



NSGSC SAFE SPORT HANDBOOK



TABLE OF CONTENTS



03	Introduction
04	Conflict
05	Incident Reporting
06	BC Universal Code of Conduct
07	Making Ethical Decisions
08	Digital/Privacy
09	Keeping Girls in the Game + Additional Resources

INTRODUCTION

Safe Sport

At NSGSC the safety of our players is our top priority. It is crucial that our players are having fun in an environment that is safe for all participants. We follow the Canada Soccer Safe Sport guidelines that outline the importance of safety in a positive, welcoming environment.

What is Safe Sport?

Often we first think of physical safety and injury prevention when thinking of safe sport but it involves much more.

"It's about making sport better through equity, respect, and inclusion so everyone can do their best and have fun." - viaSport (2023)

Safe sport not only includes physical safety but also encompasses psychological, safety, social-emotional safety, and cultural safety.

Safe sport is a shared responsibility as it involves not only the players but also the coaches, managers, referees, volunteers, administrators, parents, guardians, and spectators.

We **ALL** have a role and responsibility to contribute to safe sport environments that are free of harmful behaviours such as abuse, maltreatment, harassment, and discrimination.



Health & Safety Officer

Jana Madill

The Health and Safety officer should be contacted with any injury, physical/mental health, or safety concerns. All reports will be reviewed by the health and safety officer and will be assessed and dealt with directly by the club, or will move forward to a third-party assessment for further investigation and support.

Email: healthsafetyofficer@nsgsc.com

CONFLICT

Being part of a team can be one of the most supportive environments to learn and grow as an athlete and as an individual. Coaches can help teammates aspire to work together in harmony to achieve success, sometimes reaching a higher level than an individual could on their own. Sport by nature can be competitive and fraught with conflict. When teammates are in conflict it can have a huge impact on team dynamics and team cohesion. It is how we work through the elements of conflict that helps us determine success.



What can athletes do to resolve conflict? Advice for the players

Teams work together successfully when they are built on a foundation of respect and trust. There are a number of things we can try when we're struggling to get along:

- **Educate the team** – Set the stage at the beginning of the season in terms of expectations around open communication, positive teammate interaction and conflict resolution.
- **Encourage communication** – When the team environment supports open and honest communication, athletes feel comfortable bringing issues forward to be dealt with instead of letting concerns fester, frustrations build, and tension become disruptive to team unity.
- **Provide a common goal** – Engage the team in setting a few simple team goals at the beginning of the season.
- **Promote a positive atmosphere** – Conflicts cause a very negative atmosphere, so it is important to refocus the individual athletes or the team on positive behaviours concentrated on solving the problem at hand to move forwards in achieving the team's goal.
- **Be a role model** – Young athletes are aware of the environment around them. Coaches and parents can be role models for conflict avoidance and resolution behaviour. Set an example of honesty, calm demeanor, and positive conflict resolution.

- **Be professional** – Keep a calm and collected demeanor. Be the bigger person and rise above any argumentative behaviour. Focus on the team and working together.
- **Be honest** – If possible, work toward a resolution with the individual involved.
- **Don't take sides** – The only side that should be taken is the side of the team itself. Taking sides only encourages divisive behaviour and increases tensions and animosity.
- **Talk to the coach** – If issues cannot be resolved on a person to person basis, talk to the coach for advice on your role and behaviour or enlist their help in working towards a team solution.
- **Address the conflict off the field** – Personal issues between teammates should not be aired on the field of play and frustrations should not be taken out in the group setting impacting team performance. Support the player and the team during competition and training.

Please see the "Additional Resources" section for links and more detailed information regarding conflict on the team.

INCIDENT REPORTING

Incident Reporting and Alternative Resolution

If the incident that is being reported pertains to a physical injury, here is the process coaches should ensure are followed:

1. On site assessment of injury
2. Fill in injury report form for any incident on field. (download form from website [HERE](#))
3. Submit it to H&S Officer in case of club insurance coverage needing to be activated
4. This must be submitted within two weeks of the injury.

It is very important to please ensure you fill out an injury report form and submit it to the Health and Safety Officer if there is an injury during a practice or game. While our club insurance is secondary to your family's coverage, in the event it is needed at any time, there needs to be a record of the injury very close to the date it occurred. So coaches and parents, please take the time to ensure this is filled out and sent in within 2 weeks of the injury.

It is a good idea to print off a few injury report forms and keep them with your team's first aid kit.



Complaints, Dispute Resolution, and Discipline

The NSGSC Discipline and Complaints Policy sets out the guidelines and procedures for bringing and resolving complaints concerning the conduct of individuals who participate in NSGSC business or activities.

General Complaints

Complaints of any nature related to NSGSC may be directed to the Club administration at Clubadministrator@nsgsc.com.

Game Related Complaints

Complaints related to on-field, game-related conduct of athletes, coaches, or officiants should first be handled on-field with the referee. Process:

1. Handle with the referee at the field
2. Referee to report incident
3. If referee refuses, coach to submit to Club administration at Clubadministrator@nsgsc.com, or directly to the relevant league official.

Complaints of a Serious or Sensitive Nature

Complaints of a serious or sensitive nature may be directed to the NSGSC Discipline Chair via disciplinechair@nsgsc.com, or directly to the Executive Director. Pursuant to the NSGSC Discipline and Complaints Policy, NSGSC will refer to BC Soccer certain allegations of misconduct, including but not limited to allegations of maltreatment, harassment, sexual harassment, or discrimination.

For additional advice, guidance and resources from BC Soccer on how to proceed or intervene appropriately in circumstances of misconduct, please visit this link [Report Abuse | BC Soccer](#).

Complaints may also be submitted anonymously, confidentially, and directly to BC Soccer via the **ITP Sport "Integrity Counts"** system IntegrityCounts, or by phone at 1-800-758-9412.

BC UNIVERSAL CODE OF CONDUCT



For sport experiences to be positive they need to be safe.

British Columbia’s sport sector and organizations are committed to create sport environments that are free from all forms of harm including sexual, physical, mental, emotional and psychological.

The B.C. Universal Code of Conduct has been designed to supplement sport organization’s current policies, it does not replace them. The purpose of the code is to set standards for the culture of sport in B.C. Any violations of the Code are subject to review and disciplinary procedures according to the respective sport organization’s policy.

All participants in a position of trust or authority have a responsibility to:

- Protect the **health** and **well-being** of all other **Participants**.
- Prevent or reduce opportunities for **Maltreatment** and other **Prohibited Behaviours**.
- Respond to any **Maltreatment** involving **Minors** and other **Vulnerable** Participants.
- Learn to recognize **systemic bias**, **unconscious bias**, and to respond quickly and effectively to **Discriminatory practices**.
- Recognize when you are in a position of **Power Imbalance**.

Prohibited Behaviours

It is a violation of the B.C. Universal Code of Conduct to engage in:

- Psychological Maltreatment
- Physical Maltreatment
- Sexual Maltreatment
- Grooming
- Boundary Transgressions
- Neglect
- Discrimination
- Subjecting a Participant to the Risk of Maltreatment
- Aiding and Abetting
- Failure to Report
- Intentionally Filing a False Allegation
- Interference with or Manipulation of Process
- Retaliation

B.C. Universal Code of Conduct Links:

ViaSport’s Safe Sport Conduct Summary can be found [HERE](#)

The link to the full B.C. Universal Code of Conduct can can be found [HERE](#)

MAKING ETHICAL DECISIONS

Ethical decisions inspire trust and with it, equity, responsibility, and care for others. As a team official, you will deal with a wide range of issues and dilemmas. The following framework and core principles can help guide the process to ensure you make a thoughtful and responsible decision.

Framework for Ethical Decision Making

1. Identify the Ethical issue
2. Identify and establish the facts
 - a. Who, What, When, and Where
3. Identify and evaluate your options and possible consequences
4. Consider factors affecting the decision-making process
 - a. Internal influences (personal bias, previous experience, personal values, and emotions)
 - b. External influences (magnitude of situation, expectations from others, organizational/social aspects and pressures)
5. Choose the best option
6. Take action and implement your decision

Core principles and ethical standards of behaviour

1. Leadership and professionalism
 - a. Understand the authority that comes with your position and make decisions that are in the best interest of all participants
 - b. Share your knowledge and experience openly
 - c. Maintain the athlete-centered approach to coaching so that every participant's well being is a priority
 - d. Be a positive role model
 - e. Maintain confidentiality and privacy of participants' personal information
2. Health and safety
 - a. Recognize and minimize vulnerable situations to ensure the safety of participants
 - b. Prioritize a holistic approach when planning and delivering training and competition
 - c. Advocate for, and ensure appropriate supervision of participants, including the Rule of Two
 - d. Participate in education and training to stay current on practices to ensure the continued safety of your participants
 - e. Understand the scope of your role and skills and call upon others with specialized skills when needed to support your participants
3. Respect and integrity
 - a. Provide equitable opportunity and access for all
 - b. Establish a respectful and inclusive sport environment where all participants can raise questions or concerns
 - c. Obey the rules and participate honestly and respectfully
 - d. Be open, transparent and accountable for your actions
 - e. Maintain objectivity when interacting with all participants

From the [NCCP Code of Ethics](#)



DIGITAL/PRIVACY



The use of online chat and other digital communications platforms must occur in OPEN and OBSERVABLE environments. The communication should be necessary, administrative, and/or focus exclusively on supporting participant engagement and development.

When communicating electronically with your team or players:

- Eliminate one-to-one electronic messaging.
 - Personal and closed/private communications between team officials and participants should not be used.
 - I.e. direct messaging such as text or via social media platforms.
 - The use of disappearing content platforms or content (Snapchat, Instagram Stories, Facebook Stories) should be avoided.
- Use our electronic communication platform **TeamSnap** for any communications. Please encourage all parents/guardians on your team to register and use TeamSnap for updates.
- All communication from a team official to participants should be kept professional in nature.
- Any participant can choose not to engage with other participants (including team officials) on social media. Participants should not be required to engage on social media platforms to access team or Sport Organization information.
- If an individual participant sends a team official a message directly, the team official should include another individual in the response. The parent or guardian of minors should be included in any individual communications from team officials.
- Restate team expectations about positive, respectful communication, and online behaviors.

Prepared with excerpts from: Coaching Association of Canada - [Electronic Communications and Social Media Use](#)

KEEPING GIRLS IN THE GAME

How we choose to coach and interact with the young athletes we lead is crucial to their experience and their attitude about themselves and sport. As coaches and leaders, we must create environments that support and encourage our players. We can all do our part to get girls playing and help keep them playing. It's up to us to create a structured, supportive, and positive sport environment.

A few key things are needed to create a positive, meaningful connection to sport:

- Social – Opportunities to be part of the team, compete, make friends and connect with teammates and the adults around them.
- Role models are important too, like female coaches and people in their lives who celebrate female athletes. Girls who have these things are more likely to keep playing as they get older. To keep them coming back and playing, we need to create a sports culture that includes and celebrates the female athlete. This starts with the culture we create on our teams.
- And most importantly, remember that the main reason why girls will participate in sport is because it is FUN!



If players stay active, they are more likely to develop positive coping skills, increased self-worth, and increased confidence. But many girls who were involved in physical activities and sports when they were younger drop out as they approach puberty.

Changing attitude regarding physical activity – If a player uses a phrase such as “I’m not an athlete” or “I don’t know anything about sports” use it as an opportunity to explain that physical activity is not black and white. Remind them that no one is ever born a natural athlete, even Olympic champions started at the beginning, and worked hard to succeed in their sport.

Keeping it fun – outside of ensuring they are enjoying their time on field with their team, here are some other suggestions to help encourage girls to stay in sport:

- Go to female sports events
- Team based activity such as a team picnic on the beach or snowshoeing in the winter
- Learn about female athletes. Read, or watch biographies on inspirational female heroes like Christine Sinclair, the Canadian National Women’s Soccer team, and other athletes such as the Williams sisters.

And always remind them that being active will help them be more confident, do better in school, and be more secure socially.

Prepared with excerpts from: [5 ways to keep girls in sports – Active For Life](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Here are some helpful links for coaches and managers to resources that can help with the success of your team:

[NSGSC Discipline and Complaints Policy](#)

[British Columbia Universal Code of Conduct](#)

[Championing Amateur Sport in BC: Making Sport Better w/ viaSport](#)

[Resolving Conflict within a Youth Sport Team – The Sport Information Resource Centre \(sirc.ca\)](#)

[i-Protect – Safe Sport Learning Platform](#)

[Keeping the Game Fun: A Sports Psychologist Weighs on Mental Health For Young Athletes](#)

