



Information on Filing Complaints with the Independent Third Party for Freestyle Canada

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Overview

On December 31, 2022 Freestyle Canada formally adopted the [Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport](#) (UCCMS) 6.0 and joined the Abuse-Free Sport program.

On November 1, 2023 we have taken it a step further and developed a comprehensive Safe Sport Policy Suite and complaint management structure to support all provincial members and clubs that **have formally adopted this program.**

There are two distinct pathways for the complaints process, depending on roles:

UCCMS participants (defined below), file with Abuse-Free Sport (the Office) for concerns regarding UCCMS

Individuals (defined below), or UCCMS participants concerned with issues not addressed by UCCMS, file with the Freestyle Canada Independent Third Party.

Abuse-Free Sport

Abuse-Free Sport is an independent program that is part of a growing national movement to rid Canadian sport of all forms of harassment, discrimination, and abuse. As a Program Signatory, FC is an active player in this movement.

Unlike the previous approach, where each national sport organization created its own system for dealing with complaints of maltreatment, Abuse-Free Sport is a centralized within a federally funded national organization. It is independent and led by experts in their fields, using education and research to prevent maltreatment at all levels of sport.

The [Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner](#) (the Office) serves as the central hub. It operates independently to administer complaints about alleged violations of the UCCMS.

Where there are admissible allegations of abuse, harassment or discrimination, the Office conducts independent investigations and recommends sanctions against individuals who violate the UCCMS. Sanctions can be imposed by the Director of Sanctions and Outcomes (DSO), who is fully independent and reports to the Maltreatment in Sport Sanctions Council.

The Office will also maintain a national sanctions registry, which prevents individuals from evading sanctions by moving between different sports or jurisdictions.

For designated participants within our organization, there is access to a wide range of resources, including victim services and referrals to specialized mental health professionals and experienced lawyers, all in English and French.

Independent Third Party for Freestyle Canada

Key approaches of the Independent Third Party (ITP) are to:

- Provide guidance and answer questions regarding the complaint and/or investigation process.
- Maintain confidentiality of enquiry and complaints as outlined by FC policy
- Maintain independence from FC and members
- ITP does not provide legal advice.

ITP will:

- Determine the admissibility of a complain (jurisdiction, frivolous/Vexatious, timelines)
- Determine which process will be followed and where the complaint will be managed (RCA, PRA, Club/Special Association)
- Determine whether an investigation is necessary

Freestyle Canada has enlisted the services of an Independent Third Party, **Gordon Hopper**.



Gord Hopper has been a sport leader for over 30 years. Originally, he was a coach, an international level judge, and learning facilitator in gymnastics. He has been The Technical Director with Gymnastics BC (1994-2003), the National Team Director with Canadian Freestyle Ski Association 2004-2007, and the Director of Athlete Performance with UBC Varsity Athletics (2014-2022). Each of the roles have included elements of risk management, complaints and investigations, and safe sport. In these roles he has worked with eighteen different sports including both teams and individuals. From 2009-2012 he was President of the BC Coaches association. He is currently consulting with several University sport programs to support prevention, education and policy development related to safe sport.

Definition of UCCMS Participants and Individuals

One key feature of the adoption of Abuse-Free Sport is that depending on one's role, certain individuals in freestyle skiing are now designated as "UCCMS Participants".

In general, UCCMS Participants have a role at the National level. A list of roles that are assigned as UCCMS Participants is outlined below. All other individuals who are subject to Freestyle Canada's policies are defined as "Individuals".

This distinction between UCCMS Participants and Individuals is important to emphasize because it is an essential detail in understanding if a complaint is filed with Abuse-Free Sport or the Independent Third Party for Freestyle Canada, explained further below.

Individuals in the following roles are now considered UCCMS Participants and any complaints against them related to alleged breaches of the UCCMS while active/participating in these roles must be filed with Abuse-Free Sport:

- National Team Athletes (World Cup & NextGen)
 - National Team Coaches (World Cup & NextGen)
 - National Team Technicians
 - National Team Dedicated IST Personnel (Lead Physicians, Strength, and Conditioning Coaches)
 - Freestyle Canada Administrative Employees
 - Freestyle Canada Board of Directors
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Complaint Forum Jurisdiction

Formal complaints will be filed with the Independent Third Party for Freestyle Canada

Complaints related to **alleged breaches of the UCCMS-by-UCCMS Participants** will be directed to Abuse-Free Sport.

Complaints related to **alleged breaches of the UCCMS by Individuals** will be filed with the Independent Third Party (ITP) for Freestyle Canada.

Complaints related to other **alleged misconduct under FC Policies** must be filed with the Independent Third Party (ITP) for Freestyle Canada. This applies to both **UCCMS Participants** and **Individuals**.

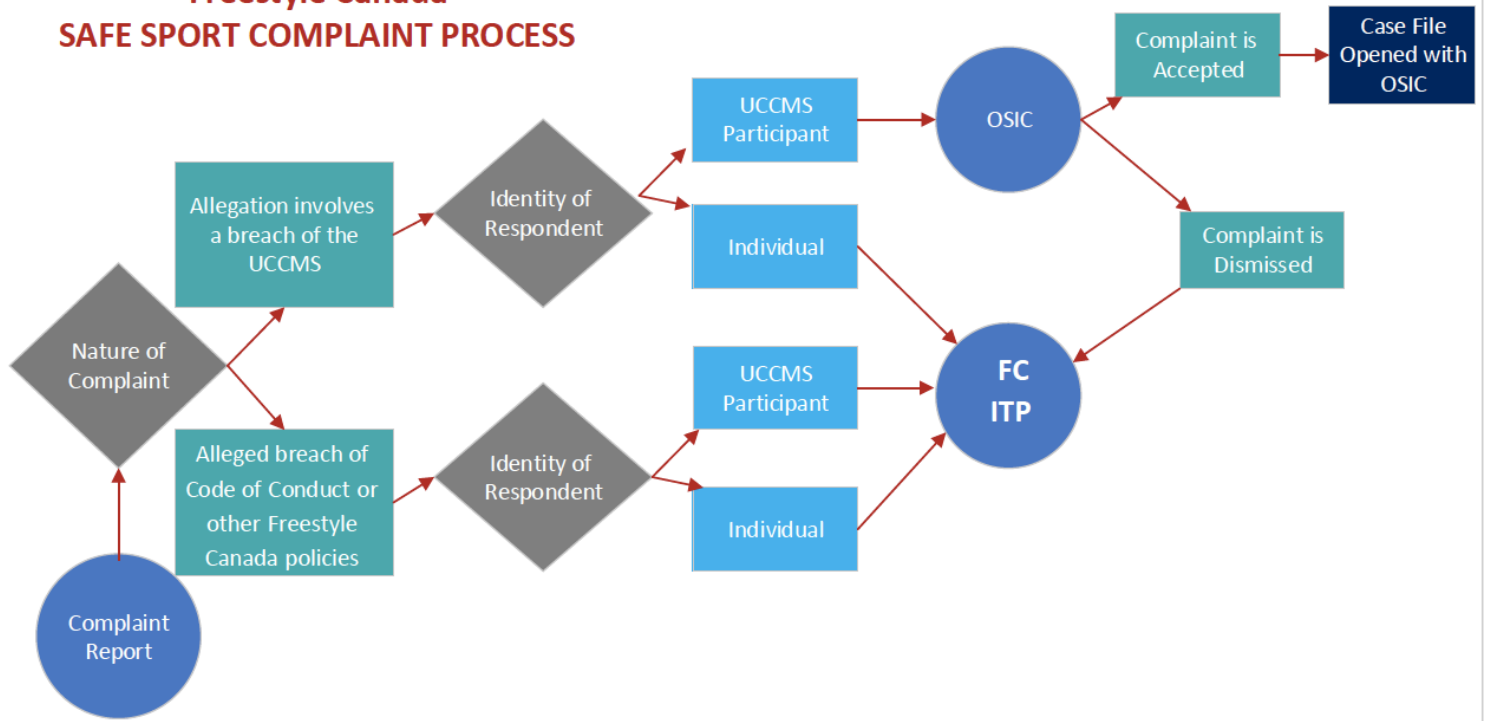
Table 1. Jurisdiction for complaints filed against UCCMS Participants and Individuals

Type of Complaint	Where Complaint is Filed/Directed	
	Abuse-Free Sport/OSIC	ITP for Freestyle Canada
<u>UCCMS Participant</u>		
Alleged UCCMS Breach	X	
Other misconduct (non UCCMS Breach) allegation under FC Policies		X
<u>Individual</u>		
Alleged UCCMS Breach		X
Other misconduct (non UCCMS Breach) allegation under RCA Policies		X*

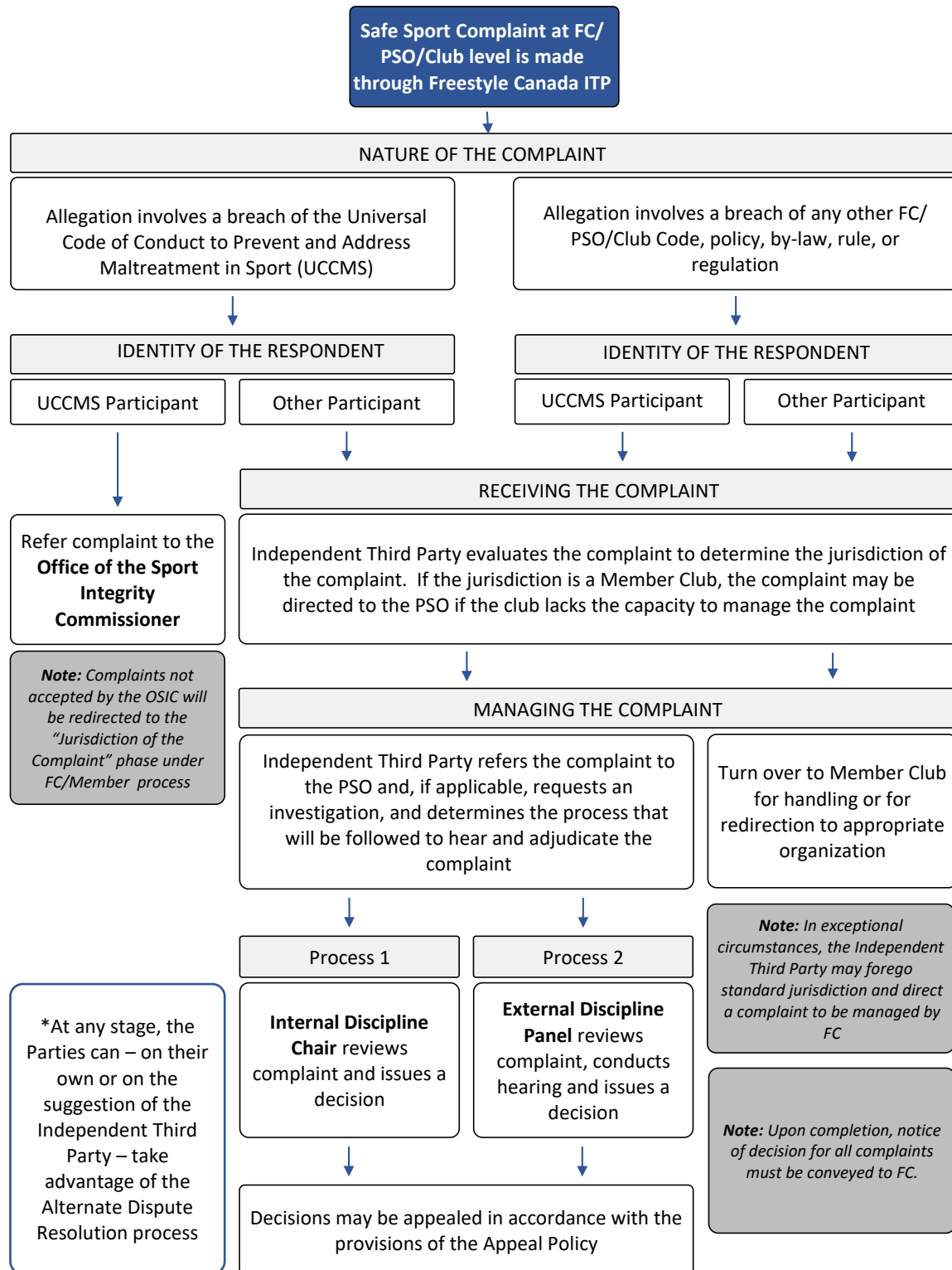
*Including if allegations against a UCCMS Participant

The Freestyle Canada [Safe Sport Policy Manual](#) contains information required to understand the complaint management process that applies when a complaint must be filed with the ITP for Freestyle Canada or when a complaint must be filed with the OSIC. Equivalent versions are also in place at the local and provincial levels.

Freestyle Canada SAFE SPORT COMPLAINT PROCESS



Freestyle Canada Comprehensive SAFE SPORT COMPLAINT PROCESS



Filing a Complaint

Before Filing a Complaint

Formal complaint processes, which may include an investigation and/or Disciplinary Panel, is a detailed, and at times a resource extensive process that can take several weeks to months to complete. Not all differences of opinion constitute maltreatment or misconduct. Individuals who feel comfortable doing so are encouraged to try to resolve their dispute informally before engaging in the complaint process.

Not all disputes should be addressed by a formal complaint process. The following are examples that **may** fall outside of the complaint process, depending on the specific circumstances:

- Selection processes at the local, provincial, or national level.
- Differences of opinion expressed respectfully.
- Governance issues.
- Disagreement with club decisions.
- Club employment matters

In these cases, other avenues, such as the Appeal Policy or contacting club/association administration, may be available to you.

Individuals who feel comfortable doing so are encouraged to try to resolve their dispute informally.

Ready to File a Complaint

Independent Third Party For Freestyle Canada

If you have determined that your complaint should be filed with the ITP for Freestyle Canada, it should be submitted to the ITP for assessment within **30 days of the Incident occurring**. Complaints can be made by submitting the Safe Sport Incident Form on Freestyle Canada's website to the ITP at the below email address.

Gord can be reached at 778-228-4367 or by email at ITP.Freestylecanada@gmail.com

Abuse-Free Sport Helpline

Following four years of successful operation and providing an invaluable resource, the Canadian Sport Helpline will now be known as the **Abuse-Free Sport Helpline**.

While the name and branding are changing, the service provided by the Helpline is not:

- It is free, anonymous, confidential, and independent.
 - Professionally trained operators are available to help in both official languages, English and French;
 - Available via phone call, text, or email seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (Eastern Time).
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Most importantly, the Helpline continues to be available to all Canadians, regardless of their sport, level of participation, or where they live within the country. They do not have to be participants of an Abuse-Free Sport signatory organization to access the Helpline. Operators with expertise in counselling, psychology and sport will listen and offer support. Additionally, they can advise the client about the reporting process and, if possible, refer them to the appropriate reporting mechanism for their individual situation.

If the matter of concern is potentially admissible to the Abuse-Free Sport program, the operators are able to assist the client with the completion of the report form and, if desired, may also refer them to the Abuse-Free Sport mental health support services.

