federation to participate in competitions or demonstrations in the sphere of activity of another federation without the prior consent of the federations involved and that of the federation organizing the event. Likewise, the participation of gymnasts or judges of a federation in an event organized by a body other than a federation must be subject to the prior consent of any federations involved. Federations are also responsible to FIG for the behavior of their gymnasts, coaches, judges and other officials and they act as guarantors to the FIG in respect of these responsibilities.

After every competition, within 30 days, the Federations will send to the FIG a report about the competition (FIG form) and the tax ratified by the Council (see Art. 26.3).

- B. Below are the sanctions which may be imposed upon a federation or an individual by the FIG for an act of misconduct:

CHAPTER IX: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS AND DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

ARTICLE 43

ART. 43.2 DISCIPLINARY MEASURES WHICH CAN BE IMPOSED AMONGST OTHERS ON A FEDERATION OR AN INDIVIDUAL

- a. the warning, which can possibly be the object of a publication in the FIG bulletin;
- b. the blame;
- c. the suspension of the federation or the person concerned for one or more official FIG events and other international events;
- d. the proscription to take part in the FIG events and other international events for one given or unspecified duration;
- e. the exclusion of any participation in the FIG activities and other international events for one given or unspecified duration;
- f. the demotion of functions;
- g. the cancellation of the brevets or diplomas awarded;
- h. the financial fine;
- i. the suspension for one or more functions of a person elected within one of the

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- FIG bodies and/or of a continental Union for one given or unspecified duration;
 - j. the suspension of the federation for one given or unspecified duration;
 - k. the exclusion of a federation for one given or unspecified duration on decision of the Congress;
 - l. the exclusion of an FIG person
 - m. the cancellation of results of a competition;
 - n. the obligation to restore the financial benefits and prizes received;
 - o. the disciplinary measures resulting from the anti-doping regulations;
 - p. all the sanctions taken can be the subject of a publication in the FIG bulletin or in any other official FIG publication
 - q. or any other sanction which could be proposed by the Disciplinary Commission
- C. Any competition/exhibition conducted in the United States which includes foreign athletes must be sanctioned by USA Gymnastics.
- D. The sanction fee will be determined based upon the particulars of the event (up to \$250,000.00). Do not send any invitations (foreign or domestic) until the USA Gymnastics Member Services department has notified you that approval has been granted.

III. Requirements for Foreign Exchanges

The following categories have been defined for participation of foreign athletes in this country and for participants of USA club athletes in a club exchange in a foreign country. All exchanges involving foreign athletes are under the jurisdiction of the FIG and the host Federation. Every procedure MUST be followed to protect the athletes and the federations.

- A. Competitions/Exhibitions conducted in the United States
1. Prior approval of Foreign Federation must be secured through request made by USA Gymnastics.
 2. All aspects of the event MUST be approved by USA Gymnastics. This includes but is not limited to:
 - a. sponsorships
 - b. marketing/property rights
 - c. equipment/format
 - d. television
 - e. all promotional, marketing, and advertising materials
 3. The use of the word "INTERNATIONAL" in the title of a competition/exhibition is strictly FORBIDDEN.
 4. Promotion or advertising depicting the event as a competition between two or more countries is forbidden. (i.e., USA vs. Canada)
 - a. Athletes from a foreign country competing in the United States represent only their club at the exchange; they are NOT representing their country as a National Team member.

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5. Higher sanction fees may be assessed for galas or exhibitions depending upon the level of the participating athletes.
 6. FIG has a 5% tax on prize money awarded at an event.
- B. Training Exchanges conducted in the United States
1. Prior approval of foreign Federations must be secured through a request made by USA Gymnastics.
 2. Only a letter of invitation with the specific information is required; however, it is not necessary to sanction.
 3. Proof of Insurance coverage:
 - a. It is the sole responsibility of the event host to secure proper insurance for the event. (Be aware that some insurance packages do not cover foreign athletes or coaches.)
 - b. Training exchanges may not be "USA Gymnastics-sanctioned"; therefore, the Athlete Member insurance is not in effect.
 4. Prior notification to USA participants that they represent only their club at this exchange and they are not participating as official USA representatives.
- C. Competitions, exhibitions and training exchanges conducted in another country
1. USA Gymnastics must receive communication from the host country requesting permission for USA Gymnastics members to attend.
 2. USA Gymnastics must approve of your club's participation BEFORE your club accepts an invitation to participate in another country's event. Notification requesting permission to participate in a foreign competition, exhibition or training exchange must be provided to the Program Director at the USA Gymnastics.
 3. Events sponsored by and/or held in a foreign country CANNOT be "USA Gymnastics-sanctioned"; therefore, the Athlete Member insurance is not in effect. Prior notification to USA participants that USA Gymnastics insurance does not cover their participation in an event sponsored by and held in a foreign country is required.
 4. Any judge (US or foreign citizens) must receive permission from the National Federation of their country of citizenship before accepting an invitation to officiate a competition that is conducted outside of their country of citizenship.
 5. USA participants may only represent their club at these events/exchanges and they may not participate as official USA representatives.
 - a. For example: Official results may not reflect "USA".
 - b. Prior notification to USA participants that they represent only their club at this exchange and they are not there as official USA representatives is required.
 6. USA National Team members may not represent their club in an international event without the approval of the Program Director.

IV. Awards for Foreign Athletes and Non-Citizen Athletes Residing in the USA

- A. Non-U.S. citizen athletes who are living in the United States and training in a U.S. gymnastics club are eligible to compete and receive awards for USA Gymnastics sanctioned events, including State, Regional, Open, J.O. Championships.
 - 1. For the Junior Olympic Championships, at least half of the Junior Olympic Group members must be U.S. citizens.
 - 2. If a non-citizen athlete places equal to or above the last qualifier's all-around score for entry to the National Championships, the non-citizen athlete will be designated Level 10.
 - 3. During the National Qualifier, non-citizens will be awarded duplicate awards if they place within the top 6 places.

Foreign athletes (those that reside and/or train in another country) are eligible for awards at any Invitational competition that has secured a foreign sanction from USA Gymnastics.

V. General Foreign Sanction Procedures

Competitions/Exhibitions conducted in the United States

Every procedure MUST be followed to protect the athletes and the federations.

- A. If the activity is a competition/camp/clinic/exhibition, a USA Gymnastics **Foreign** Sanction is REQUIRED.
- B. Submit a completed Request for Foreign Sanction form, with the application fee of \$300 no later than 120 days prior to the event date to USA Gymnastics Member Services, Attention: FOREIGN SANCTIONS.
 - 1. If received in less than 120 days, an additional \$100.00 late fee is due.
 - 2. Additional countries may be added no less than (14) business days of the event for a fee of \$25 per country.
- C. The **final Foreign** Sanction fee will be determined based upon the particulars of the event (up to \$250,000.00). Do not send any invitations (foreign or domestic) until the USA Gymnastics Member Services department has notified you that approval has been granted.
- D. Higher sanction fees may be assessed for galas or exhibitions depending upon the level of the participating athletes.
- E. After receiving the Foreign Sanction request form, USA Gymnastics will make contact with the foreign federation to request their approval for their athletes/coaches to participate.
- F. Meet Directors may request to invite an unlimited number of countries, as long as list of countries is submitted at the same time with original Foreign Sanction request.