



World Pickleball Federation (WPF)

Athlete Safety & Safeguarding Policy

1. Commitment to Athlete Safety

The World Pickleball Federation (WPF) is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and professional environment for all athletes, students, coaches, officials, and participants involved in pickleball activities conducted under their certification, programming, or affiliation.

Athlete welfare is paramount. WPF maintains a zero-tolerance stance toward harassment, abuse, neglect, discrimination, and misconduct in any form. All certified professionals, affiliated clubs, event operators, volunteers, and participants are expected to uphold the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct.

WPF aligns with internationally recognized safeguarding principles, including guidance established by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and supports global best practices in athlete protection.

2. Scope of Application

This policy applies to:

- WPF-certified teaching professionals
- Athletes competing at WPF sanctioned events and/or training camps
- Assistant instructors and apprentices
- Event directors and tournament staff affiliated with WPF
- Volunteers operating within WPF programs
- Athletes and students
- Parents and guardians
- Clubs and academies affiliated with WPF

This policy applies to conduct occurring in person, during travel, at events, in training environments, and in digital or online communications.

3. Definitions

3.1 Harassment and Abuse

Includes psychological abuse, physical abuse, sexual harassment, and neglect. These forms of misconduct may occur individually or in combination.

3.2 Psychological Abuse

Any unwelcome conduct such as verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, coercion, bullying, manipulation, or actions that diminish an individual's dignity, identity, or self-worth.

3.3 Physical Abuse

Any deliberate act causing physical trauma or injury, including inappropriate physical contact, excessive or age-inappropriate training demands, or forced participation while injured.

3.4 Sexual Harassment

Any unwelcome verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Consent obtained through coercion, manipulation, or abuse of authority is not valid consent.

3.5 Neglect

Failure to provide an appropriate standard of care, supervision, or protection that results in harm or risk of harm.

Harassment and abuse may be based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability, nationality, socio-economic status, or athletic ability. Misconduct may involve a single incident or a pattern of behavior and may occur in person or online.

4. Education and Prevention

WPF is committed to proactive prevention through:

- Safeguarding education within certification programs
- Ongoing professional development for instructors
- Distribution of educational materials on professional boundaries
- Promotion of respectful coaching practices
- Encouragement of safe reporting cultures within clubs and academies

WPF strongly recommends that affiliated organizations implement appropriate screening and background verification procedures where permitted by law.

5. Reporting Procedures

Any individual who experiences, witnesses, or becomes aware of suspected harassment or abuse is encouraged to report the concern promptly.

Reports should include:

- Name(s) of involved individuals
- Description of the incident
- Date, time, and location (if applicable)
- Any supporting documentation or witnesses

Reports may be submitted through WPF's designated safeguarding contact channel (as published on the official website) (Anti-Doping Committee Chair – AntiDoping@WorldPickleballFederation.org)

Retaliation against any individual who reports a concern in good faith is strictly prohibited.

6. Investigation Process

Upon receipt of a report, WPF will:

1. Acknowledge receipt of the complaint
2. Conduct a preliminary review
3. Initiate a fair and impartial investigation when warranted
4. Gather relevant information from involved parties
5. Determine findings and appropriate action

WPF may engage independent advisors or legal counsel when necessary.

All parties will be treated with fairness and respect throughout the process.

7. Disciplinary Measures

If a violation of this policy is confirmed, WPF may impose disciplinary action proportionate to the severity of the conduct. Sanctions may include:

- Written warning
- Mandatory education or corrective training
- Probationary status
- Suspension of WPF certification
- Revocation of certification
- Prohibition from participation in WPF-affiliated activities
- Suspension for future WPF Events as a competitor and/or spectator
- Withdrawal of prize purse or reward earned from previous WPF sanctioned events

In cases involving potential criminal conduct, appropriate law enforcement authorities may be notified consistent with applicable laws.

8. Confidentiality

Safeguarding matters will be handled with appropriate confidentiality. Information will be disclosed only:

- When required by law
- When necessary to protect individuals from harm
- When consent is provided by the concerned individual

Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where safety or legal obligations require disclosure.

9. Athlete Involvement

WPF values athlete input in shaping policies that impact participant safety. The organization supports continued review and enhancement of safeguarding standards with stakeholder engagement.

10. Event and Program Safeguarding Measures

To promote safe environments, WPF encourages:

- Clearly posted Codes of Conduct
- Defined supervision standards for youth programming
- Appropriate coach-to-athlete ratios
- Professional boundaries in communication and social media
- Controlled access to restricted competition or training areas
- Visible safeguarding contact information at events

11. Ongoing Commitment

WPF remains committed to continuous improvement in athlete protection standards. Safeguarding is an ongoing responsibility shared by instructors, athletes, clubs, administrators, and the broader pickleball community.

All members and certified professionals are expected to uphold this policy and actively contribute to a culture of safety, dignity, and respect in the sport of pickleball.

For safeguarding inquiries or to report a concern, please refer to the official contact information listed on the WPF website.

WPF Anti-Doping Committee Chair

AntiDoping@WorldPickleballFederation.org