

Code of Professional Responsibility

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PREAMBLE

The Code of Professional Responsibility provides the fundamental ethical principles that guide judges to ensure that their conduct promotes respect for the National Association of Women's Gymnastics Judges (NAWGJ). Standards for professional behavior are reflected in the Canons and Rules, while procedures for dealing with breaches of expected behavior are located in the Disciplinary Actions section. The fulfillment of the role of a women's gymnastics judge requires each judge to understand her/his relationship with a well ordered and justly administered system of judging women's gymnastics events. This responsibility creates an obligation on the part of each judge to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct.

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

This Code of Professional Responsibility consists of three parts: Canons, Rules, and Disciplinary Actions. The Canons express the conduct expected of women's gymnastics judges in their relationship with the public, with NAWGJ, and with the profession of judging in general. The Disciplinary Rules set forth the minimum level of conduct that is expected of all judges who belong to NAWGJ. These rules will be uniformly applied to all members. Finally, the Disciplinary Action section describes the process to be used to address complaints about the professional behavior of judges in their role as a NAWGJ member.

CANONS

- CANON 1: A judge should assist in maintaining the integrity and competence of the profession of judging women's gymnastics events.
- CANON 2: A judge should assist NAWGJ in fulfilling its duty of making judges available for women's gymnastics events.
- CANON 3: A judge should assist in improving the system of judging women's gymnastics events.
- CANON 4: A judge should avoid even the appearance of professional impropriety.

- CANON 5: A Judge should be well qualified in gymnastics, know the rules and be thoroughly prepared for each assignment. All teams, athletes, participants, and spectators, are entitled to the official's best efforts to administer the rules of the sport.
- CANON 6: A judge should prepare for each judging assignment and should be knowledgeable of rules and rule changes through study and clinics.
- CANON 7: A judge should fulfill all assignments accepted and be punctual. A judge should also attend all judging and other meetings which are intended to promote a well ordered and conducted meet or event.
- CANON 8: A judge should be alert at all times when serving in the role of judge or meet referee. A judge should quickly yet accurately produce her/his scores. If a legitimate need should arise, the judge should be prepared to explain and support such scores by working through conferences and dealing with inquiries in a dignified, professional manner.
- CANON 9: A judge should not solicit meets for herself/himself or for others.
- CANON 10: A judge should be completely unbiased. A judge should not give any appearance, especially at a meet, of any particular friendship with any coach or competitor. Also, a judge should decline any assignment in which a relationship with a team or individuals would tend to influence the judge's ability to be fair and objective.
- CANON 11: A judge should treat gymnasts, coaches, judges, promoters and spectators with respect. A judge should respect their privacy, property, and feelings, and should not do anything that would embarrass or offend any person. There will be no tolerance for any discrimination related to race, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender identification, religion, or age.
- CANON 12: A judge should at all times both look and act professionally. A judge should maintain a neat and well-groomed appearance when judging. Judges should wear the NAWGJ uniform (except where other dress is permitted).
- CANON 13: A judge should not be overly officious. Judges should not criticize other officials or attempt to explain other officials' judgments.
- CANON 14: A judge should confine her/his duties to the purposes of judging; e.g., coaching or serving as a meet director are not included in a judge's responsibilities.
- CANON 15: A judge should exercise good judgment when using social networking media (Facebook, Twitter, blogs, texting, email, etc), e.g., a judge should avoid communicating with coaches, gymnasts or family/guardians during, before or after a competition; commenting about gymnasts or meets or meet results; and refrain from making

inappropriate statements about fellow judges, coaches, gymnasts, clubs or family/guardians.

DISCIPLINARY RULES

- **RULE 1:** A judge who is a member of NAWGJ shall not: (a) violate a disciplinary rule, (b) circumvent a disciplinary rule through actions of another, (c) engage in illegal conduct involving moral turpitude, (d) engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation, (e) engage in conduct prejudicial to the judging of women's gymnastics events, (f) engage in any other conduct that adversely reflects on her/his fitness to engage in the profession of judging women's gymnastics events.
- **RULE 2:** A judge who is a member of NAWGJ shall report any knowledge she/he has of a violation of Rule 1 by any other judge or member to the State Judging Director (SJD) or other appropriate NAWGJ official as designated in the Problem Resolution Process. Every effort shall be made by the reporting party to keep such report and the content thereof confidential unless and until called upon by the appropriate NAWGJ official to make the content known to others.
- **RULE 3:** A judge who possesses knowledge or evidence concerning another judge or member of NAWGJ shall reveal such knowledge or evidence upon proper request by the NAWGJ representative who has the authority to investigate or act on the conduct of such judge.
- **RULE 4:** A judge shall not accept or claim any compensation, remuneration or consideration in connection with fulfilling a contract to judge an event other than that which has been approved by the organization's governing body, e.g., NAWGJ, USA Gymnastics, NCAA, College/University, or others.
- **RULE 5:** A judge shall not allow anything to influence, affect, or give the appearance of affecting her/his judgment in rendering a fair and impartial and honest judgment
- **RULE 6:** A judge shall not accept anything of value from any person whether the judge knows or reasonably should know that the offer is for the purpose of influencing her/his actions as a women's gymnastics judge.
- **RULE 7:** A judge or NAWGJ officer shall not use her/his position to influence or attempt to influence anyone in any manner whatsoever, or to obtain any special advantage for herself/himself.
- **RULE 8:** A judge shall not knowingly make a false statement concerning any fellow judge or other person having involvement whatsoever in any meet or event involving NAWGJ.

- RULE 9: A judge shall not consume alcoholic beverages or drugs prior to or during a judging assignment where such consumption is evident by odor, conduct, or appearance.

- RULE 10: A judge who has accepted a contract issued by NAWGJ and who later cannot, for valid and substantial reasons, perform that contract shall contact the appropriate assigning official at the earliest possible time and shall adhere to the procedures designated by the assigning entity to facilitate replacement as appropriate.

- RULE 11: A judge shall not engage in any conduct which results in or tends to result in an event or meet being seriously interrupted, compromised, terminated prematurely, or terminated in discord. A judge shall consult with the appropriate official (Meet Referee, Meet Director, and/or NAWGJ official) for resolution of any disagreements, improprieties, impositions, contract disputes, or monetary losses.

- RULE 12: A judge shall not speak for or in the name of NAWGJ to the press or other media or any other person or entity unless it is part of their official job duties within the NAWGJ organization.

- RULE 13: Judges shall not participate in any wagering activities involving amateur, collegiate or professional gymnastics, nor can they provide any information to individuals involved in any type of gymnastics wagering activities.

- Rule 14: A judge shall not use NAWGJ social media, posts and websites for financial gain by individuals or private businesses without written permission from the NAWGJ National Governing Board.

- Rule 15: A judge shall not change the score of another judge or judging panel without following the procedures designated by the organization governing the event, e.g., USA Gymnastics, NCAA, or other entity. In all cases, the score should be discussed with the judge/judging panel prior to making the change and should be noted as a score change by the Chief Judge.

- Rule 16: A judge shall not accept a contract for meets unless she/he holds the appropriate rating and has fulfilled all required professional responsibilities (e.g., continuing professional educational requirements, active memberships, safety certifications, other requirements) unless an exception is obtained in writing from the appropriate authority prior to the event.

- Rule 17: Any contact list generated for NAWGJ is confidential and shall be used for the sole purpose of NAWGJ business.

- Rule 18: A judge shall never claim credit for attending any course, online or in-person, in which she/he has not fully participated.

PROBLEM RESOLUTION PROCESS AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION GUIDELINES

All NAWGJ members are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner and to adhere to the NAWGJ Canons and Rules. Judges who engage in unprofessional behavior or who violate any of the NAWGJ Canons or Rules may be subject to disciplinary action. These guidelines are designed to address issues involving NAWGJ members while they are performing duties as judges or other activities that may reflect on their role as a judge or NAWGJ representative. The guidelines are intended to:

- provide fair and equitable resolution of problems;
- resolve problems in a manner that is instructive to the affected judge;
- prevent the re-occurrence of a problem.

This document is not intended to address situations involving suspected child abuse. In such cases, state and federal laws take priority. After investigations of suspected child abuse have been completed, NAWGJ may use this problem resolution process and apply appropriate disciplinary actions.

If a State Judging Director (SJD) is notified of a concern about the professional behavior of a judge, the SJD is encouraged to discuss the concern privately with the judge and to seek resolution. If the conversation does not resolve the issue, the person(s) who has the concern should be given this document to decide if they wish to pursue a formal complaint.

A list of definitions is provided at the end of this document.

Problem Resolution Process

Level One: State-Level Process

1. A party desiring to report a judge due to a potential violation of a NAWGJ Canon, Rule, or other unprofessional behavior must communicate this information to the SJD by email.
2. When a potential violation is reported, the SJD is responsible for reviewing the allegation and attempting to resolve the issue between the parties. Within 15 days of receiving the complaint, the SJD must provide the judge with a written copy of the complaint and consult with the judge about the concern. The SJD may also consult with the reporting party and others who witnessed or have knowledge of the alleged violation. The SJD will listen to the affected judge's account and give the judge the opportunity to provide written information regarding the complaint.
3. Depending on the information received from the judge, the SJD may:
 - a. end the problem resolution process by clarifying any misunderstandings with the reporting party; or
 - b. indicate that the judge has acknowledged the problem and that appropriate consequences will be applied, e.g., a letter of counsel.
4. If the problem is not resolved, the SJD will convene a meeting (in person or virtually) of the affected judge and the reporting party within 15 days to seek resolution. The SJD will be the moderator of the meeting.

5. Depending on the outcome of the meeting, the SJD shall determine that no further action is needed or that a letter of counsel or reprimand will be issued to the affected judge. The letter, to be issued within 15 days of the meeting, must include:
 - a description of the problem that occurred
 - the NAWGJ Canon/Rule that was violated if applicable
 - the procedures used to obtain information (who was consulted, documents reviewed)
 - the rationale for the decision
 - the disciplinary action that will be applied if any, and
 - notification of the judge's right to appeal the decision or the disciplinary action. A URL link to the NAWGJ Code of Professional Responsibility and Disciplinary Procedures must be included in the letter.

The letter must be dated and sent either by email or by registered/certified mail to the affected judge, return receipt requested, with delivery restricted to the addressee only. The letter shall be clearly marked "Personal and Confidential."

6. The SJD shall keep a copy of the record of the Level One process for a period of seven years and shall transfer the record to the future SJD so that comprehensive records may be maintained. The SJD shall notify the RJD of the outcome of the process.

Level Two: Appeal Process

1. The affected judge may appeal the Level One decision or the disciplinary action by sending an email to the NAWGJ Vice President within 15 days of receipt of a Letter of Counsel or Letter of Reprimand. The Vice President will send an acknowledgement of receipt to the affected judge by email. The request for an appeals hearing must clearly specify the purpose of the appeal, describe what action is being appealed (i.e., the violation itself, the disciplinary action, or both) and indicate what remedy is sought.
2. Within 15 days of receiving the written request to appeal, the Vice President shall:
 - select three non-affiliated members of the National Governing Board to hear the appeal; typically, the members will be selected from the Professional Responsibility Committee but the Vice President may select other NGB members to obtain particular expertise or experience;
 - determine a date, time and place to hear the appeal; and
 - notify the affected judge and SJD by email of the hearing date, time, and location (or virtual meeting information).
- No later than five days before the hearing, the SJD must submit all materials relevant to the Level One review. The affected judge may present additional materials relevant to the situation within this same time period. The affected judge and the SJD must be given copies of any additional documents submitted and may provide a written response prior to the appeals hearing.
3. Both the SJD and the affected judge may speak at the hearing. The reporting party may attend and speak at the appeals hearing (in person or virtually) but is not required to do so.
4. The Vice President will conduct the appeals hearing. After hearing from all parties who elect to present information, the Vice President will meet with the panel to deliberate and determine its

finding. The Vice President may participate in the discussion, but shall refrain from voting on the final outcome. The affected judge, SJD, and the reporting party may not be present during the panel's deliberations.

5. If a majority of the appeals panel finds no reason to adjust the Level One outcomes, the Vice President will notify the affected judge and SJD that the process has concluded. The panel shall record its findings in writing, including a description of the procedures used, and transmit a copy to the affected judge, the SJD, and the NAWGJ President for inclusion in the records of the Association.
6. If a majority of the panel finds the appeal to have merit and adjusts the Level One decision and/or outcome, the adjusted outcome must be clearly stated and the procedures used by the appeals panel must be described in a written report. The report shall be provided to the affected judge, the SJD, and the NAWGJ President. The Vice President will notify the reporting party that action has been taken.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

In determining the disciplinary action to be applied, consideration should be given to the relative gravity of the misconduct, the number of previous offenses or infractions by the affected judge, and the mitigating or extenuating circumstances bearing upon the infraction. The following examples describe disciplinary actions that may be considered. The list is not prescriptive or comprehensive and other actions may be applied as appropriate.

- Formal apology and/or letter of explanation from the affected judge to the reporting party and/or others affected by the behavior
- Letter of counsel
- Letter of reprimand (with specific disciplinary action stated)
- Development of a plan to address the area of concern; (focus on education and/or professional behaviors)
- Assignment of a mentor
- Professional training in the area of concern, e.g., interpersonal skills, anger management, cultural/diversity education, professional conduct, anti-bullying, appropriate use of social media
- Loss of assignment as Chief Judge or Meet Referee for up to two years
- Loss of eligibility for office for a specified time period
- Expulsion from the Association for a fixed period of time not to exceed five years;
- Permanent expulsion from the Association.

The penalties shall be effective fifteen (15) days from the date of communication of the Level One process to the affected judge. However, the initiation of an appeal, if submitted within the specified timeframe, may postpone the imposition of the penalty until the appeal process is concluded.

Definitions

Affected Judge: the NAWGJ member who is the subject of a complaint.

Days: refers to calendar days including weekends but excluding recognized federal holidays. The specified number of days (15) may be adjusted to accommodate special circumstances at Level One by the SJD with the approval of the RJD or by the Vice President at Level Two with the approval of the President.

Letter of Counsel: an advisory letter notifying the affected judge of a behavior that should be modified to avoid the appearance of or actual misconduct or unprofessional behavior.

Letter of Reprimand: a letter that includes the same information as the Letter of Counsel but also includes a disciplinary consequence related to a finding of misconduct or unprofessional behavior.

Reporting Party: the individual(s) who reports the concern/complaint on behalf of themselves or an organization or other group.

State Judging Director (SJD): the SJD or the State Governing Board member designated as ethics/professional chair or comparable.

Substitution of SJD: If the affected judge is the SJD, the RJD will conduct the Level One process. If the affected judge is a RJD or a National Officer (other than the President), the President shall designate an appropriate individual to conduct the Level One process. If the affected judge is the President, the Vice President will be responsible for all communications and deliberations.

Substitution for Unusual Circumstances: If the problem occurs at a regional meet/event, the RJD will be responsible for conducting the Level One procedures instead of the SJD. If the problem occurs at a national meet/event, the President will determine the person responsible for conducting the Level One procedures. If the problem occurs at a meet/event held in a state other than the membership state of the affected judge, the President will determine the person responsible for conducting the Level One procedures.