



UNITED STATES OLYMPIC & PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE

Our Commitment to the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Community

The United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee is deeply focused on critical initiatives and collaboration across the entire U.S. Olympic and Paralympic community to protect, support and empower America's athletes. The USOPC has made significant progress to strengthen protections for athletes, and the collective efforts to improve athlete safety must never cease.

Across the world, athletes are bravely sharing the egregious sexual abuse, harassment and discrimination they have faced for too long. This behavior has no place in the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic community, and now is the time for the USOPC to lead organizations, institutions and individuals alike in reigniting a culture of athlete empowerment and competitive excellence – one that is a safe, respectful and supportive environment.

The USOPC failed the athletes it was supposed to protect, and to the victims and survivors of abuse, we are profoundly sorry. While we cannot undo the trauma of these horrific experiences, we can promise you – and future generations of American athletes – better. We are actively committed to creating an athlete-centric culture, and safe and healthy environments that are free from all forms of abuse. With changes to governance and personnel, policies and procedures – and, most importantly, culture – the USOPC is a very different community today than it was even just a few months ago.

Athlete Safety & Advocacy Action Plan

The USOPC has taken key actions to create and implement an overarching, multi-disciplinary Athlete Safety & Advocacy Action Plan to provide a safer environment for athletes and more effectively achieve its mission. Through the action plan, the USOPC is both examining the past, and taking immediate and forward-looking actions to create a safer and more empowering environment for athletes.

1. *Important Lessons Learned*

The USOPC is at a critical point in its history. The U.S. Olympic and Paralympic community has an obligation to find out how the Nassar tragedy happened and how other instances of abuse occur. Together with our partner National Governing Bodies, the USOPC exists to serve athletes and we intend to deliver on their behalf. Critical to that accountability, the USOPC is responsible for ensuring proper oversight to help prevent and mitigate abuse of any kind in sport.

2. *Commitment to Change*

While cooperating with and considering the findings of independent investigations and recommendations, the USOPC has already taken and will continue to take important actions.

3. *The Path Forward*

Moving forward, the USOPC is reviewing the culture of elite sports in the United States to determine what safeguards must be strengthened and modernized to ensure the safety and well-being of the athletes it serves.

The Athlete Safety & Advocacy Action Plan consists of five central tenets, which each involve several initiatives aimed at addressing shortcomings:

1. *Improve athlete safety programs and effectiveness of U.S. Center for SafeSport*

Improve the USOPC's athlete safety policies and procedures, while also promoting the capabilities and independence of the U.S. Center for SafeSport via additional funding and support, both within and outside the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic community.

2. *Athlete Advocacy*

Empower Team USA athletes to shape key USOPC and NGB policies and programs, and improve education and communication to set American athletes up to be successful leaders in



the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic movements.

3. Evaluate and reform USOPC engagement with athletes and National Governing Bodies

Drive meaningful reform in how the USOPC interacts with and oversees its member NGBs and enhance engagement with the athletes it serves.

4. Strengthen USOPC organization and effectiveness

Institute new leadership and stronger accountability measures, both internally and within NGBs, to further modernize organizational and governance structure while ensuring the USOPC delivers a safe and successful Olympic and Paralympic community – one that is balanced between holistic athlete well-being and competitive excellence.

5. Support elite U.S. gymnasts and continued evaluation of USA Gymnastics

Create a stable, safe and supportive training environment for elite U.S. gymnasts, while evaluating USA Gymnastics' reforms and status as the recognized NGB in the United States.

Key Actions (as of July 2019)

Below is a list of key actions that outlines the USOPC's progress against these deliverables.

I. IMPROVE USOPC ATHLETE SAFETY PROGRAMS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF U.S. CENTER FOR SAFESPORT

Athlete Safety Policy. The [USOPC Athlete Safety Policy](#) was updated in April 2018 to comply with the *Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017*. Per the Act, any knowledge of suspected child abuse must be reported to both law enforcement and the U.S. Center for SafeSport within 24 hours. The policy is under review and will be further modified based on feedback from the Athletes' Advisory Council and other constituent groups as necessary.

Increased Funding. The USOPC again **doubled its annual funding of the U.S. Center for SafeSport to \$6.2 million** in January 2019, enabling the agency to hire additional investigators and staff, improve the resolution of cases, enhance ongoing communication for survivors and their families, provide age-appropriate training on recognizing and preventing abuse, and offer improved and more accessible resources via SafeSport.org. To guarantee the Center's independence, which is critical for success, the USOPC is requesting federal funding to further support the Center's work in abuse education, prevention, investigation and adjudication.

SafeSport Training. All U.S. Olympic Committee employees and board members have completed **SafeSport and ethics trainings**. With the aim of educating a broader audience, SafeSport training resources were expanded to include agents and representatives. SafeSport training became mandatory for the USOPC and member NGBs on Jan. 1, 2014.

USOPC Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies. The USOPC and NGBs are **implementing prevention efforts specific to the [U.S. Center for SafeSport's MAAPPs](#)**, most notably including limiting one-on-one interaction between minor athletes and adults and improving prevention measures that govern massage and athletic training treatment modalities of minor athletes.

In addition, the USOPC has taken additional MAAPP measures at the Olympic and Paralympic Training Centers and the Games – including the Olympic and Paralympic Games, Pan American and Para Pan American Games, Youth Olympic Games and Beach Games. These additional abuse protection policies will further limit one-on-one interactions between minor athletes and adults by outlining more restrictive transportation and housing requirements and will be fully implemented as of July 2019.

Centralized Database. The USOPC is supporting the U.S. Center for SafeSport's effort to create a comprehensive information resource on permanently ineligible and suspended individuals across the USOPC, NGBs and the Center. As of January 2019, the [U.S. Center for SafeSport Centralized Disciplinary Database](#) is public and houses a list of individuals who have been suspended or deemed permanently ineligible for sexual misconduct. Phase II, which includes suspensions for emotional and



physical misconduct by all aforementioned entities was completed in July 2019.

Response and Resolution. The USOPC is also working with the U.S. Center for SafeSport to support the creation of a **case management system to track grievances** (including non-sexualized cases of bullying and harassment) that will be accessible to the USOPC and all member organizations.

NGB Preparedness. In collaboration with the U.S. Center for SafeSport, the USOPC hosted an **Athlete Safety Investigation Workshop** in February 2019 to further NGB competency in handling allegations and investigations of emotional and physical misconduct. Forty-five of the 50 member NGBs were represented.

Education and Prevention. The USOPC's Coalition for the Prevention of Illness and Injury in Sport partnered with Highmark Health and the American College of Sports Medicine to **host the Summit on Sexual Abuse in Sport**. The Summit convened more than 100 sports medicine professionals, NGB, NCAA and International Olympic Committee representatives, as well as local and national law enforcement, to discuss prevention and management of abuse in sport. The results of the summit, including specific outcomes and published standards of care, will be shared in 2019.

II. ATHLETE ADVOCACY

Athlete Representation. The USOPC continues to engage the Athletes' Advisory Council and U.S. Olympians and Paralympians Association to identify key issues requiring action by both the USOPC and NGBs. Specifically, the USOPC is working with the AAC to **review athlete representation on the USOPC board and ensure athletes have a powerful voice** in the governance of Olympic and Paralympic sport in the United States. Following continued discussions with AAC leadership and the full membership, the USOPC is exploring proposed changes to its bylaws and process for direct athlete representation to the USOPC board. The proposal would increase athlete representation in USOPC and NGB governance from the current 20 percent to 33 percent and broaden representation by also considering athletes who have been retired from competition for more than 10 years.

Following meetings with senior USOPC leadership – including CEO Sarah Hirshland and chair Susanne Lyons – in February 2019, the USOPC offered to fund professional staffing resources to **aid the AAC in its organization efficiency and effectiveness**. The USOPC also committed to the AAC to launch a working group to **evaluate team selection criteria and procedures**, ensuring meaningful representation from athletes and NGBs.

III. EVALUATE AND REFORM USOPC ENGAGEMENT WITH ATHLETES AND NGBs

Independent Report. In December 2018, the USOPC closely reviewed and responded to the **Ropes & Gray Report and the House Committee on Energy and Commerce Report**, and remains committed to working with Congress and the Athlete & NGB Engagement Commission to plan additional actions and reforms. The USOPC swiftly responded to facts provided by the report by terminating the employment of its chief of sport performance.

Borders Commission. The Athlete & NGB Engagement Commission [released an exploratory report](#) following a nine-month review in July 2019, addressing how the USOPC can more effectively interact with and oversee its 50 diverse member NGBs, and support and engage with the athletes it serves. Chaired by former WNBA President Lisa Borders, the "Borders Commission" was chartered by the USOPC in 2018 to review and deliver a series of recommendations aimed at improving the organization's governance strategy and athlete protection policies – including examining whether changes are needed to USOPC policies and procedures, its bylaws, and the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act. The commission is comprised of nine members – including four athlete representatives, two NGB representatives, two independents and one USOPC board member – and was assisted by independent counsel. Following the release of the report, the USOPC is continuing to take appropriate actions to implement and reinforce meaningful reforms to create a culture and environment where athletes can achieve both personal well-being and competitive success.



Membership Audits and Compliance. To ensure NGBs comply with conditions of USOPC membership, the **USOPC has increased the frequency of its audits and expanded the scope of its annual compliance reviews to include safe sport** components in addition to traditional elements of governance and financial controls. The USOPC expanded its audit and compliance division in 2018 and began publishing [NGB compliance reports](#) to ensure increased transparency. In 2019, compliance reports for all 50 member NGBs will be available publicly at TeamUSA.org. NGBs are also required to review and **update their ethics and conflict of interest policies**, and conduct **ethics training** with their board members and staff.

Ethics and Conflicts of Interest. In exercising increased NGB compliance, the USOPC is requiring members to review and **update their ethics and conflict of interest policies** and conduct **ethics training** with board members and staff. NGBs are also required to **disclose** all designated committee members related to funding and team selection, ongoing investigations, unresolved grievances and ethics complaints, permanently banned members and suspended members who are not submitted to the U.S. Center for SafeSport. To further communication between the NGBs and the Center, the USOPC in 2019 established the **NGB Council Leadership Liaison Group**, which meets quarterly to ensure alignment on key issues.

Board Assessments. The USOPC board **issued an independent assessment** to inform its role moving forward. Additionally, the USOPC **completed board assessments for all 50 NGBs** to determine effectiveness and launched an RFP process for identifying a governance expert to train NGB boards on best practices. Following these assessments, the USOPC addressed governance issues within USA Boxing and USA Diving. Those recommendations led to governance changes, including replacement of the board of directors at USA Boxing. The USOPC also issued a letter to USA Badminton demanding specific measures be put in place to address compliance failures found in its comprehensive audit.

Background Checks. The USOPC is implementing a new background check policy that outlines minimum standards for all [member](#) NGBs, Paralympic Sport Organizations and High-Performance Management Organizations to adopt as part of their background check requirements. The new policy standardizes background check search components, inclusion of who is required to complete a background check, and offenses that may disqualify an individual from affiliation and/or participation in the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic movements. Under the new policy, athletes ages 18 and over will also be required to complete a background check.

Enhanced Communication. The USOPC supported a joint meeting between the NGB Council and Athletes' Advisory Council leadership in September 2108 to ensure alignment on key issues. Additionally, the USOPC is working to **provide clarity for athletes**, NGBs and USOPC staff as to which athletes comprise Team USA and how the USOPC serves them by **identifying eligibility criteria and associated USOPC services and benefits** – while ensuring transparent communication of this information. To aid in that process, the USOPC consolidated all information related to [athlete services](#) into one central section on TeamUSA.org – including ombudsman and athlete safety information – to ensure athletes can easily find resources available to them. Additionally, the USOPC is **developing an athlete app that will be used to streamline two-way communication and facilitate feedback**.

Athlete Feedback. A total of **939 athletes provided feedback via an athlete-only survey**, allowing the USOPC to gather insights into improving policies, programs and services, and to better understand athletes' priorities and concerns. The survey results were shared with the Athletes' Advisory Council, NGBs, the U.S. Center for SafeSport and athlete respondents, along with immediate actions that the USOPC is taking to address feedback.

IV. STRENGTHEN USOPC ORGANIZATION AND EFFECTIVENESS

Organizational Restructure and Mission.

The **USOPC realigned existing departments under new athlete and sport services divisions** to enhance efforts around athlete safety, services, engagement and communication. In a true manifestation of the [USOPC's reformed mission and guiding principles](#), the restructure clearly delineates the balance between athlete health and well-being from competitive excellence and high-performance



initiatives, while allowing for continued alignment with NGB services and support needs. Additionally, staff **compensation and bonus structures were updated** to increase emphasis on athlete wellness and services.

Changing of the Guard. To further ensure organizational effectiveness, the USOPC also **restructured its leadership team** and is in the process of hiring two new executives – in addition to two who are already in place – representing a change in half the executive staff. The changes to the USOPC’s executive office followed the hiring of a new CEO in July 2018. Additionally, in January 2019, the USOPC announced three **new board members** (one athlete, NGB and at-large representative) as well as a **new board chair**. The turnover represents 25 percent of the elected board.

Internal Reform. Several internal divisions also saw significant change. The USOPC **hired a vice president of athlete safety** in May 2018 to increase support for athletes and integrate athlete safety across organizational and movement-wide initiatives. The **athlete safety office expanded** to include a senior investigator, associate director of athlete safety, and athlete safety and initiatives consultant, significantly increasing resources and support for athletes and NGBs.

The USOPC also **doubled staffing and expanded resources for the Ombudsman’s office**, which offers confidential, independent advice to athletes seeking guidance on conflict and dispute resolution. Having previously reported to the USOPC CEO, the Ombudsman now reports to the **new Athlete & NGB Engagement Board Committee**. Comprised of both NGB and AAC leadership, the committee is responsible for overseeing NGB compliance and addressing the issues of greatest importance to athletes and NGBs.

Additionally, the USOPC audit and compliance function was reorganized under a new comprehensive compliance division, increasing the independence of the department.

V. SUPPORT ELITE U.S. GYMNASTS AND CONTINUED EVALUATION OF USA GYMNASTICS

USA Gymnastics Reform. The USOPC has been a central driver of organizational reform at USA Gymnastics, **forcing the resignation** of both USAG’s CEO and full board of directors in 2018. Following a mandate by the USOPC to reseat its board of directors, the USAG interim board of directors **confirmed the election of the organization’s new board** in June 2018. Additionally, each of USAG’s five competitive disciplines selected two representatives to serve on the **newly created Programs Council**, which will provide a forum for its representatives to provide input, perspective and guidance on a variety of relevant topics.

Section 8. The USOPC performed a **forensic evaluation of USA Gymnastics** in November 2018 to determine the USAG’s ability to support its athletes and identify the resources required to undergo the necessary changes for athlete well-being and organizational stability. Recommendations were offered, but ultimately, the USOPC filed a Section 8 complaint, seeking to revoke USAG’s recognition as the NGB for gymnastics in the United States.

Deliberate Delay. USA Gymnastics responded to the USOPC’s Section 8 complaint by filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy and requested a delay from the USOPC-appointed panel overseeing the Section 8 hearing. In the sole interest of **expediting and resolving litigation for victims and survivors**, the USOPC has made the strategic decision to not oppose USAG’s request to delay hearings while its bankruptcy is pending. The USOPC reserves the right to proceed with the hearing at any time despite the bankruptcy filing by USAG.

Seamless Support. In the meantime, the USOPC is **ensuring seamless training for elite U.S. gymnasts** and working to **identify alternative training sites** following the removal of Karolyi Ranch as the USA Gymnastics National Team Training Center. While a permanent site is being identified, the USOPC has offered the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, as an interim solution and will continue planning for alternative solutions to ensure a smooth continuation of athlete support in the event USAG’s NGB status is ultimately revoked.



Athlete Assistance Fund. The USOPC also worked with USAG to implement a **\$1.3 million grant to the Athlete Assistance Fund** established by the National Gymnastics Foundation for providing resources to survivors of sexual abuse. Additionally, planning is underway for an athlete assistance fund that will extend to all sports within the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic movements to provide support and assistance to victims of all types of abuse.

Daniels Report. The USOPC is requiring USA Gymnastics complete 70 specific actions related to the recommendations made in the Daniels Report, and is regularly auditing the organization for compliance. USAG is publishing a real-time progress report publicly at usagymprogressreport.com. Per the report, leadership changes were critical to cultural reform. USA Gymnastics hired a new CEO, Li Li Leung in February 2019, and appointed Tom Forster as the women's national team coordinator.