



WORLD PLAYER RIGHTS POLICY

Introduction

Players are people first, and athletes second. Players are also the public face of sport, and athletic performance is fundamental to the prestige, popularity and viability of sport.

Sport is controlled by international sporting federations, national sporting organisations, professional sports leagues, employers, business and governments.

The work of professional players is, by its nature, highly sought, skilled and valuable, yet risky and precarious. As a condition of that work, players are made subject to regulations by sport that are extraordinary and far-reaching in their complexity and subject matter. Increasingly, those regulations are not justiciable in accordance with national law. Players, therefore, sit at the intersection between sport and human rights.

Sport must recognise its obligation to uphold the inherent dignity and equal rights of everyone involved in or affected by its activities, including the players. The starting point is for those that control sport to adopt a player rights policy that, at a minimum, makes the commitments and meets the obligations set out herein and to embed that policy throughout their organisations to ensure that the human rights of the players are protected, respected and guaranteed.

Player rights commitments

United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

1. Sport must commit to protecting, respecting and guaranteeing player rights in accordance with the *United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* (UNGPs).

Internationally recognised human rights

2. Sport's commitments under paragraph 1 must embrace all internationally recognised human rights, including those expressed in *The International Bill of Human Rights* (consisting of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*), the *International Labour Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and Its Follow-Up* and the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. In addition, sport is obliged to uphold the human rights of athletes as set out in the *United Nations Economic, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Revised Charter on Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport 2015*.

Proactive player rights commitments

3. Sport must act proactively to meet its player rights commitments. This requires sport to:
 - Provide an environment for players that is well governed, free of corruption, manipulation and cheating, and committed to protecting, respecting and guaranteeing the human rights of everyone involved in or affected by sport, including the players
 - Undertake in depth and ongoing due diligence processes to avoid causing or contributing to adverse player rights impacts
 - Exercise leverage in relationships which are contributing to adverse player rights impacts
 - Address, prevent, mitigate and remediate adverse player rights impacts where they occur.

Salient player rights risks

4. The salient player rights risks of sport include:
 - The denial of the right of players to freely access and enjoy sport with equal opportunity. This may involve discrimination, harassment or violence due to race, colour, birth, age, language, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy, religion, political or other opinion, responsibilities as a carer, property or other status. It may also involve the violation of the rights of child athletes, including through trafficking and sexual abuse
 - The failure to respect the fundamental labour rights of players. These include the right to work, free choice of employment and freedom of movement. The right of players to organise, collectively bargain and form player associations may not be respected and upheld. Other issues include a failure to provide players with just and favourable remuneration and conditions of work, the timely payment of their wages, and equal pay for equal work. Players may also be subject to unsafe and dangerous conditions, such as over-training and playing, inadequate medical care, doping,

concussion and, due to the high profile of sport, threats to their security. These all present a significant risk to players' physical health, mental health and social wellbeing

- The intense demands of an athletic career especially on young people also require measures to be taken to ensure that players can access education, and have their privacy, name, image and data protected. The right of players to freedom of expression and opinion may also be curtailed
- Players may also be subject to the requirements of sport which violate or fail to respect their fundamental legal rights, including the right to due process, a fair hearing and to access an effective remedy where player rights have not been respected and upheld.

Player rights obligations

Player rights policy

5. In order to effectively uphold its player rights commitments, sport must embed them from the top of their organisation and through all its functions. This must be done in a coherent manner such as within the regulatory framework of the sport or pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement. Where the player rights commitments of a sport differ or conflict with national laws or regulations or, indeed, regulations of the sport, the sport must follow the higher standard.

Player rights due diligence

6. In order to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how sport addresses its player rights impacts, sport must carry out player rights due diligence. The ongoing processes must include assessing actual and potential player rights impacts, integrating and acting upon the findings, tracking responses, and transparently communicating how impacts are being addressed.

Access to an effective remedy

7. Where sport identifies or becomes aware that it has caused or contributed to adverse player rights impacts, it must provide for or cooperate in their remediation through legitimate processes. These must provide for the early and direct remediation of grievances. Such grievance mechanisms must meet the requirements of Principle 31 of the UNGPs by being legitimate, accessible, predictable, equitable, transparent, rights compatible, a source of continuous learning and based on engagement and dialogue. Players and other users must know about such grievance mechanisms, trust them and be able to use them.

Player engagement and communication

8. Sport must engage in a structured and ongoing manner with players and their legitimate representatives, including world, regional and national player associations, in relation to their player rights efforts and activities. That engagement must include open, transparent and researched communications in an endeavour to prevent and remediate the abuse of player rights and uphold the commitments and obligations of sport to player rights.

Binding policy

9. The player rights commitments and obligations of sport including as set out in the player rights policy under paragraph 5 must be binding on sport and its bodies and officials, including when applying and interpreting the regulations of the sport.

Adopted:

World Players Association

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