



CLUB DEVELOPMENT

usaswimming.org

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Dear USA Swimming Member Coaches,

You are ambassadors and leaders in our sport, and we appreciate your leadership.

The Open Letter we posted on usaswimming.org on March 23, 2010, has raised member awareness about the issue of sexual misconduct, and has garnered constructive feedback, which has provided us the opportunity to remind you of some of USA Swimming's key policies surrounding child protection, specifically, the USA Swimming Code of Conduct and Reporting and Disciplinary process.

We need not tell you, our coaches, about the numerous benefits of competitive swimming, or the highly positive impact the sport and its leaders can have on our members. We are incredibly grateful for the thousands of qualified, effective and positive coaches within our membership. Unfortunately, there is a fraction of a percent of people who would choose to act inappropriately, and it is vital that our coach membership be aware of USA Swimming's rules and the affirmative responsibility to report inappropriate behavior to the National office, in addition to any legal reporting obligations that a coach may have.

Code of Conduct (Article 304, USA Swimming Rulebook)

All registered members of USA Swimming must adhere to USA Swimming's Code of Conduct, the full text of which can be found [here](#). In regard to sexual misconduct specifically, the USA Swimming Code of Conduct prohibits:

304.3.4 *Conviction of, imposition of a deferred sentence for, or any plea of guilty or no contest any any time, past or present, or the existence of any pending charges for any*



crime involving sexual misconduct.

304.3.5 *Any sexual conduct, advance or other inappropriate sexually oriented behavior or action directed towards an athlete by (i) a coach member or other non-athlete member, or (ii) any other adult participating in any capacity whatsoever in the affairs or activities of USA Swimming (whether such adult is a member or not). Any nonconsensual physical sexual conduct, or pattern of unwelcome advances or other sexual harassment in connection with or incidental to a USA Swimming-related activity by any person participating in the affairs or activities of USA Swimming (whether such person is a member or not) directed toward any member or other person participating in the affairs or activities of USA Swimming.*

304.3.10 *Physical abuse of an athlete by any person who, in the context of swimming, is in a position of authority over that athlete.*

Reporting Inappropriate Conduct / National Board of Review (Section 4, USA Swimming Rulebook)

Any violation of the above sections or any other complaint regarding sexual misconduct, should be immediately reported in writing to USA Swimming's Executive Director. Remember, sexual abuse is a criminal act, and while we can remove the perpetrator from membership in our organization, we implore coaches, members, parents and athletes to also report the matter quickly and directly to local police authorities. All states have mandatory child abuse reporting laws. The definition of which categories of people must report varies from state to state. Coaches and Clubs are responsible for knowing whether they are mandatory reporters of child abuse under state law. A useful guide to state laws is found at: http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/state/.

A complaint can be filed with USA Swimming via any of the following channels:

- Email to cwielgus@usaswimming.org
- Fax to: (719) 866-4761
-
- Mail to:
USA Swimming
Attn: Chuck Wielgus
One Olympic Plaza

Colorado Springs, CO 80909

In no case should any coach, club or other member conclude that, based on their own investigation, a complaint lacks sufficient merit to be reported to USA Swimming. All complaints filed via one of the above channels are immediately turned over to USA Swimming's legal representation and investigated. Once a complaint has been substantiated, it is sent to our internal hearing body, the National Board of Review. The National Board of Review has the authority to suspend or expel a member for life, which is the highest penalty available to USA Swimming.

You should always report any sexual misconduct that you observe or that is reported to you. Please do not decide not to report based on your own investigation. When in doubt, report.

Thank you for working together with us to ensure our clubs remain a safe and healthy environment for our young athletes. If you have additional questions about the Code of Conduct, Board of Review or Reporting process, please [email us](#).

The material in this e-mail is provided for educational and informational purposes only and does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement with respect to any company or product. One of the objectives of the USA Swimming Coach's Blast e-mails is to make coaches aware of potential resources available.

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