



## **United States Equestrian Federation Supplemental Procedures for Grievances and Complaints**

The Federation Bylaws [Part VII](#) set forth how complaints and disputes are administered by the Federation and the Hearing Committee. Bylaw 701.3 authorizes the Federation's Regulation Department (FRD) to generally administer and oversee all complaints. Additionally, it empowers the FRD to promulgate procedures in addition to those set forth in the Bylaws for effective administration of reports of violations or formal complaints received by the Federation. Under this authority, the FRD adopts these additional procedures.

### **1. Complaint Forms**

The reporting party may attach any evidence that they have to a Complaint Form. This will not be the only opportunity to produce evidence. If a matter proceeds to a hearing, each party to the proceeding will have the opportunity to produce evidence in support of their position and an opportunity to inspect the evidence produced by any other party.

### **2. Review of Reported Misconduct**

Following receipt of an allegation of a violation(s) of Federation Rules, the Federation will evaluate the appropriate response and action to adequately address the allegation. At any point in time during its review process, the Federation may impose temporary measures pursuant to Bylaw 702.9.

For reported conduct that, if true, would violate Federation Rules and warrant action, the Federation will make reasonable efforts to gather relevant information, which may include interviews of potential witnesses.

Before pursuing disciplinary action, the respondent will be provided written notice of the allegation, the policies or rules that apply to the allegation, the right to representation, and the opportunity to respond to the allegations, including the opportunity for an interview. The respondent is afforded the opportunity to provide an account, any witness information, and any supporting documentation.

Once satisfied with the information gathered, the Federation will determine whether to proceed with formal disciplinary action. If so then the Chief Executive Officer or General Counsel will approve proceeding with such action.

### **3. Hearing Committee Panels**

In conformity with the Federation's [Conflict of Interest and Gift & Entertainment Policy](#), prior to the appointment of a hearing panel, panelists will disclose to the FRD in writing any potential conflicts of interest with any party to the dispute. The FRD will provide such disclosures or a statement that no potential conflicts were disclosed to the parties when the panelists are identified. As provided in Bylaw 702.2, each party will be provided 5 business days to object to any panelist, in writing, showing good grounds for recusal, including bias or conflict of interest.

#### **4. Timelines**

As stated in Bylaw 702.4, if a matter is not resolved informally and proceeds to a hearing, the Notice of hearing will include a schedule with deadlines for the proceeding, which will include a deadline for the parties to exchange a list of anticipated witnesses, with a brief description of their expected testimony, and any exhibits that the parties anticipate using at the hearing. All papers filed must be served on the opposing party or parties. Except for grievances heard on an expedited basis and disputes filed pursuant to GR316, the following timelines serve as general guidance but may be adjusted at the discretion of the FRD if the circumstances warrant:

- a. Filing of complaint- Upon receipt of a properly filed complaint, the Federation shall notify all parties within 7 business days that such complaint has been filed.
- b. The Federation shall promptly identify a hearing panel. Such identification must include the disclosures in 2 above.
- c. Upon notice of the properly filed complaint, the respondent(s) shall have 21 calendar days to file an Answer to the complaint. Such Answer must be served on all parties.
- d. Upon receipt of the Answer, the Federation shall have 30 calendar days to attempt to resolve the matter informally and reach an amicable resolution. This time period may be extended upon written consent of the parties.
- e. If a dispute is not informally resolved following the 30 day or extended period in d above, the Federation shall identify a Hearing Panel within 14 calendar days, if one has not already been identified. Such identification must include the disclosures referenced in 2 above.
- f. The seating of a panel must not exceed 30 calendar days from the date the first panel is identified.
- g. When the panel is seated, a Notice of Hearing shall be issued to the parties, with a deadline to identify potential witnesses and produce exhibits intended to be introduced as evidence at the hearing. This information shall be exchanged between the parties no later than 7 calendar days before the hearing.
- h. The hearing shall occur within 90 calendar days of a properly filed complaint unless agreed to by the parties.

**Resources:**

**Athlete Ombuds**

Team USA athletes may contact the Office of the Athlete Ombuds for independent and confidential advice on a variety of sport related matters, including their rights, applicable rules, policies or processes, and questions related to resolving disputes and grievances. The Athlete Ombuds can also help Team USA athletes connect with legal, mental health, and other support resources. All other NGB athletes (i.e., athletes competing at the masters, recreational, or youth level) are welcome to visit the Athlete Ombuds website to review informational resources and should work directly with their NGB to understand additional resources and options available to them.

Phone: 719-866-5000

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

Website: [usathlete.org](http://usathlete.org)

**Athlete Ombuds Confidentiality and Privacy Policy:**

(A) In general.—The Office of the Athlete Ombuds shall maintain as confidential any information communicated or provided to the Office of the Athlete Ombuds in confidence in any matter involving the exercise of the official duties of the Office of the Athlete Ombuds.

(B) Exception.—The Office of the Athlete Ombuds may disclose information described in subparagraph (A) as necessary to resolve or mediate a dispute, with the permission of the parties involved.

(C) Judicial and administrative proceedings.—

(i) In general.—The ombudsman and the staff of the Office of the Athlete Ombuds shall not be compelled to testify or produce evidence in any judicial or administrative proceeding with respect to any matter involving the exercise of the duties of the Office of the Athlete Ombuds.

(ii) Work product.—Any memorandum, work product, notes, or case file of the Office of the Athlete Ombuds—

(I) shall be confidential; and

(II) shall not be—

(aa) subject to discovery, subpoena, or any other means of legal compulsion; or (bb) admissible as evidence in a judicial or administrative proceeding.

(D) Applicability.—The confidentiality requirements under this paragraph shall not apply to information relating to—

(i) applicable federally mandated reporting requirements;

(ii) a felony personally witnessed by a member of the Office of the Athlete Ombuds;

(iii) a situation, communicated to the Office of the Athlete Ombuds, in which an individual is at imminent risk of serious harm; or

(iv) a congressional subpoena.

**Anti-retaliation Statement**

No employee, contractor, agent, volunteer, or member of USEF or the USOPC shall take or threaten action against an athlete as a reprisal for disclosing information to or seeking assistance from the Office of the Athlete Ombuds.

**For additional information on how to file a grievance or complaint through the Federation or the procedures, please contact Emily Pratt at [epratt@usef.org](mailto:epratt@usef.org)**

**For information about how to file a grievance, go [here](#).**