

# U.S. FIGURE SKATING LAUNCHES SAFESPORT PROGRAM

U.S. Figure Skating strives to provide a safe environment for its members and to protect the opportunity of its members to participate in the sport in an atmosphere that is free of harassment and abusive practices. The U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Program provides resources for all members to help identify abuse and misconduct, outlines steps that can be taken to reduce both and offers procedures to respond to them.

There are many positive reasons to participate in figure skating, but like all sports, it can also be an environment where misconduct can occur: emotional, physical, sexual, bullying, harassment and hazing. All forms of misconduct are unacceptable and in direct violation with U.S. Figure Skating rules.

The new U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Program, supported by the Professional Skaters Association, was formally launched in May at the annual Governing Council meeting. SafeSport was originally created by the U.S. Olympic Committee, and U.S. Figure Skating has adapted the USOC's program to create its own program, which includes policies that will apply to all U.S. Figure Skating clubs, programs, events and activities.

The U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Program addresses the following types of abuse, harassment and misconduct:

- Sexual abuse and misconduct
- Physical abuse and misconduct
- Emotional abuse and misconduct
- Bullying, threats and harassment
- Hazing
- Willfully tolerating misconduct

The association will not tolerate or condone any form of harassment or abuse of any of its members including athletes, coaches, officials, directors, employees, parents, volunteers or any other persons while they are participating in or preparing for a figure skating activity or event conducted under the auspices of U.S. Figure Skating.

Everyone can play a role in preventing abuse and reducing misconduct in sport. All U.S. Figure Skating members should familiar-

ize themselves with each form of abuse and misconduct and refrain from engaging in such misconduct.

### What Can Your Club Do? Five Simple Steps:

1. Appoint a SafeSport Compliance Chair to your local club board who will serve as the primary contact for U.S. Figure Skating; oversee the implementation of the SafeSport Program; assist in fostering a safe, healthy and positive environment for your members; verify coach compliance with U.S. Figure Skating rules; and disseminate information on best practices.

2. Adopt and implement the SafeSport policies found within the SafeSport Handbook

- SafeSport travel guidelines
- Codes of conduct for skaters, parents, coaches and club board members

3. Select at least three persons within the club to complete the SafeSport Training developed by the United States Olympic Committee (USOC). For more information or to register for SafeSport Training, go to [www.safesport.org](http://www.safesport.org).

4. Communicate and educate your members on the definitions of abuse and misconduct and ask everyone to help monitor and govern areas where potential abuse and misconduct could occur.

5. When in doubt, report — if you suspect abuse or misconduct or have specific and credible information about inappropriate behavior, it is your duty as a member of U.S. Figure Skating to report it under GR 1.03.

Based upon the severity of the incident, the report should be directed to the local authorities, U.S. Figure Skating and/or your club's SafeSport compliance chair.

For more information on reporting, please go to [www.usfigureskating.org/safesport](http://www.usfigureskating.org/safesport), then "Clubs" and "SafeSport," or send an email to [safesport@usfigureskating.org](mailto:safesport@usfigureskating.org).

### Resources

For more information, please go to [www.usfigureskating.org/safesport](http://www.usfigureskating.org/safesport) to find all of the U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Program Resources including:

- U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Handbook — includes SafeSport policies and guidelines
- U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport brochures to distribute to members
- How to Make a Report
- Link to SafeSport Training
- Links to State Reporting Laws

For more information on the SafeSport Program, contact Susi Wehrli-McLaughlin, senior director of membership at U.S. Figure Skating, at [swehrli@usfigureskating.org](mailto:swehrli@usfigureskating.org).



that are applicable to your club and facility to reduce the risks of potential abuse:

- Athlete protection and commitment to safety
- Two-deep leadership and appropriate supervision
- Locker room and changing room policy
- Social media, mobile and electronic communications policy

"U.S. Figure Skating is committed to providing a safe and positive environment for our members' physical, emotional and social development and ensuring it promotes an environment free from abuse and misconduct. Through the U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Program, U.S. Figure Skating is committed to providing the safest possible environment for all participants." — Patricia St. Peter, president, U.S. Figure Skating