

# National Association of Women's Gymnastic Judges



## Disciplinary Procedures

## **National Association of Women's Gymnastic Judges (NAWGJ)**

### **Disciplinary Procedures**

The National Association of Women's Gymnastic Judges (“NAWGJ”) is dedicated to fostering fair, impartial, and consistent judging in the sport of women's gymnastics. These Disciplinary Procedures describe the process to be used to address complaints about the professional behavior of judges in their role as a NAWGJ member and/or at a NAWGJ assigned event. The goal is to ensure a fair and consistent process while upholding the integrity of NAWGJ and the sport of women’s gymnastics.

These Procedures are issued by NAWGJ and come into force on September 1, 2025, and supersede all previous NAWGJ Problem Resolution Process and Disciplinary Action Guidelines, including all rules and procedures set forth therein. These Procedures may be amended from time to time by NAWGJ.

**These Procedures are not intended to address situations involving suspected child abuse or any other cases where local, State or Federal criminal laws may have been violated. In such cases, State and Federal laws take priority over these Procedures, after which NAWGJ may use these Procedures to apply the appropriate disciplinary sanctions.**

#### **1. Overview of the Disciplinary Process**

All NAWGJ members are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner and to adhere to the Rules. Judges who engage in unprofessional behavior or who violate any of the Rules may be subject to disciplinary action.

The Ethics Committee is composed of the Ethics Committee Chair, the Vice President, and elected members of the Professional Development Committee and, when appropriate, the National Collegiate Assigner.

All documents submitted to NAWGJ must be sent via email/shared to [ethics@nawgjngb.com](mailto:ethics@nawgjngb.com), with a cc/copy to the NAWGJ Vice President. The Ethics Committee Chair, Review Panel, and/or Appeal Panel may accept other options for submission at their sole, respective discretion.

##### **1.1. Onsite Issues**

Alleged violations of the Rules by a judge that takes place while that judge is working at a particular gymnastics competition should be reported promptly to the Meet Referee. The Meet Director, with consultation from the Meet Referee, is responsible for determining whether to suspend or dismiss the judge from that competition, but shall not have the power to suspend or dismiss the judge from any other gymnastics competition without following the written procedures set forth in Sections 1.2 through 1.8, below.

## **1.2. Filing a Complaint**

An individual (e.g., coach, contracting official, NAWGJ member) may file a written complaint regarding a judge's alleged violation of the Rules.

- 1.2.1.** Complaints must be submitted in writing to the NAWGJ Ethics Committee (via the Complaint Form provided on the NAWGJ National website, available [here](#)).
- 1.2.2.** The complaint must include specific details, dates, locations, witnesses, and any supporting documentation.
- 1.2.3.** Complaints must be filed within 7 days of the alleged incident, unless extenuating circumstances prevent filing within this timeframe, but in no event should be filed later than 14 days after the alleged incident.

## **1.3. Initial Review**

Upon receipt, the Ethics Committee will conduct an initial review to determine if the complaint falls within the scope of the NAWGJ Rules and merits further response and/or investigation.

If the Ethics Committee decides that the complaint does not fall within the scope of the NAWGJ Rules or that there is no case to answer, then no further action will be taken against the judge, and the matter will be closed.

## **1.4. Initial Investigation**

If the Ethics Committee decides that the complaint merits further investigation, then the Ethics Committee will determine the appropriate direction for the complaint, which shall be to (i) send the complaint and suggested solutions to the SJD for resolution, or (ii) move forward to the Review Panel.

## **1.5. Review Panel**

The Review Panel shall be selected by the Ethics Committee Chair and shall consist of three (3) members of the NAWGJ Board. Decisions of the Review Panel shall be determined by a majority vote of its members.

If the Review Panel is convened, then:

- 1.5.1.** The judge against whom the complaint is made will be notified of the complaint in writing, which shall include a summary of the facts and on which each Rule violation is based, the potential sanctions applicable to each Rule violation in the complaint, and the terms of any provisional suspension (if applicable).
- 1.5.2.** The judge will have 10 days from receipt of the complaint to provide an initial response consisting of one of the following 3 responses:
  - a.** Admit to the Rule violation(s) set forth in the complaint, and accept the sanctions specified in the notice;

- b. Admit to the Rule violation(s) set forth in the complaint, but dispute and/or seek to mitigate the sanctions specified in the notice, and to have the Review Panel determine the sanctions after a hearing solely on the sanctions; or
  - c. Deny the Rule violation(s) set forth in the complaint, and to have the Review Panel determine the Rule violation(s) and any sanctions at a hearing. If the judge wishes to exercise their right to a hearing before the Review Panel, the judge shall also state how they respond to the complaint and explain in summary form the basis for each such response.
- 1.5.3.** In the event that no response to the notice is received by the specified deadline (unless an extension is granted by the Ethics Committee Chair), the judge will be deemed to have admitted to the Rule violation(s), and to have acceded to the sanctions specified in the notice.
- 1.5.4.** All parties involved are expected to cooperate fully with the investigation.

### **1.6. Minor Infractions**

The Review Panel may render a decision and complete the complaint with a disciplinary action as set forth in Part 1.72 (Decision and Sanctions) without a hearing or any further investigation. The Review Panel may also decide to move forward with a hearing as set forth in Section 1.8 (Hearing and Determination), below.

### **1.7. Serious or Major Infractions and Suspensions**

The Review Panel may request and gather additional information, interview witnesses, and review relevant documents, if necessary, prior to moving forward with a hearing as set forth in Section 1.8 (Hearing and Decision), below.

The Review Panel may provisionally suspend a judge with immediate effect on such terms and conditions as the Review Panel considers appropriate at any point from the receipt of the complaint up through the issuance of a decision, where the Review Panel considers in its sole discretion that: (i) the judge is failing or has failed to cooperate with the investigation; (ii) in the absence of a provisional suspension, the integrity and/or reputation of the sport could otherwise be seriously undermined and the harm resulting from the absence of a provisional suspension outweighs the hardship of the provisional suspension on the judge; (iii) for the health and safety of the judge or any other person; and/or (iv) a provisional suspension is necessary to allow the Review Panel to conduct its investigation, or for any other governing body or governmental authority to conduct their own investigation.

A provisional suspension shall remain in force unless or until the Review Panel determines that it shall be lifted or at the time of the issuance of the Review Panel's decision.

If the Review Panel elects to impose a provisional suspension, it shall notify the Vice President, who shall notify the judge concerned and any governing bodies and/or member associations and/or any other parties that are deemed necessary for the purpose of enforcement of the provisional suspension. The judge shall have 10 days from receipt of the notice of provisional suspension to apply in writing to the Review Panel to have that suspension lifted or varied, stating the reason(s) for the application. The decision of the Review Panel on that application will be final and binding and all parties irrevocably waive the right to any form of appeal, review, or recourse by any court or judicial authority.

### **1.8. Hearing and Determination**

If a hearing is convened, the Review Panel shall have the power to regulate its own procedure, including, without limitation to: (i) rule on its own jurisdiction; (ii) extend any time limits or deadlines; (iii) make any decisions with respect to the conduct of the hearing; (iv) expedite, postpone or adjourn the hearing; (v) consolidate a matter with any other matter; (vi) appoint experts or request or provide specialist advice; (vii) require the hearing be in person or remote via video; (viii) stay the hearing pending the outcome of any investigation or proceeding being conducted by another party (such as law enforcement or a governing body); and (ix) proceed in absence of a party at the hearing, provided that the Review Panel is satisfied that the party received notice of the hearing.

For all hearings before the Review Panel:

- 1.8.1.** The judge will have the right to be present, present evidence, and call witnesses, and be represented by legal counsel (at their own expense). The judge must provide written notice to the Review Panel with their legal counsel's name and contact information by no later than 7 days prior to the date of the hearing.
- 1.8.2.** The hearing will be conducted on a private and confidential basis, attended only by the parties to the hearing and their representatives and witnesses, except that the outcome of the hearing and the decision of the Review Panel may be shared as set forth in Part 2 (Decision and Sanctions), below.
- 1.8.3.** The Review Panel will weigh all evidence presented and decide whether a Rule violation has occurred. This determination will be based on the balance of the probabilities (i.e., whether it is more likely than not that a violation occurred).
- 1.8.4.** If a party considers that an urgent decision is required, that urgency shall be communicated to the Review Panel together with an explanation of the reasons for the urgency. The Review Panel shall decide whether the matter will be processed urgently.

**1.8.5.** All hearings will be conducted in English. Any party wishing to speak in a language other than English must pay for an independent translator or simultaneous translation services. All documents must be submitted to the Review Panel in English, and all foreign language documents must be translated at the submitting party's own cost and must include a certification verifying the translation.

**1.8.6.** Nevada law will govern all matters, including all hearings.

## **2. Decision and Sanctions**

Sanctions or disciplinary actions, individually or in combination, may be imposed upon a judge found to be in violation of the NAWGJ Rules of Professional Conduct. **Nothing in the Rules shall prohibit the Review Panel from imposing a temporary suspension upon a judge, which may include, but not be limited to, a temporary loss of eligibility for NAWGJ assignments until the matter is resolved.**

### **2.1. Decision:**

The Review Panel will render a decision based on the evidence presented. The decision will be communicated in writing to both the complainant and the judge within 14 days of the conclusion of the investigation or last day of the hearing. Decisions of the Review Panel are final and binding, except as set forth in Part 3, below (with respect to the issuance of disciplinary sanctions).

### **2.2. Sanctions and Disciplinary Actions:**

Sanctions and disciplinary actions may be imposed for violations of the NAWGJ Rules of Professional Conduct. In determining the appropriate disciplinary action, consideration should be given to the relative gravity of the misconduct, the number of previous offenses or infractions by the aggrieved party, if any, and any mitigating or extenuating factors and the totality of the circumstances bearing upon the infraction. Further, the severity of the sanction will depend on the nature, impact, and totality of the circumstances of the violation. The list below is not exhaustive, and the Review Panel reserves the right to impose other appropriate sanctions as deemed necessary in its sole discretion.

### **2.3. Appeals:**

Decisions of the Review Panel imposing sanctions may only be challenged by way of appeal as set forth in Part 3 (Appeals Process), below. No other decisions may be challenged or appealed.

### **2.4. Reciprocity:**

The Review Panel reserves the right to adopt, affirm, modify, or reject a suspension or other sanction issued against a judge by a governing body or other relevant gymnastics organization pursuant to another disciplinary process. Each governing body or other gymnastics organization shall have the sole discretion whether to recognize and enforce any decision of the Review Panel (or Appeal Panel) and to adopt, affirm, or extend a suspension or other sanction issued by the Review Panel (or Appeal Panel).

## 2.5. Disciplinary Actions:

The list is not exhaustive, and the Review Panel reserves the right to impose other appropriate sanctions as deemed necessary in its sole discretion.

- a. **Verbal Reprimand and/or Verbal Counseling:** A direct verbal communication to the judge addressing the problematic behavior and providing guidance on expected conduct, with the goal of immediate correction. This is typically for minor infractions.
- b. **Formal Apology and/or Letter of Explanation:** A requirement for the affected judge to issue a formal apology and/or a letter of explanation to the reporting party and/or other individuals or entities affected by the behavior.
- c. **Letter of Counsel:** A written communication outlining the problematic behavior, advising the judge on expected conduct, and emphasizing the importance of adherence to NAWGJ Rules of Professional Conduct. This typically serves as a warning for minor infractions.
- d. **Letter of Reprimand (with specific disciplinary action stated):** A formal written censure detailing the violation, the specific Rule(s) violated, and outlining any specific disciplinary action(s) to be taken, such as a requirement to complete training or a probationary period. This is a more serious warning than a Letter of Counsel.
- e. **Development of a Professional Improvement Plan:** A mandatory plan focusing on education and/or modification of professional behaviors, designed to address the specific area(s) of concern identified by the disciplinary process.
- f. **Assignment of a Professional Mentor:** The assignment of an experienced NAWGJ member to mentor the judge, providing guidance on professional conduct, rule interpretation, or other areas requiring improvement. The specifics of the judge's participation with the mentor will be set forth in a written communication to the judge.
- g. **Professional Training:** Requirement to complete specific professional training in the area of concern, which may include, but is not limited to, interpersonal skills, anger management, cultural/diversity education, or professional conduct.
- h. **Withdrawal of Access and Suspension for Assignment:** Access withdrawn for any NAWGJ events and/or suspension from assignment to any NAWGJ-assigned events for a specified period of time.
- i. **Change of, or termination of Contract/Assignment:**
  - (i.) Temporary loss of eligibility for NAWGJ contract assignments for a specified period.
  - (ii.) Temporary loss of eligibility for specific judging roles (e.g., Chief Judge, Meet Referee) for up to two years.
- j. **Suspension from the Association:** Suspension from NAWGJ for a fixed period of time not to exceed 5 years, during which the individual is prohibited from participating in any NAWGJ activities or events or representing NAWGJ.
- k. **Permanent Expulsion from the Association:** Permanent removal of membership from NAWGJ, prohibiting any future NAWGJ participation, NAWGJ assignments, or NAWGJ representation.

## **2.6. Publicity:**

Decisions involving suspension from assignment or from NAWGJ, changes in assignments, or expulsion may be disseminated within NAWGJ and/or to relevant gymnastics organizations, as deemed appropriate by the Ethics Committee, the Review Panel, and/or the NAWGJ President, and in accordance with NAWGJ policy.

## **3. Appeals Process**

A judge who has received a disciplinary sanction shall have the right to appeal the decision to an Appeal Panel convened by the NAWGJ National President. The Appeal Panel shall consist of 3 or 5 members of the NAWGJ Board who were not members of the Review Panel and may include the NAWGJ President.

- 3.1.** Appeals must be submitted via email within 14 days of receiving the sanction notification via overnight mail and must state which sanction is being appealed and a summary of facts and arguments from the record to support the appeal.
- 3.2.** Except where they are contradicted by this Part 3, the provisions of Part 1, Sections 1.5 through 1.8 shall apply to proceedings before the Appeal Panel (with the term Review Panel replaced by the term Appeal Panel).
- 3.3.** The sanction being appealed will remain in full force and effect pending any determination of the appeal, unless the Appeal Panel orders otherwise.
- 3.4.** Except as set forth in the next bullet, an appeal to the Appeal Panel shall be limited to (a) the evidence presented to the Review Panel (no new evidence or testimony) and (b) consideration of whether the sanction being appealed was erroneous given the circumstances. For example, a sanction may be erroneous if it is unduly lenient or excessive.
- 3.5.** In exceptional circumstances, as solely determined by the Appeal Panel, appeals may take the form of a new hearing before the Appeal Panel and may include new evidence and testimony. The Appeal Panel need not review or rely on the decisions of the Review Panel. However, the Appeal Panel may instead determine, in its sole discretion, to send the matter back to the Review Panel for rehearing.
- 3.6.** The Appeal Panel will review the case and make a final determination. The Appeal Panel's decision shall be final and binding and there is no further right of appeal. All parties irrevocably waive the right to any form of appeal, review, or recourse by any court or judicial authority for any decision of the Appeal Panel.
- 3.7. Appeal Decision Timeframe:** The Appeal Panel shall render a final decision on the appeal within 14 days after receiving the Appeal or after the Appeal hearing, if applicable. The Appeal Panel may enlarge this time frame at their discretion. The decision of the Appeal Panel shall be sent to the affected judge, and the Ethics Committee, for inclusion in the Association records.