



SAFEGUARDING REGULATIONS



REGULATION DOCUMENT





DEUTSCHLAND

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Introduction

1.1. The International Federation of American Football (IFAF) is the international governing body for the sport of American Football. It is responsible for all regulatory, competition, performance and developmental aspects of the game on a global level.

1.2. In accordance with the IOC Consensus Statement on Harassment and Abuse in Sport, it is incumbent upon all stakeholders to adopt, implement and monitor policies and procedures for SafeSport which state that all athletes have a right to be treated with respect and protected from non-accidental violence and all forms of harassment and abuse.

1.3. Accordingly, and in furtherance of the principles of both the IFAF Safeguarding Policy and Integrity Code to which all Covered Persons associated with IFAF are bound; notably the respect for human dignity, the rejection of discrimination and the rejection of all forms of harassment and abuse, the IFAF Board has adopted the IFAF Regulations Governing Safeguarding (hereinafter "Safeguarding Regulations").

1.4. These Safeguarding Regulations establish a clear set of rules that must be in place, notably at all IFAF supervised-competitions and training, in recognition of the importance of providing all IFAF athletes, members, volunteers and competition officials with a field of play that is free from abuse and harassment both in and out of competition.

1.5. These Safeguarding Regulations refer to the IFAF Safeguarding Policy's Aims and Core Principles and presupposes that all IFAF Action Items set out in the Safeguarding Policy have been implemented.

Objective

2.1. As anticipated in the IFAF Safeguarding Policy, these Regulations provide written disciplinary rules and processes aimed to regulate and guide IFAF's responses to safeguarding cases and to the needs of individuals involved in them.

2.2 While read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy, these Regulations set out:

- a. clear non-exhaustive definitions of what constitutes prohibited behaviour,
- b. the steps to report prohibited behaviour,
- c. the IFAF investigative process, and
- d. the possible disciplinary process and outcomes as provided in the IFAF Disciplinary and Dispute Resolution Rules.

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Scope

3.1. "Covered Persons" as defined and used in these Safeguarding Regulations and all IFAF Integrity Rules include but are not limited to:

- 3.1.1. All participants in IFAF activities including but not limited to players, coaches, trainers, therapists, physicians, Technical Officials, other officials, Board of Directors and Executive Members, or other IFAF Officers.
- 3.1.2. All Member Federations and their members who compete at the international level.
- 3.1.3. All persons who take part in the sport of American football in any capacity directly or indirectly at a IFAF sanctioned or IFAF approved event.
- 3.1.4. All IFAF employees or IFAF-appointed consultants or agents.
- 3.1.5. All individuals who compete, coach, officiate, work at, or otherwise participate in a supporting role, including parents and legal guardians of a player in an event or training camp or activity organised, sanctioned or approved by IFAF.
- 3.1.6. All individuals who hold an IFAF or IFAF-recognised officiating or coaching certification or Technical Official certification.
- 3.1.7. All individuals who receive accreditation at any IFAF tournaments, events and activities or act as an IFAF contractor or volunteer in relation to such tournaments, events and activities.
- 3.1.8. All individuals who serve as members of any IFAF committee or national or international committee related to IFAF.
- 3.1.9. All persons who have, whether by enjoying any form of licence, accreditation or any other status from IFAF, or otherwise consented (expressly or impliedly) to be bound by this Code.

3.2. Any person who ceases to be a Covered Person for any reason shall for all purposes under this Integrity Code be deemed to be and to remain a Covered Person in respect of any allegation into conduct whilst that person was a Covered Person.

3.3. Any person who became a Covered Person shall be deemed to be and to remain a Covered Person for a continuous period of 12 months after the date, on each occasion, upon which that person became a Covered Person.

3.4. Complaints made under these Safeguarding Regulations may be made by or on behalf of athletes or any individual involved in any activities of the IFAF. All Covered Persons shall be bound by these Safeguarding Regulations both during competition periods, from the moment unofficial or pre-event-training begins until the end of the medal ceremony for the last event held at the competition, as well as outside of competition periods, during any IFAF related activity (which includes but is not limited to for example, Officials Courses or Certifications, Committee Meetings, Workshops, Member Federation activities etc.).

3.5. These Safeguarding Regulations are not meant to supersede any national level disciplinary processes which may be in place in a relevant a Member Federation, National Olympic Committee or National Safe Sport organisation (together or independently referred to as the “National Safe Sport Authority”).

3.5.1. However, where a Covered Person, and notably an IFAF athlete believes they have been subject to behaviour in breach of these Regulations, they may report it directly to the IFAF.

3.5.2. Where a complaint is received concerning a Covered Person, the Investigative Officer will proceed with assessing the merits of the complaint in accordance with these Safeguarding Regulations and/or the Disciplinary and Dispute Resolution Rules and may:

- a. Chose to refer the matter back to the relevant National Safe Sport Authority if the Investigative Officer is confident that the matter may be appropriately dealt with at the national level.
- b. Chose to work with the relevant National Safe Sport Authority to address the complaint.
- c. Retain jurisdiction over the Covered Person and chose to undertake its own investigation independently from the National Safe Sport Authority.

3.5.3. Where there is no official National Safe Sport Authority in a Member Federation's country and the complaint has first been brought to the National Federation's attention by any Covered Person, if the Member Federation has not adequately addressed the complaint in accordance with internationally recognized safeguarding processes and principles and/or basic procedural human rights and the complaint is then referred to the IFAF Safeguarding Lead Officer, the IFAF shall retain jurisdiction to conduct its own investigation into the matter. Should the eventual finding be that a breach of these Safeguarding Regulations has occurred, the Health and Integrity Unit could ultimately seek from the relevant Member Federation reimbursement of IFAF's costs as a possible disciplinary measure, in addition to any other disciplinary measures which might be applicable under the IFAF Integrity Code against any individual involved in the matter. Any such investigative and disciplinary process must respect these Safeguarding Regulations and the Disciplinary and Dispute Resolutions Rules.

Definitions

4.1 Safeguarding Regulations Offences

A Safeguarding Regulations Offence will be deemed to have occurred whenever it is concluded further to the investigative process described at Article 7 of these Safeguarding Regulations that a Covered Person has engaged in prohibited behaviours defined and set out in these Safeguarding Regulations.

4.2 Harassment and Abuse

Whether during a competition period or outside competition periods, harassment and abuse are generally defined as follows and may occur in these various forms, in combination or in isolation:

4.2.1. "Psychological abuse" means any unwelcome act including confinement, bullying, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilization, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity and self-worth.

4.2.2. "Emotional misconduct" includes without limitation verbal acts, physical acts, acts that deny attention or support, criminal conduct or stalking.

- a. Verbal acts: Repeatedly and excessively verbally assaulting, threatening or attacking someone personally in a manner that serves no productive training or motivational purpose.
- b. Physical Acts: Repeated or severe physically aggressive behaviours, including but not limited to, throwing sport equipment, water bottles or chairs at or in the presence of others, punching walls, windows or other objects.
- c. Acts that Deny Attention or Support: Ignoring or isolating a person for extended periods of time, including routinely or arbitrarily excluding a Participant from participation.
- d. Criminal Conduct: includes any act or conduct described as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state laws (e.g., child abuse, child neglect). Note that any such complaints will usually be remitted to the relevant national authorities.
- e. Stalking: occurs when a Covered Person purposefully engages in a course of conduct directed at a specific person, and knows or should know, that the course of conduct would cause a reasonable person to (i) fear for their safety, (ii) fear for the safety of a third person, or (iii) to experience substantial emotional distress.

4.2.3 “Physical Misconduct” means without limitation any emotional contact or non-contact behaviour that causes, or reasonably threatens to cause, physical harm to another person. Examples of physical misconduct may include, without limitation:

- a. Contact violations: Punching, beating, biting, striking, strangling or slapping another; intentionally hitting another with objects, such as sporting equipment; encouraging or knowingly permitting an Athlete to return to play prematurely following a serious injury (e.g., a concussion) and without the clearance of a medical professional.
- b. Non-contact violations: Isolating a person in a confined space, such as locking an Athlete in a small space; forcing an Athlete to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose (e.g., requiring an athlete to kneel on a harmful surface); withholding, recommending against, or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep; providing alcohol to a person under the legal drinking age; providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to another.
- c. Criminal Conduct: Physical Misconduct includes any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under applicable federal or state law (e.g., child abuse, child neglect, assault). Note that any such complaint will usually be referred to applicable state authorities.
- d. Exclusion: Physical Misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline, or improved Athlete performance. For example, hitting, punching and kicking are well-regulated forms of contact in combat sports, but have no place in American Football. Physical Misconduct also does not include conduct reasonably accepted as part of sport or conduct reasonably accepted as part of Participant’s participation.

4.2.4. “Bullying” means without limitation repeated or severe behaviour(s) that are (a) aggressive (b) directed at a Minor, and (c) intended or likely to hurt, control, or diminish the Minor emotionally, physically, or sexually. Bullying-like behaviours directed at adults may be addressed under other forms of misconduct, such as Hazing or Harassment. Examples of bullying behaviour may include, without limitation, repeated or severe:

- a. Physical hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, strangling, slapping, spitting at, or throwing objects (such as sporting equipment) at another person.
- b. Verbal ridiculing, taunting, name-calling or intimidating or threatening to cause someone harm.

c. Social, including cyberbullying use of rumours or false statements about someone to diminish that person's reputation; using electronic communications, social media or other technology to harass, frighten, intimidate or humiliate someone; socially excluding someone and asking others to do the same.

d. Exclusion: Conduct may not rise to the level of bullying behaviour if it is merely rude (inadvertently saying or doing something hurtful), mean (purposefully saying or doing something hurtful, but not as part of a pattern of behaviour), or arising from a conflict or struggle between persons who perceive they have incompatible views or positions. Bullying does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline, or improved Athlete performance.

4.2.5. "Physical abuse" means without limitation any deliberate and unwelcome act - such as for example punching, beating, kicking, biting and burning - that causes physical trauma or injury. Such act can also consist of forced or inappropriate physical activity (e.g., age-, or physique- inappropriate training loads; when injured or in pain), forced alcohol consumption, or forced doping practices.

4.2.6. "Sexual harassment" means without limitation any verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, which is unwelcome, or where consent is coerced, manipulated or cannot be given. Sexual harassment can take the form of sexual abuse.

4.2.7. "Sexual abuse" means without limitation any conduct of sexual nature, whether non-contact, contact or penetrative, where consent is coerced, manipulated or is not or cannot be given.

4.2.8. "Neglect" means without limitation the failure of a Covered Person with a duty of care towards the athlete or competition official to provide a minimum level of care to the athlete or competition official, which is causing harm, allowing harm to be caused, or creating an imminent danger of harm.

4.2.9. "Harassment" means without limitation repeated or severe conduct that (a) causes fear, humiliation or annoyance, (b) offends or degrades, (c) creates a hostile environment (as defined above), or (d) reflects discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority or power over an individual or group based on age, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, national origin, or mental or physical disability; or (e) any act or conduct described as harassment under applicable federal or state laws. Whether conduct is harassing depends on the totality of the circumstances, including the nature, frequency, intensity, location, context, and duration of the behaviour.

- a. Conduct may not rise to the level of Harassment if it is merely rude (inadvertently saying or doing something hurtful), mean (purposefully saying or doing something hurtful, but not as part of a pattern of behaviour), or arising from conflict or struggle between persons who perceive they have incompatible views or positions. Harassment does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline, or improved Athlete performance.
- b. Harassment and abuse can include a one-off incident or a series of incidents.
- c. Harassment and abuse may be in person or online.
- d. Harassment and abuse may be deliberate, unsolicited and coercive.
- e. Harassment and abuse may result from an abuse of authority or control, meaning the improper use of a position of influence, power or authority.

Prohibited Behaviours

The following outlines without limitation prohibited behaviours that may, along with any actionable Safeguarding Regulations Offence as defined at Article 4, result in violations of the Safeguarding Regulations and the IFAF Integrity Code.

5.1. Harassment and abuse

Covered Persons shall not harass or abuse any other Covered person (as defined above).

More specifically:

5.2. Unfair and/or Discriminatory Conduct

5.2.1. Covered Persons shall not engage in unfair or unethical conduct including any attempt to injure, disable or intentionally interfere with the preparation or competition of any athlete or the work or decision of any competition official.

5.2.2. Covered Persons shall not discriminate in the provision of services on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, religion, age or sexual orientation.

5.3. Abuse of Authority; Abusive Conduct

5.3.1. Covered Persons shall not abuse their position of authority or control and shall not attempt to injure or compromise the psychological, physical or emotional wellbeing of any athlete or competition official.

5.3.2. Covered Persons shall not engage in abusive conduct, either physical or verbal, or threatening conduct or language directed toward any Covered Person, parent, spectator or member of the press/media.

5.3.3. Covered Persons shall not exploit any athlete relationship to further personal, political or business interests at the expense of the best interests of the athlete.

5.4. Sexual Conduct

To prevent sexual abuse and the negative consequences resulting from the imbalance of a dual relationship, sexual conduct of any kind between any athlete and his/her Athlete Support Team Members and/or Covered Persons is discouraged. In addition, the following conduct is specifically prohibited:

5.4.1. Covered Persons shall not make sexual advances towards or have any sexual contact with any athlete who is under 18 years of age or under the age of legal majority in the jurisdiction where the conduct takes place or where the athlete resides.

5.4.2. Covered Persons shall not sexually abuse an athlete or Covered Person of any age. Sexual abuse is defined as the forcing of sexual activity by one person on another person (i) of diminished mental capacity; or (ii) using physical force, threats, coercion, intimidation or undue influence.

5.4.3. Covered Persons shall not engage in sexual harassment - for example, by making unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favours or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where such conduct may create an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

5.5. Criminal Conduct

Any Covered Person who has been convicted of or entered a plea of guilty or no contest to a criminal charge or indictment involving the following shall not be permitted to work in any capacity (including volunteer) for IFAF or at an IFAF event:

- a. An offence involving use, possession, distribution or intent to distribute illegal drugs or substances,
- b. An offence involving sexual misconduct, harassment or abuse,
- c. An offence involving child abuse, or
- d. An offence that is a violation of any law specifically designed to protect minors.

Reporting Process

IFAF will encourage its staff members, staff in partner organisations, participants and spectators to report safeguarding concerns to the Safeguarding Lead Officer or Event Safeguarding Lead (depending on the context).

Contact details, including a Concern Report Form, will be actively promoted to all stakeholders, and available through the IFAF website. See Appendix 1 of the Safeguarding Policy.

6.1. IFAF Competition-specific complaints:

6.1.1. The Safeguarding Lead Officer/Verbal complaints

- a. Any individual who believes that any Covered Person has failed to meet his or her obligations under these Safeguarding Regulations and/or wishes to report a case of harassment or abuse and/or make a complaint with regards to a possible case of harassment or abuse during an IFAF Competition, should promptly verbally and confidentially direct this complaint to the designated IFAF Event Safeguarding Lead during the competition in question .
- b. IFAF will nominate an Event Safeguarding Lead for each competition at its discretion and clearly identify the Event Safeguarding Lead during the Technical Meeting at the beginning of the Competition.
- c. The IFAF Event Safeguarding Lead will be responsible for following up on all reported incidents of Harassment and Abuse at all IFAF Competitions but may delegate that responsibility to the Safeguarding Lead Officer on a case-by-case basis.

6.1.2. Any individual who wishes to file a complaint against a Covered Person during IFAF supervised competitions and does not want to direct it verbally to the IFAF Safeguarding Lead Officer or Event Safeguarding Lead can file the complaint with the confidential IFAF integrity unit directly at safeguarding@americanfootball.sport or to the IFAF Athletes Committee at athletes@americanfootball.sport

6.2 Complaints outside competition periods

6.2.1. Any individual who believes that any Covered Person has failed to meet his or her obligations under these Safeguarding Regulations and/or wishes to report a case of harassment or abuse and/or make a complaint or guide the IFAF with regards to a possible case of harassment or abuse outside competition periods should promptly and confidentially direct this complaint, guidance or charge directly to the IFAF integrity unit on its hotline <https://ioc.integrityline.org/>, by email safeguarding@americanfootball.sport

6.2.2. Complaints, guidance or charges made under these Safeguarding Regulations can also be made verbally by way of the Safeguarding Lead Officer during an IFAF supervised competition even if the incident reported has not occurred during the competition in question so long as the impugned behaviour has occurred in the course of any activities convened under IFAF jurisdiction as non-exhaustively defined in these Safeguarding Regulations.

6.2.3. Complaints can also be filed with the IFAF Athletes Committee to whom athletes can always convey any specific concerns. Covered Persons can either communicate directly with any Athletes Committee member or send an email to athletes@americanfootball.sport

6.3. Complaints during Olympic Games or other Majors Events

6.3.1. For complaints that are specific to harassment and abuse occurring during the Olympic Games, athletes can approach the designated IFAF Event Safeguarding Lead or IOC Safeguarding Lead Officer who will be present at the Olympic Village throughout the Games time period. Athletes can also approach members of the IOC Athletes Commission or the IOC Medical and Scientific Commission.

6.3.2. In addition to the reporting channels outlined above, for complaints during IOC supervised events like the Youth Olympic Games or involving officials affiliated with the IOC, athletes can make use of the IOC Integrity and Compliance Hotline available at <https://secure.registration.olympic.org/en/issue-reporter>.

6.3.3. All complaints made to individuals or bodies affiliated to the IOC are analysed by the Ethics and Compliance Office and referred to the IOC Ethics Commission wherever applicable. The procedures are based on the IOC Code of Ethics which can be referred to on the IOC and relevant Olympics website.

6.3.4. Should a Covered Person not file a complaint during the Olympic Games time period, it does not preclude them from doing so with the IFAF after the Games time period in accordance with these Safeguarding Regulations.

6.3.5. For complaints that are specific to harassment and abuse occurring during another Major Event (The World Games for example), athletes can approach the designated IFAF Event Safeguarding Lead or Major Event Safeguarding Lead Officer who will be present at the Athletes Village throughout the Games time period.

Investigative Process

7.1 Initial assessment:

7.1.1. Once a complaint is received by the Safeguarding Lead Officer, the IFAF Health and Integrity Unit, or the Athletes Committee, the role of the individual receiving the complaint is to initiate a prompt evaluation of the impugned action, to take any necessary conservatory measures to ensure the safety of Covered Persons, where appropriate, to assist in a prompt resolution of the complaint when possible and/or to refer the matter to an impartial Safeguarding Investigations Officer.

7.1.2. A complaint can be settled at any stage in the investigative process.

7.1.3. Should it be determined further to the initial assessment that the matter is outside the jurisdiction of IFAF, the Secretary General or Disciplinary Officer will promptly refer the matter to the appropriate authorities or entities.

7.2. Investigations during competition periods

7.2.1. Further to directly receiving a verbal complaint, or by confidential IFAF email or via the Athletes Committee, during an IFAF supervised competition, the Safeguarding Lead Officer will be so informed and shall be responsible for promptly and confidentially following up on the matter with the assistance of the IFAF Health and Integrity Unit and the Safeguarding Investigations Officer if needed.

7.2.2. The Safeguarding Lead Officer and/or Safeguarding Investigations Officer shall promptly conduct a preliminary inquiry into the factual elements of any complaint it receives to determine if there has been an apparent breach of these Safeguarding Regulations. This inquiry will consist at a minimum of speaking with the complainant, the person against whom the complaint is being made and any possible witness(es).

7.2.3. Should the matter be able to be quickly resolved to all the parties' satisfaction, the Safeguarding Lead Officer shall be authorised to do so with the assistance of the Safeguarding Investigations Officer if needed.

7.2.4. Should the Safeguarding Lead Officer deem it necessary, he or she will liaise with athlete psychologists and medical team as required.

7.2.5. Should it be determined that the matter needs to be remitted to local authorities, in cases involving sexual abuse or assault or criminal behavior for example, the Safeguarding Lead Officer shall refer the matter to the Secretary General who will be entrusted with following up on this task.

7.2.6. Should it be determined, in urgent and serious situations, that conservatory measures need to be taken to safeguard a Covered Person (such as expelling an offender from a Championship venue), such measures will be taken by the Safeguarding Lead Officer under the official authority of the Secretary General. Not following the usual disciplinary process in such an instance would be justified under applicable Human Rights legislation because the duty to protect outweighs the duty of procedural fairness owed to a possible dangerous offender.

7.2.7. Any actions taken by the Safeguarding Lead Officer shall be documented.

7.3 Additional assistance

7.3.1. Should the matter prove too complex for the Safeguarding Lead Officer or should the Safeguarding Lead Officer determine that he-she may not act impartially or without bias in a complaint, an impartial and unbiased professional (hereinafter the Safeguarding Investigations Officer) appointed by the IFAF Health and Integrity Unit will then be promptly called upon to assist the Safeguarding Lead Officer in completing the preliminary inquiry and to:

a. Review and determine the facts of the complaint in an expedited, thorough and unbiased manner and decide whether it is necessary to conduct a more extensive investigation in accordance with the investigative process outlined in these Safeguarding Regulations. If the preliminary inquiry set out above has not already been completed by the Safeguarding Lead Officer, the Safeguarding Investigations Officer shall promptly do so.

b. Review and determine if any immediate conservatory measures need to be taken to safeguard the Covered Person in question, such as removing an individual from the field of play, the range or the competition in general.

c. In the case of a report involving a Minor as the alleged victim or third-party witness of Harassment and Abuse, the Minor's parents or legal guardian should be informed, providing that doing so is not considered to represent a risk for such Minor's safety or wellbeing.

d. In the case that informing the parents or legal guardian as per Section 7.3.1 iii is considered to represent a risk for the Minor's safety or wellbeing, another person attending the IFAF competition within the same delegation as the Minor in an official capacity, preferably in a medical or legal capacity, must be informed, providing that doing so is not considered to represent a risk for the Minor's safety or wellbeing.

e. In urgent and serious situations, should the Safeguarding Investigations Officer shall promptly do so. determine that conservatory measures need to be taken to ensure the safety of a Covered Person, the Safeguarding Lead Officer will be directed to take such measures under the official authority of the Executive Committee. Not following the usual disciplinary process in such an instance would be justified under applicable human rights legislation because the duty to protect outweighs the duty of procedural fairness owed to a possible offender.

f. The Safeguarding Investigations Officer shall promptly do so. shall also be responsible for liaising with psychologists and medical teams as required.

7.3.2. Any determination made under these Safeguarding Regulations shall be documented and moved forward with the assistance and cooperation of the IFAF.

7.3.3. Once the additional assistance has been provided by the Safeguarding Investigations Officer shall promptly do so. and any determinations or preliminary conservatory measures have been taken, the matter will proceed in accordance with these Safeguarding Regulations. On agreement of all parties, for the sake of consistency and confidentiality, the Safeguarding Investigations Officer shall promptly do so. shall proceed with the more formal investigation and thereby take on the role of the Investigative Officer as outlined in these Safeguarding Regulations.

7.4. Investigative Officer

For complaints outside competition

7.4.1. When, after completing the preliminary process for complaints reported outside competition, it appears on a balance of probabilities that a Safeguarding Regulations Offence has been committed, the IFAF Health and Integrity Unit will proceed in referring the matter to an independent and impartial Investigative Officer (which may be the Integrity Officer) for a more thorough investigation to be conducted pursuant to these Safeguarding Regulations.

For complaints during Competition

7.4.2. For complex complaints brought forth during competition periods the IFAF and/or the Safeguarding Officer will summon a third-party (Investigative Officer) to conduct a more extensive investigation into the complaint on the IFAF Health and Integrity Unit's behalf should the Safeguarding Investigations Officer not have assumed this role. The Complainant and Covered Person against whom the conservatory measures have been taken will be notified of this process and advised of the steps involved as well as their rights and responsibilities.

7.4.3. Should any actions or conservatory measures have been taken under these Safeguarding Regulations on the authority of the IFAF, the Investigative Officer shall promptly be appointed to undertake an investigation into the possible Safeguarding Regulations Offence. The Complainant and Covered Person against whom the conservatory measures have been taken will be notified of this process and advised of the steps involved as well as their rights and responsibilities.

For all complaints

7.4.4. The Investigative Officer will make a written demand for individuals directly involved in the complaint to provide information or evidence or cooperate with the investigation in any way that will assist the Investigatory Body in its determination as to whether a Safeguarding Regulations Offence has been committed. This will include at minimum but not be limited to making a written demand for information or speaking with the Complainant, the Covered Person against whom the complaint has been made and any relevant witness (es).

7.4.5. An adverse inference may be drawn when any individual directly involved in the complaint refuses to cooperate with the process. Where needed the IFAF Disciplinary Officer, on behalf of the Investigatory Body, may make a final request for an individual to cooperate.

7.4.6. The Investigative Officer or the IFAF Health and Integrity Unit may make a written demand to additional Covered Persons to provide the Investigatory Body any information or evidence that may lead to the discovery of additional evidence relating to a possible Safeguarding Regulations Offence, including (without limitation) requiring the Covered Person to attend an in person or telephone interview and/or to provide a written statement setting forth his/her knowledge of the relevant facts and circumstances.

7.4.7. All Covered Persons must cooperate fully with such investigations. When requested to furnish information or evidence by the Investigatory Body, they shall be required to do so within seven (7) business days of the request failing which they will be deemed to have breached these Rules and the IFAF Integrity Code. This will render the Covered Person subject to discipline under the IFAF Disciplinary and Dispute Resolution Rules.

7.4.8. The Complainant and the Covered Person(s) against whom the complaint has been made shall be notified of all relevant steps and accusations brought against them as required in these Safeguarding Regulations and the IFAF Disciplinary and Dispute Resolution Rules.

7.4.9. Pursuant to the IFAF Disciplinary and Dispute Resolution Rules , the Covered Person(s) against whom the complaint has been made shall be granted procedural rights and given the opportunity to be heard and defend the charge of committing an alleged Safeguarding Regulations Offence prior to an Investigative Report being issued and the matter being remitted to the Integrity Tribunal.

7.4.10. The Complainant and the Covered Person(s) against whom the complaint has been made shall be notified of all relevant steps as required in these Safeguarding Regulations and the IFAF Dispute Resolution and Disciplinary Rules. They may also be granted procedural accommodations if necessary.

7.4.11. As outlined in the IFAF Disciplinary and Dispute Resolutions Rules, further to completing the investigation, the Investigatory Body shall provide the IFAF Disciplinary Officer with a written report documenting and outlining its findings on a preponderance of the evidence.

7.5. Disciplinary action and sanctions

7.5.1. A decision of the IFAF Disciplinary Officer, Lead Safeguarding Officer or Integrity Unit to impose urgent preliminary measures during an IFAF Competition cannot be appealed. Not following the usual disciplinary process in such an instance is justified under applicable Human Rights legislation because the duty to protect outweighs the duty of procedural fairness owed to a possible offender.

7.5.2. When, after completing its investigative process set out in these Safeguarding Regulations the Investigatory Body/Integrity Unit concludes on a balance of probabilities that a Safeguarding Regulations Offence has been committed, it shall so inform and refer the matter the IFAF Disciplinary Officer by way of a detailed confidential Investigative Report which may include non-binding recommendations.

7.5.3. Investigative Reports are treated as confidential. There are, however, limits to confidentiality. The IFAF will make reasonable efforts to protect the privacy of individuals involved in the administration of Investigative Reports, while balancing the need to gather information to assess and/or investigate a complaint and to implement the Safeguarding Rules and IFAF Integrity Code in a manner that is procedurally fair.

7.5.4. To assist with the adjudication of the matter and reduce duplication of witness testimony, the Investigatory Body's findings shall be considered findings of facts. The Investigative Body's Report shall automatically become part of the case, so long as any confidential sections are redacted to the Investigatory Body's satisfaction (in order among others to protect the identity of vulnerable or at-risk-witnesses), prior to being shared with the parties in the event the matter proceeds to adjudication.

7.5.5. To assist with the adjudication of the matter and reduce duplication of witness testimony, the Investigatory Body's findings shall be considered findings of facts. The Investigative Body's Report shall automatically become part of the case, so long as any confidential sections are redacted to the Investigatory Body's satisfaction (in order among others to protect the identity of vulnerable or at-risk-witnesses), prior to being shared with the parties in the event the matter proceeds to adjudication.

7.5.6. The Disciplinary Officer (or Ad Hoc Disciplinary Officer when one is appointed by the Integrity Unit in the event the Disciplinary Officer must be recused) will consider the contents of the Investigative Report, the Investigative Body's non-binding recommendations and the scope of application of the Safeguarding Regulations or other applicable Integrity Rule.

7.5.7. Based upon the same, the Disciplinary Officer shall, by written confidential and official correspondence offer to the Respondent an option to accept “Proposed Consequences” in a full and final resolution of the matter in lieu of proceeding to a hearing.

7.5.8. Prior to offering Proposed Consequences to the Respondent, the Disciplinary Officer shall request that the Health and Integrity Unit contact the Complainant, or do so from his/her own volition, and inform them of the anticipated Proposed Consequences so that the Complainant may consent to the consequences being proposed and waive their right to a hearing in a full and final binding resolution of the matter (imposing the Proposed Consequences on the Respondent) and/or appeal the Decision to the Disciplinary Tribunal.

7.5.9. Should the matter not be resolved by accepted consequences, the resolution or adjudication processes shall generally follow the procedures set out in the IFAF Discipline and Dispute Resolution Rules.

7.5.10. When, after completing the investigative process set out in these Safeguarding Regulations the Investigatory Body is not satisfied on a balance of probabilities that a Safeguarding Regulations Offence has occurred, it shall so inform the Disciplinary Officer by way of a confidential Investigative Report and may still make non-binding recommendations along with its general findings to assist with the final resolution of the matter. All parties will be informed of the outcome.

7.5.11. If the Investigatory Body or Health and Integrity Unit deem that the matter should be referred to local police authorities, they shall refer the matter to the IFAF Secretary General will be entrusted with following up with this task.

Nature of Complaints

8.1. All complaints brought forward in good faith under these Safeguarding Regulations will be carefully considered by the IFAF Health and Integrity Unit without retaliation or censure.

8.2. Retaliation is any adverse action or threat to take any adverse action against any person related to allegations of Prohibited Conduct. Adverse actions include, but are not limited to threatening, intimidating, harassing, coercing, or any other action or conduct with the potential effect of dissuading any reasonable person from reporting prohibited conduct or engaging in activity related to the reporting or investigative processes or punishing them for having done so.

8.3. All inquiries and investigations undertaken further to a complaint being filed shall be unbiased and impartial and any conclusions or actions taken under the Safeguarding Regulations shall be made without retaliation or censure.

8.4. It would be a serious violation of these Safeguarding Regulations and the IFAF Integrity Code for a Covered Person to harass or retaliate against any person who is participating or has participated in an investigative process conducted under these Safeguarding Regulations, including any retaliation against an individual who reports an allegation or participates in related proceedings (e.g. a witness). All parties to an investigative process and Covered Persons must refrain from engaging in behavior, or prompting or permitting someone else to engage in such behavior, which could constitute retaliation. Any such behaviour, when established on a balance of probabilities, would be subject to disciplinary action under the IFAF Integrity Code and may also be subject to applicable federal or state penalties.

8.5. A Covered Person who fails to report actual or reasonably suspected Sexual Misconduct or Child Abuse to the IFAF or their National Safe Sport Authority, and when appropriate to law enforcement, may be subject to disciplinary action under the IFAF Integrity Code and may also be subject to applicable federal or state penalties.

8.6. Where further to the investigative process outlined herein, it is established on a balance of probabilities that the complaint brought against a Covered Person under the Safeguarding Regulations is knowingly false, frivolous, vexatious or malicious, the IFAF Health and Integrity Unit will refer the matter back to (i) the IFAF Disciplinary Officer who will proceed with resolution facilitation or if the Proposed Consequences are not accepted, (ii) to the Integrity Tribunal who will proceed with implementing disciplinary processes, either of which shall be conducted in accordance with the IFAF Disciplinary and Dispute Resolution Rules.

Time Limit to File a Complaint

9.1. A complaint filed under these Safeguarding Regulations, especially where a complainant's safety is at risk, should always be filed as soon as practicable.

9.2. A complaint filed under these Safeguarding Regulations should be filed with the IFAF within twenty-four months of the last event of alleged incident leading to the complaint unless there are extenuating circumstances which would allow the Investigative Officer to proceed with the investigative process at his or her own discretion. The information provided must be as precise and concise as possible. This Article does not preclude the complainant to file report with another entity.

9.3. Allegations can go back further in time to describe incidents or events if the complainant can demonstrate that they are directly related to the last event of alleged harassment that led to the complaint. This is especially necessary in cases where the complainant intends to demonstrate a pattern of events or prohibited behaviour.

Confidentiality

10.1. All procedures arising from the application of these Safeguarding Regulations shall respect all applicable privacy legislation, notably with respect to minors and human rights.

10.2. All procedures and investigations undertaken under these Safeguarding Regulations will be always kept confidential in complete respect for all the privacy rights of the Covered Person and in accordance with all applicable privacy legislation, unless IFAF is required by law to disclose information relating to a specific case.

10.3. All information pertaining to an alleged incident of any prohibited behaviours set out in these Regulations, all matters and information of the Covered Persons and all information gathered during investigations and results of investigations shall be regarded as confidential and handled in accordance with all applicable laws.

10.4. Confidential information related to Minors will never be publicly disclosed.

10.5. All Covered Persons who are asked to take part in an investigation or disciplinary process under these Safeguarding Regulations agree to respect and be bound by all applicable privacy and human rights legislation and will be subject to discipline under the Integrity Code when failing to respect such privacy and confidentiality obligations.

Appeals

11.1. All matters referred to the IFAF Integrity Tribunal as a result of a breach of these Safeguarding Regulations may be appealed to the IFAF Integrity Appeal Tribunal in accordance with the process provided in the IFAF Disciplinary and Dispute Resolutions Rules and the procedural rules applicable before the IFAF Disciplinary Tribunal.

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