

APPENDIX P

CODE OF ETHICS (Effective February 7, 2018)

Amendments to this Appendix P are the responsibility of the Board of Directors.

INTRODUCTION

United States Synchronized Swimming (USSS), also known as USA Synchro, is recognized by the United States Olympic Committee as the National Governing Body for the sport of synchronized swimming and by FINA as a constituent member of United States Aquatic Sports for participation in the Olympic Games.

The mission of USSS unites, promotes and inspires athletes to achieve sustained competitive and personal excellence in the women's Olympic sport of synchronized swimming.

USSS is inspired by the following ideals in all sport contexts. Our values guide our behaviors:

- Excellence through consistently high standards and expectations.
- Creativity through imaginative and bold action.
- Integrity through honesty and respect for fair play.
- Teamwork through coordinated effort to utilize individual capabilities.
- Empowerment through personal and institutional responsibility.

USSS grants the privilege of membership to individuals and organizations committed to its mission. The privilege of membership may, therefore, be withdrawn by USSS at any time where USSS determines that a member's conduct is inconsistent with the mission of the organization or the best interest of the sport and those who participate in it.

In order to assist all members to better serve the interests of those who participate in synchronized swimming, USSS has adopted the Code of Ethics that follows. The Code of Ethics is not intended to establish a set of rules that will, by inclusion or exclusion, prescribe the appropriate behavior for USSS members in every aspect of their participation in the sport. Rather, the Code of Ethics offers general principles to guide the conduct, and the judicious appraisal of conduct, of all USSS members (including employees and agents of USSS) in situations that have ethical implications.

The Code of Ethics cannot further ethical conduct in the sport of synchronized swimming; that can only come from the personal commitment of the participants in the sport to behave ethically. The Code of Ethics is offered to guide and to affirm the will of all of USSS members to safeguard the best interests of the sport by acting ethically at all times.

ARTICLE 1

ELEMENTS OF THE CODE OF ETHICS

1.01 Participant Relationships:

Members of USSS are obligated to support the mission and values of the organization. It is inconsistent with this obligation for any member to:

- A. Fail to follow the safety guidelines established by USSS or otherwise knowingly subject a participant to unreasonable physical or emotional risk.
- B. Engage in conduct that is unfair, including, in particular, attempting to injure, disable or intentionally interfere with the preparation of an athlete.

- C. Engage in conduct that is abusive toward another participant in the sport. USSS recognizes that the process for training and motivating athletes will vary with each coach and each athlete. It is nevertheless incumbent on everyone involved in the sport to support the development and use of motivational and training methods that avoid conduct that is, or is likely to be perceived as being, abusive.
 - D. 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.
 - E. Attempt to intimidate, embarrass or improperly influence any individual responsible for judging or administering a competition.
 - F. Engage in business practices directed toward another member which are determined by a court or other similar adjudicatory body to be unethical, illegal or a breach of contract.
- Failure to comply with this section or the [Athlete Safety Policy](#) is a violation of this Code of Ethics. See Appendix Q.

1.02 Participation:

Any USSS activity or event should be open to any member properly qualified under the rules of that activity or event, and every member participating in a USSS activity or event has an obligation to participate to the best of their abilities. It is inconsistent with this obligation for any member to:

- A. 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.
- B. Participate as a judge, coach, athlete or administrator in any activity where that judge, coach or athlete is inadequately prepared, unable to participate or fails to participate to the best of his or her ability.
- C. Engage in behavior which 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.

Failure to comply with this section is a violation of this Code of Ethics.

1.03 Responsibility:

A member of USSS has a responsibility to the sport of synchronized swimming and the rules and regulations that govern it. It is inconsistent with this obligation for any member to:

- A. Knowingly misrepresent the policies or actions of USSS or its authorized representatives.
- B. Fail to follow the established procedures for challenging a competitive result, contesting a Team selection decision, complaining about the conduct of another member, or attempting to reverse a policy adopted by USSS.
- C. Breach the duty to maintain appropriately established confidences of USSS or its members.

Failure to comply with this section is a violation of this Code of Ethics.

1.04 Communication:

Members of USSS have a duty to communicate honestly and openly with the organization and its members. It is inconsistent with this obligation for any member to:

- A. Misrepresent competitive achievements, professional qualifications, education, experience, eligibility, criminal record or affiliations.
- B. Knowingly disseminate false or misleading information about another member.
- C. Withhold from athlete members information or resources likely to enhance the athletes' enjoyment of the sport or reduce their risk of injury or illness.
- D. 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.
- E. Misrepresent the nature or extent of an injury in order to decline an invitation to participate in or withdraw from a competition assignment, training camp or other similar activity.

- F. 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.
- Failure to comply with this section is a violation of this Code of Ethics.

1.05 Alcohol and Drug Abuse:

Members of USSS 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:

- A. Use or provide to a third party any drug proscribed by applicable federal, state or municipal law.
- B. Assist or condone any competing athlete's use of a drug banned by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), Federation Internationale de Natation (FINA), US Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), U.S. Synchronized Swimming (USSS), or National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), or, in the case of athlete members, to use such drugs or refuse to submit to properly conducted drug tests administered by one of those organizations.
- C. Provide alcohol to, or condone the use of alcohol by, minors, abuse alcohol in the presence of athlete members or at USSS activities or, in the case of athlete members, consume alcoholic beverages while a minor.

Failure to comply with this section is a violation of this Code of Ethics.

1.06 Criminal Conduct:

Members of USSS are expected to comply with all applicable criminal codes. This obligation is violated by any member who has been convicted of or has entered a plea of guilty or no contest to a criminal charge or indictment involving sexual misconduct, child abuse, or conduct that is a violation of a law specifically designed to protect minors, and, depending on the nature of the crime, 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. Failure to comply with this section or the Athlete Safety Policy is a violation of this Code of Ethics. See Appendix Q.

1.07 Sexual Misconduct:

Non-athlete members of USSS must protect the integrity of the sport and the interests of the athletes they serve by avoiding sexual relationships with athletes. Failure to comply with this section or the Athlete Safety Policy is a violation of this Code of Ethics. See Appendix Q.

1.08 Conflict of Interest:

Members of USSS are responsible for disclosing both actual and perceived conflicts of interest in the conduct of business on behalf of the organization. Failure to comply with the Conflict of Interest Policy is a violation of this Code of Ethics. See Appendix U.

1.09 Confidentiality:

Members of USSS are responsible to retain the confidentiality in the conduct of business on behalf of the organization. Failure to comply with the Confidentiality Policy is a violation of this Code of Ethics. See Appendix V.

ARTICLE 2

ENFORCEMENT OF THE CODE OF ETHICS

- 2.01** Compliance with the Code of Ethics depends primarily upon understanding and voluntary compliance, secondarily upon reinforcement by peers, and, when necessary, upon enforcement through disciplinary action.

Any individual who believes that a member or employee of USSS has failed to meet his or her obligations under the Code of Ethics is, under all but the most egregious circumstances, encouraged to first address that concern directly to that member or employee. If that action does not result in a satisfactory resolution, the individual may file an inquiry or complaint with the Ethics Committee, Executive Director of USSS, or with the President. An anonymous inquiry or complaint may be made.

- A. The Ethics Committee may, upon review of the inquiry or complaint:
 - 1. Determine that the inquiry or complaint does not merit further action;
 - 2. Inform the member, employee, Executive Director, President or Board of Directors that the inquiry should be referred to another committee for action; or
 - 3. Refer the complaint to the Executive Director, President or Board of Directors for action.
- B. The Executive Director, President or Board of Directors may, upon review of the inquiry or complaint:
 - 1. Determine that the inquiry or complaint does not merit further action;
 - 2. Counsel the member who is the subject of a complaint and record both the complaint and the nature of the counseling in the member's permanent record;
 - 3. Refer the complaint, as appropriate, to the LSSC Review Board;
 - 4. Refer the complaint, as appropriate, to the Ethics Committee for further investigation and recommendations; or
 - 5. Process the complaint under the grievance procedures of USSS Administrative Rules. See Article 24.