

## **INTRODUCTION**

SEPSA is dedicated to creating an inclusive environment for everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, color, national origin, age, disability (physical or mental), sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, parental status, pregnancy status, marital status, political affiliation, military and veteran status, as well as mental health status, socioeconomic status or background, neuro(a)typicality, or physical appearance.

The membership of SEPSA is united by these values, and we celebrate our differences. We will not tolerate sexism, racism, transphobia or homophobia. We will work continuously to combat the effects of discrimination in our leagues and in our communities.

All Member Leagues are expected to make the commitment to call out discrimination when it appears in our communities. We expect that all Member Leagues will continually work to act with integrity.

We put forth this code of conduct and set of values, not because we anticipate bad behavior, but because we believe in the already exceptional level of respect among our membership, member leagues and the affiliates within those sport leagues. We believe that articulating our values and accountabilities to one another reinforces that respect and provides us with clear avenues to correct our culture should it ever stray. We commit to enforce and evolve this code as our membership grows.

The contents of this document are concepts we encourage members and member leagues to apply to their lives in and outside of SEPSA. This Code of Conduct applies to member interactions in various areas of our shared athletic lives, including all events hosted by SEPSA, shared online spaces, social media, member-to-member events and games, member-to-non-member events and games, and any time our membership represents SEPSA.

## **GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE**

The Grievance Committee shall be composed entirely of two individuals appointed by the Board of Directors. The primary purpose of this committee is to review a complaint that has not been resolved at the staff or administrative levels and to provide mediation when appropriate. It is the job of the committee to evaluate any issue in a thoughtful and respectful manner without allowing any emotions involved to overwhelm their work. The committee will be as impartial as possible and strive not to prejudge any individual or situation.

How the process works:

1. Review of Formal Complaints
  - a. The committee receives and reviews any and all complaints which have not been satisfactorily resolved at the league manager level.
2. Fact Finding with Involved Parties
  - a. If the committee believes that efforts to resolve the complaint have been exhausted at the staff or director level, the committee schedules meetings with all involved parties. The purpose of these meetings is to gather information, determine specific points of conflict, and identify possible solutions.
3. Written Response to Complaints
  - a. The committee provides an initial written response to a formal complaint within ten days.
4. Develop Plan to Resolve Complaints
  - a. The Grievance Committee reviews the conduct, decisions and policies that are involved in the complaint and works with each party to develop a plan that will address the

concerns of all those involved. If necessary, the Committee will hold a meeting with all of the parties to present the previously identified concerns and solutions and work to mediate a resolution that is acceptable to all parties. The committee will issue a formal written response to the complaint at the end of this process.

5. Addressing Issues which May Threaten the Welfare of the Entire Organization
  - a. In the case that the Grievance Committee believes that an issue threatens the conduct or welfare of the entire organization, the Grievance Committee may bring a complaint to the Board of Directors for a vote of disciplinary action.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

The following rules and standards of conduct are essential to a safe and fun environment. Discrimination and harassment, retaliation, bullying, threatening behavior or conduct that violates SEPSA Code of Conduct and any local, state, federal or other laws are expressly prohibited. As such, member organizations, athletes, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, and other SEPSA participants must familiarize themselves with, and follow, the SEPSA's rules and standards. These rules and standards are set forth as a protective measure within our communities.

While not intended to be an all-inclusive list, the examples below represent behavior that is considered unacceptable for SEPSA member leagues and their communities. Behaviors such as these, as well as other forms of misconduct, may result in disciplinary action up to and including permanent expulsion from SEPSA:

- Theft or inappropriate removal/possession of property
- Fighting or threatening violence
- Making maliciously false statements about athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, and other SEPSA participants
- Violation of safety or health rules
- Unwelcome sexual advances or other harassment
- Bullying, including through league policies that purposefully enable exclusion based on race, ethnicity, religion, color, national origin, age, disability (physical or mental), sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, parental status, pregnancy status, marital status, political affiliation, military and veteran status, as well as mental health status, socioeconomic status or background, neuro(a)typicality, or physical appearance.
- Social media posts of abusive, harmful, or harassing content that attack a person or group's race, ethnicity, religion, color, national origin, age, disability (physical or mental), sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, parental status, pregnancy status, marital status, political affiliation, military and veteran status, as well as mental health status, socioeconomic status or background, neuro(a)typicality, or physical appearance.
- Slurs or epithets that attack a person or group's race, ethnicity, religion, color, national origin, age, disability (physical or mental), sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, parental status, pregnancy status, marital status, political affiliation, military and veteran status, as well as mental health status, socioeconomic status or background, neuro(a)typicality, or physical appearance.
- Using positions of institutional or political power maliciously against another member of SEPSA community including but not limited to leveraging power to accuse a SEPSA community member of a violation of the Code of Conduct when no such violation has occurred.
- Making knowingly false statements, allegations or accusations.

Other forms of misconduct not listed above may also result in disciplinary action, up to and including permanent expulsion from SEPSA. SEPSA can, at its discretion, bypass the Code of Conduct policy and immediately suspend or expel athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, and other SEPSA participants if the circumstances warrant.

## **COMPLAINT AND INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE**

SEPSA is committed to an environment that is supportive of survivors and victims of harassment and abuse. SEPSA takes all complaints seriously. In order to take action, any incident of sexual harassment, harassment, discrimination, or any other violation of the Code of Conduct should be reported to SEPSA by either the victim or a witness so a prompt investigation can occur.

If you believe you have been harassed by an athlete, member, coaching staff, official, volunteer, administrator, registrant of SEPSA, or other participant in SEPSA, you have the option to report all of the facts of the incident and the names of the individuals involved in order to initiate an internal SEPSA investigation.

Additionally, if you believe you have witnessed a violation of the Code of Conduct by an athlete, member, coaching staff, official, volunteer, administrator, registrant or other participant in SEPSA, you have the option to report all the facts of the incident and names of individuals involved in order to initiate an internal investigation.

In order for an investigation to occur, the information or complaint must be reported as soon as possible. There are different avenues to report. As a preliminary matter, complaints can be reported to your League Representative or league leadership. League Representatives in receipt of such a report must immediately contact the Grievance Committee. If you do not feel comfortable reporting the incident to your League Representative, you may bypass the League Representative and report directly to the Grievance Committee.

As soon as the Grievance Committee receives your report an investigation will be conducted. Moreover, appropriate corrective action will be taken, where necessary. Any athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, or other individuals who participate in SEPSA found to be engaged in any violation of the Code of Conduct will be subject to discipline, up to and including a ban from SEPSA and any SEPSA member league. Such discipline will be made known to the victim upon the conclusion of the matter.

Any and all athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, or other individuals who participate in SEPSA who become aware of complaints or violations of the Code of Conduct should report such complaints or incidents immediately so that an internal investigation may occur.

## **ANTI-RETALIATION AND WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY**

This policy is designed to protect athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, or other SEPSA participants and address SEPSA's commitment to integrity and ethical behavior. In accordance with anti-retaliation and whistleblower protection regulations, SEPSA will not tolerate any retaliation against athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, or other SEPSA participants who:

- Make a good faith complaint, or state intentions to make a good faith complaint, regarding any policy in this Code of Conduct;
- Make a good faith complaint, or state intentions to make a good faith complaint, regarding accounting, internal accounting controls, or auditing matters that may lead to incorrect, or misrepresentations in, financial accounting;
- Make a good faith report, or threaten to make a good faith report, of a violation that endangers the health or safety of athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, other SEPSA participants, or the general public;
- Provide information to assist in an investigation regarding violations of these policies; or
- File, testify, participate or assist in a proceeding, action or hearing in relation to alleged violations of the law.

Additionally, retaliation for having participated in any procedure under this Code of Conduct; or for having been associated with a person who filed a complaint or participated in any procedure under this Code of Conduct, will be treated as harassment and will not be tolerated. Retaliation against athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, or other SEPSA participants, for any reason including, but not limited to,

- Filing a complaint under this Code of Conduct;
- Participating in any procedure under this Code of Conduct; or
- Being associated with a person who filed a complaint or participated in any procedure under this Code of Conduct will be treated as harassment and will not be tolerated.

In order to take action, any incident of retaliation must be reported to SEPSA by either the victim or a witness. If you believe you have been retaliated against by an athlete, member, coaching staff, official, volunteer, administrator, registrant, or other participant in SEPSA, you must report all of the facts of the incident, and the names of the individuals involved to the Grievance Committee. Additionally, if you believe you have witnessed harassment by an athlete, member, coaching staff, official, volunteer, administrator, registrant, or other participant in SEPSA, you must report all the facts of the incident, and names of individuals involved to the Grievance Committee.

Per the Complaint and Investigation Procedure, when the Grievance Committee receives your report, a prompt investigation will be conducted. Anyone found to have engaged in retaliation will be subject to discipline, up to and including permanent expulsion from SEPSA. Athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, and other SEPSA participants who knowingly make a false report of a violation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including permanent expulsion.

## **HARASSMENT**

Harassment is an attempt by one person to assert abusive, unwanted power over another. Athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, or other individuals who participate in SEPSA against whom a complaint of harassment is substantiated may be disciplined, up to and including termination of membership or registration, and/or suspension of participation per the Grievance Policy.

This policy applies to harassment that occurs during the course of all SEPSA activities and events. It also applies to harassment involving individuals associated with SEPSA but outside of SEPSA activities and events when such harassment adversely affects relationships within the SEPSA's work and sport environment.

All incidents of harassment must be reported regardless of who the harasser may be. Notwithstanding this policy, any person who experiences harassment continues to have the right to seek assistance from law enforcement, regulatory agencies, or an attorney, even when steps are being taken under this policy.

The Harassment Policy shall be posted on the SEPSA website, along with the details as to How to File a SEPSA Grievance.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Under this policy sexual harassment is defined as knowingly unwelcome sexual advances. Sexual harassment is also defined as other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when this conduct explicitly or implicitly creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. These behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Requests for sexual favors in exchange for favorable treatment;

- Verbal conduct such as derogatory or obscene comments, sexual invitations, sexual or derogatory jokes, propositions, suggestive comments, epithets, insulting comments, obscene comments or gestures, or other verbal abuse of a sexual nature;
- Visual material such as derogatory or offensive posters, photographs, cartoons, drawings or gestures;
- Retaliation for having reported or threatened to report sexual harassment;
- Insulting or obscene comments or gestures;
- Offensive email, voicemail, or text messages;
- Making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances.

Please note that any sexual touching or language that occurs in-game between members of opposing teams will be inferred as unwanted, penalized in-game, and escalated to SEPSA Grievance Committee after the game. Consent cannot be reasonably given during active game play.

SEPSA will not tolerate sexual harassment by any and all parties including, but not limited to athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, and/or participants. This means all reported violations will be investigated by the Grievance Committee. SEPSA will discuss the investigation process, the level of investigation, possible outcomes of the investigation, and the level of desired confidentiality with any reporting individual. Investigations may lead to discipline up to and including expulsion from SEPSA. SEPSA reserves the right to immediately expel athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, or participants if the circumstances warrant.

## **DISCRIMINATION**

SEPSA is committed to an environment free of discrimination for all its athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, or participants in which all individuals are treated with respect. In keeping with this commitment, we maintain a strict policy prohibiting discrimination. SEPSA expressly prohibits discrimination and all forms of harassment including but not limited to discrimination and/ or harassment based on race, ethnicity, religion, color, national origin, age, disability (physical or mental), sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, parental status, pregnancy status, marital status, political affiliation, military and veteran status, as well as mental health status, socioeconomic status or background, neuro(a) typicality, or physical appearance.

SEPSA will not tolerate discrimination by any and all parties including, but not limited to athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, or participants. This means all reported violations will be investigated by the Grievance Committee. Investigations may lead to discipline up to and including expulsion from SEPSA. SEPSA reserves the right to immediately expel athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, and/or participants if the circumstances warrant.

Please note that any incidents of harassment or discrimination that occurs in-game between members of opposing teams and is not heard/witnessed by Officials can be escalated to SEPSA Grievance Committee after the game.

## **BULLYING**

Bullying can be defined as repeated verbal, psychological, or physical aggression conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behavior which is intentionally aggravating and intimidating including but not limited to unwanted sexual or physical contact; cyberbullying through text message/SMS, electronic mail, social media, or instant messages; physical abuse or threats of violence; verbal abuse focused on an individual's race, nationality, color, gender,

age, religion, sexuality, body type, physical appearance, etc.; destruction, defacement or theft of a fellow SEPSA participant's personal property; engaging in any activity that intimidates or threatens fellow athletes or inflicts extreme emotional distress; and/or forcing an individual to engage in any activity or perform any task that violates the law including federal, state or other local delimitations or SEPSA rules.

SEPSA will not tolerate bullying of any kind and all athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, or other participants in SEPSA have a duty to report any such behavior to SEPSA.

Any athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, or other individuals who participate in SEPSA found to be engaged in any form of bullying as determined by the Grievance Committee may be subject to discipline, up to and including a ban from SEPSA.

## **ANTI-VIOLENCE POLICY**

SEPSA is committed to providing a safe environment for its athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, and other SEPSA participants. Maintaining a safe environment, however, requires the continuous cooperation of all participants in SEPSA.

Compliance with this Anti-Violence Policy is a condition of participation. Due to the importance of this policy, anyone who violates any of its terms, who engages in or contributes to violent behavior, or threatens others with violence, may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate suspension, removal, or expulsion from SEPSA.

SEPSA strictly prohibits violence, including any act of intimidation, threat, harassment, physical violence, verbal abuse, aggression or coercion against athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, or other SEPSA participants. Prohibited actions, include, but are not limited to the following examples:

- Excessive, unnecessary physical contact including physical assault of another person
- Sexually assaulting another person
- Threatening to injure another person
- Engaging in behavior that intentionally subjects another person to emotional distress (intentionality means a person has prior understanding that their behavior can cause harm)
- Bringing an unauthorized firearm or other weapon
- Threatening to use or using a weapon
- Intentionally damaging property of another

SEPSA takes all complaints seriously. In order to take action, any incident must be reported to SEPSA by either the victim or a witness. All threats or acts of violence must be reported to the Grievance Committee. Athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, or other SEPSA participants should report any suspicious activity they observe to their League Representative or appropriate security personnel. Reports made pursuant to this policy will be kept confidential to the maximum extent possible. SEPSA will not tolerate any form of retaliation against athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, or other SEPSA participants for making a report under this policy.

SEPSA will take prompt remedial action, up to and including immediate expulsion against any athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, or other SEPSA participants found to have engaged in threatening behavior or acts of violence.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

SEPSA understands that social media is widely used. Our community often exists online when not in person, enriching the connectivity of the organization. However, use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. It is important to remember that one can be held personally and legally responsible for publicly made opinions and comments, even on personally maintained sites, pages and accounts. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, slander, sexual harassment, threats of violence, or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the SEPSA.

Additionally, it is not permitted to share confidential or proprietary information, photographs or videos about SEPSA community members on personal sites. You are also encouraged to exercise caution and reasonable judgment with regard to exaggeration, colorful language, guesswork, speaking in generalities, obscenity, copyrighted materials, legal conclusions, and derogatory remarks or characterizations that might be interpreted as harmful or derogatory to SEPSA Community Members.

## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

This section applies to athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, or participants of SEPSA doing work on behalf of SEPSA. Athletes, members, coaching staff, officials, volunteers, administrators, registrants, or participants should use good judgment, adhere to high ethical standards, and avoid situations that create an actual or potential conflict between their personal interests and the interests of SEPSA. A conflict of interest exists when loyalties or actions are divided between the SEPSA's interests and those of another, or if a relationship between members and participants of SEPSA creates or has the possibility of creating partiality. A conflict of interest may also exist when the interests or concerns of an interested party are perceived as competing with the interests or concerns of the organization.

There are a variety of situations which raise conflict of interest concerns including, but not limited to, the following:

- Financial Interests
- Romantic Relationship

If you are unsure as to whether a certain transaction, activity, or relationship constitutes a conflict of interest, discuss it with your league leadership or Grievance Committee.