

# Grateful Oars Rowing Club

## Athlete Protection Policy

Adopted November 11, 2014

### COMMITMENT TO SAFETY

#### Overview

This “Athlete Protection Policy” is intended as fulfillment of the US Rowing Association’s goal of furthering safety from misconduct in the ways enumerated here. In the event that any member observes inappropriate behaviors (i.e., policy violations), suspected physical or sexual abuse, or misconduct, it is the responsibility of the member to immediately report his or her observations to a GRATEFUL OARS ROWING CLUB (GORC) director or a member of the club’s Participant Safety Committee, if established.

GORC is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for members’ physical, emotional and social development and to ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct.

**Members should not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of child physical or sexual abuse allegations as a condition for reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities.** Instead, it is the responsibility of each member to immediately report suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse to a Director or a member of GORC’S Participant Safety Committee, if any. Complaints and allegations will be addressed by the Board of Directors under Grateful Oars Rowing Club’s Bylaws and Policy Guidelines.

USRowing athlete protection policy guidelines recognize that the process for training and motivating athletes will vary with each coach and athlete, but it is nevertheless important for everyone involved in sport to support the use of motivational and training methods that avoid misconduct. GORC generally accepts that these principals refer as well to community rowing clubs like GORC. However, GORC membership does not include “athletes” as normally defined, only recreational rowers, some of whom participate occasionally in competitions, nor does GORC employ persons to train its members to compete. GORC has no competition programs. The minimum age for GORC is 14.

#### Application

This Policy applies to members and parents of minor children who are members.

Members and parents engaged in GORC activities shall refrain from:

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Hazing
- Emotional misconduct
- Physical misconduct
- Sexual misconduct, including sexual abuse.

## **PROHIBITED CONDUCT**

### **Sexual Abuse**

- (1) Any sexual activity where consent is not or cannot be given. This includes sexual contact with a child that is accomplished by deception, manipulation, force or threat of force, regardless of the age of the participants, and all sexual interactions between an adult and a child, regardless of whether there is deception or the child understands the sexual nature of the activity.
- (2) Any act or conduct described as sexual abuse under federal or state law.

***Exception:*** None

### ***Examples***

Sexually abusive acts may include sexual penetration, sexual touching or non-contact sexual acts such as verbal acts, sexually suggestive electronic or written communications, exposure or voyeurism.

### **Emotional Misconduct**

- (1) A pattern of deliberate, non-contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to an athlete. Non-contact behaviors include:
  - a. verbal acts
  - b. physical acts
  - c. acts that deny attention or support
- (2) Any act or conduct described as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. child abuse, child neglect).

### ***Exception***

Emotional misconduct does not include professionally-accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, discipline or improving athletic performance.

### ***Examples***

Examples of emotional misconduct prohibited by this policy include, without limitation:

- (1) **Verbal Acts.** A pattern of verbal behaviors that (a) attack an athlete personally (e.g., calling them worthless, fat or disgusting) or (b) repeatedly and excessively yelling at a particular participant or participants in a manner that serves no productive training or motivational purpose.
- (2) **Physical Acts.** A pattern of physically aggressive behaviors, such as (a) throwing sport equipment, water bottles or chairs at, or in the presence of, participants; or (b) punching walls, windows or other objects.
- (3) **Acts that Deny Attention and Support.** A pattern of (a) ignoring an athlete for extended periods of time or (b) routinely or arbitrarily excluding participants from practice.

***Note: Bullying, harassment, and hazing, defined below, often involve some form of emotional misconduct.***

### **Physical Misconduct**

- (1) Contact or non-contact conduct that results in, or reasonably threaten to, cause physical harm to an athlete or other sport participants; or
- (2) Any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. child abuse, child neglect, assault).

### ***Exceptions***

Physical misconduct does not include professionally-accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, or improving athlete performance.

### ***Examples***

Examples of physical misconduct prohibited by this Policy include, without limitation:

- (1) **Contact offenses.** Behaviors that include:
  - (a) punching, beating, biting, striking, choking or slapping an athlete;
  - (b) intentionally hitting an athlete with objects or sporting equipment;
  - (c) providing alcohol to an athlete under the state legal drinking age;
  - (d) providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any athlete;
  - (e) encouraging or permitting an athlete to return to rowing pre-maturely following a serious injury (e.g., a concussion) and without the clearance of a medical professional;

(f) prescribing dieting or other weight-control methods (e.g., weigh-ins, caliper tests) without regard for the nutritional well-being and health of athlete.

(2) **Non-contact offenses.** Behaviors that include:

- (a) isolating an athlete in a confined space (e.g., locking an athlete in a small space);
- (b) forcing an athlete to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose (e.g. requiring an athlete to kneel on a harmful surface);
- (c) withholding, recommending against or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep.

***Note: Bullying, harassment and hazing, defined below, often involve some form of physical misconduct.***

### **Sexual Misconduct**

- (1) Any touching or non-touching sexual interaction that is (a) nonconsensual or forced, (b) coerced or manipulated, or (c) perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitative or threatening manner;
- (2) Any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual with evaluative, direct or indirect authority. Such relationships involve an imbalance of power and are likely to impair judgment or be exploitative; or
- (3) Any act or conduct described as sexual abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, rape)

**Note: An imbalance of power is always assumed between a coach and an athlete.**

### ***Types of Sexual Misconduct***

Types of sexual misconduct include:

- (1) sexual assault,
- (2) sexual harassment,
- (3) sexual abuse, or
- (4) any other sexual intimacies that exploit an athlete. **Minors cannot consent to sexual activity with an adult**, and all sexual interaction between an adult and a minor is strictly prohibited.

***Exceptions:*** None

### ***Examples***

Examples of sexual misconduct prohibited under this Policy include, without limitation:

- (1) **Touching offenses.** Behaviors that include:
- (a) fondling breasts or buttocks
  - (b) exchange of reward in sport (e.g., team placement, scores, feedback) for sexual favors
  - (c) genital contact
  - (d) sexual relations or intimacies between persons in a position of trust, authority and/or evaluative and supervisory control over athletes or other sport participants.
- (2) **Non-touching offenses.** Behaviors that include:
- (a) a coach discussing his or her sex life with an athlete
  - (b) a coach asking an athlete about his or her sex life
  - (c) coach requesting or sending a nude or partial-dress photo to athlete
  - (d) exposing athletes to pornographic material
  - (e) sending athletes sexually explicit or suggestive electronic or written messages or photos (e.g. “sexting”)
  - (f) deliberately exposing an athlete to sexual acts
  - (g) deliberately exposing an athlete to nudity (except in situations where locker rooms and changing areas are shared)
  - (h) sexual harassment; specifically, the sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature, and
    - a. is unwelcome, offensive or creates a hostile environment, and the offending individual knows or is told this
    - b. is sufficiently severe or intense to be harassing to a reasonable person in the context.

### **Bullying**

- (1) An intentional, persistent and repeated pattern of committing or willfully tolerating physical and non-physical behaviors that are intended, or have the reasonable potential, to cause fear, humiliation or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish or isolate the targeted athlete(s), as a condition of membership
- (2) Any act or conduct described as bullying under federal or state law

### **Exceptions**

Bullying does not include group or team behaviors that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors, or (b) promote team cohesion.

For example, bullying does not include verbal admonitions to encourage members to train harder and to push through a difficult training regimen.

## ***Examples***

- (1) **Physical behaviors.** Behaviors that include (a) hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking, or slapping an athlete; (b) throwing at, or hitting an athlete with, objects such as sporting equipment.
- (2) **Verbal and emotional behaviors.** Behaviors that include (a) teasing, ridiculing, intimidating; (b) spreading rumors or making false statements; or (c) using electronic communications, social media, or other technology to harass, frighten, intimidate or humiliate (“cyber bullying”).

## **Harassment**

- (1) A repeated pattern of physical and/or non-physical behaviors that (a) are intended to cause fear, humiliation or annoyance, (b) offend or degrade, (c) create a hostile environment or (d) reflect discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority or power over an individual athlete or group based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression or mental or physical disability; or
- (2) Any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law

***Exceptions:*** None

## ***Examples***

- (1) **Physical offenses.** Behaviors that include (a) hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking or slapping an athlete or participant; (b) throwing at or hitting an athlete with objects including sporting equipment.
- (2) **Non-physical offenses.** Behaviors that include (a) making negative or disparaging comments about an athlete’s sexual orientation, gender expression, disability, religion, skin color, or ethnic traits; (b) displaying offensive materials, gestures, or symbols; (c) withholding or reducing playing time to an athlete based on his or her sexual orientation.

## **Hazing**

- (1) Coercing, requiring, forcing or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for (a) joining a group or (b) being socially accepted by a group’s members; or
- (2) Any act or conduct described as hazing under federal or state law

## ***Exception***

Hazing does not include group or team activities that (a) are meant to establish

normative team behaviors or (b) promote team cohesion.

### ***Examples***

Examples of hazing prohibited by this Policy include, without limitation:

- (1) requiring, forcing or otherwise requiring the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs
- (2) tying, taping or otherwise physically restraining an athlete
- (3) sexual simulations or sexual acts of any nature
- (4) sleep deprivation, otherwise unnecessary schedule disruption or the withholding of water and/or food
- (5) social actions (e.g. grossly inappropriate or provocative clothing) or public displays (e.g. public nudity) that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule
- (6) beating, paddling or other forms of physical assault
- (7) excessive training requirements focused on individuals on a team

### **WILLFULLY TOLERATING MISCONDUCT**

It is a violation of this Athlete Protection Policy if a member knows of misconduct, but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the athlete(s), participant(s), member.

### **REPORTING**

Although these policies are designed to reduce child sexual abuse and other misconduct, it can still occur. Members of GORC shall follow the reporting procedures set forth in this policy. **GORC does not investigate suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse, or attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of such allegations, as a condition of reporting suspicions or allegations to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.**

### **VIOLATIONS**

Violations of the Athlete Protection Policy shall be reported pursuant to the Board of Directors.