



Code of Conduct

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Summary

Applicable to all participants, officials, staff, volunteers, contractors, vendors, and agents of the US Open®; provides the definitions of expected conduct, disciplinary authority, prohibited conduct, and outlines the procedures through which disciplinary hearings are set, sanctions determined, and appeals heard.

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§1: INTRODUCTION

1. This is the Official Code of Conduct outlining behavioral expectations for US Open participants. The US Open has developed this Code of standards and expectations consistent with its purpose as a premiere martial arts competition and requires that each participant accept responsibility for his or her own behavior and sanctions. Once a participant is accepted as a participant of the US Open, they are responsible for upholding the standards outlined in this document. As such, participants should be familiar with this document. These specific regulations should not be viewed as a comprehensive code of desirable conduct; rather they describe the minimum standards. In addition to this Code of Conduct, there are specific rules and regulations governing unarmed combat including state and local laws and sanctioning entity regulations.
2. **Philosophical Approach to Standards of Conduct:** Disciplinary actions must be proportional with the seriousness of the offense and the total conduct history of a Respondent. Each case is determined on its own merits. Conduct procedures and subsequent disciplinary outcomes are designed to find a balance between the interests of the individual and the sporting community.
3. **Jurisdiction of the Code of Conduct:** The Code of Conduct shall apply to conduct that occurs on US Open premises that occurs within one (1) year of the occurrence or one (1) year after first discovery.
4. **Inherent Authority:** The US Open Executive Committee shall appoint an Ethics Officer to uphold the standards outlined in this document. The Ethics Officer or their designee has administrative responsibility for overseeing the conduct process. Their actions may include any or all the following:
 - Investigating allegation(s) of misconduct.
 - Processing a charge of misconduct if warranted.
 - Issuing disciplinary sanctions.
 - Assigning the case to the Conduct Board.
 - Extending any deadlines and time requirements in this document for good cause. Both the Respondent and the complainant will be notified in writing of the delay, the reason for delay, and the date of the new deadline or event. Extensions requested by one party will not typically be longer than five (5) calendar days.

§2: DEFINITIONS

1. **Accused:** a person suspected of a violation who has not yet entered the conduct process.
2. **Administrative Review:** The first step in the disciplinary process where the Ethics Officer reviews the merit of the conduct allegations and the available evidence.
3. **Course of Conduct:** a pattern of actions composed of two or more acts over a period.
4. **Conduct Board:** authorized persons who hear conduct referrals.
5. **Conduct System:** the US Open program established to maintain the integrity and values of the US Open by reviewing alleged violations of the Code of Conduct.
6. **Complainant:** persons or organizations who refer a participant's conduct to a US Open Official for potential disciplinary action.
7. **Hearing Administrator:** any person appointed by the US Open Ethics Officer to oversee and administer Conduct hearings.
8. **Incident Report:** means any written report that includes a description of alleged misconduct. These reports may be submitted by a US Open official.
9. **May:** used in an accommodating sense.
10. **Member of the Sporting Community:** includes any person who is an Muay Thai athlete, coach, official, promoter, sporting organization board member or executive.
11. **Proceedings:** the activities related to a disciplinary complaint, including but not limited to, fact-finding investigations, formal or informal meetings, hearings, and appeals.
12. **Reporting Individual:** shall encompass the terms victim, survivor, complainant, claimant, witness with victim status, and any other term used by the US Open to reference an individual who brings forth a report of a violation.

13. **Respondent:** shall mean a person accused of a violation who has entered the conduct process.
14. **Results:** means any initial, interim, and final decision by any US Open official or entity authorized to resolve US Open disciplinary matters.
15. **Sanction:** A sanction is a requirement or status that is imposed as a result of being found responsible for violating the Code of Conduct.
16. **Shall:** is used in the imperative sense.
17. **Transcript:** A Participant's public record of participation in a US Open Event.
18. **US Open Ethics Officer:** A person appointed by the US Open Executive Committee to oversee the Conduct System.
19. **US Open Executive Committee:** Core members of the US Open Organizing Team appointed by RBT Sports, LLC.
20. **US Open Official:** includes the US Open Executive Committee and any person employed by the US Open who has administrative or professional responsibilities.
21. **US Open Participant or "Participant":** A US Open registered athlete or coach
22. **US Open Policy:** the written regulations of the US Open as found in, but not limited to, the Official Rules and Code of Conduct.
23. **US Open Premises:** includes all land, buildings, facilities, and other property in the possession of or owned, used, or controlled by the US Open including adjacent streets and sidewalks. Also includes internet and social media pages owned, used, or controlled by the US Open.
24. **US Open Staff Member:** officials, staff, volunteers, contractors, and agents of the US Open
25. **Witness:** a person who observes conduct that is in violation of rules or policies of the US Open.

§3: PROHIBITED CONDUCT

The behaviors listed in this section violate the Code of Conduct. This list is not exhaustive but is intended to describe general types of behavior that may result in disciplinary action. The Code applies to behavior which occurs on US Open Premises. Prohibited behavior includes not only completed actions, but also attempted violations of the Code of Conduct. A Respondent who withdraws from the US Open shall not be exempt from disciplinary proceedings for behavioral infractions which took place prior to withdrawal. The US Open shall follow disciplinary procedures with the accused receiving due notice. Any resulting sanction of suspension or dismissal shall be notated in the participant's public record and conduct record.

1. **Safety**

- A. Causing or creating a hazardous condition, regardless of intent.
- B. Failing to conform to sporting safety regulations including prohibitions on excessive weight cutting.

2. **Threatening or Abusive Behavior:** Intentionally or recklessly causing physical harm to any person or causing reasonable fear of such harm outside official competition. Behavior shall not be justified as defensive if:

- A. The behavior is a physical response to verbal provocation.
- B. The participant could leave the situation, but instead chooses to respond physically.
- C. In circumstances where such actions are punitive or retaliatory.

3. **Harassment:** Harassing conduct includes actions which would reasonably be construed to annoy, intimidate, and/or alarm another or a knowing course of conduct directed at another person which reasonably and seriously alarms, torments, or terrorizes that person.

4. **Sexual Harassment:** Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not-so-subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Depending on the circumstances, these behaviors may include, but are not limited to unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; sexual jokes and innuendo; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess, or sexual deficiencies; leering, catcalls, or touching; insulting or obscene comments or gestures; display or circulation of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; and other physical, verbal, or visual conduct of a sexual nature.

5. **Endangerment:** Reckless or intentional acts which endanger, or put at risk, the physical or mental welfare of oneself or others.
6. **Hazing:** Any action which endangers the mental, emotional, or physical health or safety of a participant. A person commits a hazing offense if the person engages in hazing; solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another engaging in hazing; or intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly permits hazing to occur.
7. **Forgery, Fraud, Dishonesty:**
 - A. Altering or misusing documents, records, stored data, or instruments of identification.
 - B. Furnishing false information to any US Open, local, state, or federal official.
 - C. Filing of false disputes or chargebacks related to a US Open product or service.
 - D. Circulating known false information regarding a bout outcome.
 - E. Aiding, abetting, or procuring another person to violate a US Open policy.
8. **Property Damage/Theft**
 - A. Removing, destroying, or damaging US Open property, or property under US Open control.
 - B. Removing, destroying, or damaging the property of others.
 - C. Stealing of property and/or services; possessing stolen property.
9. **Unauthorized Entry or Use:** Entering or using US Open facilities without proper authorization.
10. **Doping:** Any use of performance enhancing substances prohibited by law or regulation.
11. **Obstruction or Disruption:** Obstructing or disrupting US Open activities, or leading or inciting others to disrupt scheduled and/or normal US Open activities.
12. **Compliance:**
 - A. Failing to comply with the directions of an authorized US Open Official, local, state, or federal official acting in the performance of their duties, or any other person responsible for a facility who is acting in accordance with those responsibilities.

B. Leading or inciting others to violate US Open Policy.

13. **Disruptive Conduct:** Impairing, interfering with, or obstructing the orderly conduct, processes and functions of the US Open or patrons sharing or surrounding US Open Premises. This behavior includes, but is not limited to, excessive noise, abusive or obscene language in a public place, obstructing vehicular or pedestrian traffic, and boisterous or threatening conduct which is unreasonable in the area, time, or way it occurs.
14. **Gambling:** Creating, wagering, or participating in contests of chance or lotteries involving US Open competitions.
15. **Contempt of the Conduct System:** Including but not limited to:
 - A. Failure to comply with the sanction(s) imposed under the Code of Conduct.
 - B. Falsification, distortion, or misrepresentation of information before a Conduct Body.
 - C. Disruption or interference with the orderly conduct of a Conduct proceeding.
 - D. Knowingly instituting a Conduct referral without cause.
 - E. Attempting to discourage an individual's proper participation in, or use of, the Conduct System.
 - F. Attempting to influence the impartiality of a member of a conduct body prior to, and/or during, and/or after a conduct proceeding.
 - G. Harassment (verbal or physical) and/or intimidation of a member of a Conduct Body prior to, and/or during, and/or after a proceeding.
 - H. Influencing or attempting to influence another person to commit an abuse of the Conduct System.
16. **Retaliation:** Engaging, directly or indirectly, in any action or attempt to harass, intimidate, retaliate against, or improperly influence any individual involved with the Conduct System
17. **Solicitation and Posting:** All selling and soliciting of merchandise and services without authorization within US Open Premises is prohibited. Also prohibited is the advertising of such, solicitation, or sale, as well as any posted materials in common areas that are not specifically approved by the US Open.
18. **Other Official Rules Violation**

§4: CONDUCT PROCEDURES

1. **Introduction:** The Conduct System addresses charges that are brought against a Respondent that allegedly violates the Code of Conduct. The Conduct System utilizes a “preponderance of evidence” standard of proof. A preponderance of evidence standard evaluates whether it is more likely than not that a violation occurred. Email is the official means of communication between the Conduct System and Respondents on all matters pertaining to the Conduct System. It is the Respondent’s responsibility to check their email. Refusal to open email communication regarding violations and/or charges does not preclude responsibility for the charges.

2. The Respondent has a right to:
 - A. An unbiased review of any charges.
 - B. Written notice of the charges, which indicate the time and place of the hearing. In the case of Conduct Board hearings, at least five (5) calendar days in advance of the hearing date.
 - C. View the pertinent incident report(s).
 - D. Present information on his/her behalf and shall not be compelled to offer testimony against himself/herself. Evidence, including statements of witnesses and documents, relevant to the charges against the Respondent, may be presented by the Respondent or complainant. The Hearing Administrator will make the final decision relating to the admissibility of all evidence.
 - E. Have an advisor present at a Conduct Board hearing. The Respondent is responsible for presenting evidence on their own behalf. Advisors may speak privately to their advisee during the proceeding. The Respondent may request a brief recess to consult with their advisor, which will be granted at the discretion of the Hearing Administrator. Advisors may not present evidence or question witnesses.
 - F. Written notification of the results of a hearing. In the case of Conduct Board hearings, no later than ten (10) calendar days after the hearing.
 - G. Appeal the outcome of a hearing. The Respondent must be informed of his/her right to appeal, and the process by which to do so.

3. **Complaints/Referrals:** Any person may file charges against a US Open participant, at which point an incident report shall be prepared in writing and directed to the Ethics Officer for the determination as to whether the incident should be handled through the Conduct System. The US Open guarantees the right of a fair and impartial investigation of anyone charged with a violation. No person shall be arbitrarily subjected to any disciplinary action for any offense

without being given a fair hearing. The only exception to this practice may occur in the case of an Interim Suspension (see §5) which may be imposed only to ensure the safety and well-being of members of the US Open community.

4. **Resolutions:** Resolutions are the way conduct cases are resolved. A description of each type of resolution follows:

A. Administrative Review

- i. The Ethics Officer may investigate to determine if charges have merit. Said investigation may include an Administrative Review whereby the Respondent is informed of the charge made against him/her, his/her rights under the conduct process, and potential sanction(s).
- ii. The Ethics Officer processes a charge of misconduct if the investigation warrants.
- iii. After an Administrative Review, an outcome letter will be sent to the Respondent's email. This letter will include the findings, sanctions (if applicable), and appeal information.
- iv. If the Respondent disagrees with the finding(s) and/or sanction(s) of an Administrative Review, the Respondent may appeal this decision and request to have their case heard by a Conduct Board. The Ethics Officer may re-examine the appealed case and any new evidence submitted by the appellant or decline to do so and instead refer the case to a Conduct Board. It is the responsibility of the Respondent to submit an electronic appeal by the date listed in the outcome letter. Failure to schedule the appeal will constitute an acceptance of the Administrative Review's finding(s) and/or sanction(s).

B. Conduct Board

- i. When the Respondent is facing expulsion, or at the discretion of the Ethics Officer, a Conduct Board hearing will be scheduled.
- ii. The Conduct Board shall be comprised of members selected from a pool of registered or formerly registered US Open athletes and coaches, sanctioning officials, upstanding members of the Sporting Community and US Open staff. Every effort will be made to ensure diverse representation on each Conduct Board. However, if a particular constituency is unavailable to serve, the case will be heard by a Conduct

Board consisting of a reasonable mix of the available constituencies.

- iii. The Ethics Officer may act as the Hearing Administrator if a separate person is unavailable to serve as a Hearing Administrator.
- iv. Conduct Board hearings are conducted as follows:
 - a. Persons other than those directly involved in the case are permitted to be present at the hearing as observers, provided they have prior approval from the Hearing Administrator.
 - b. In violations involving more than one Respondent, the Hearing Administrator, in their discretion, may permit the hearing concerning each Respondent to be conducted separately.
 - c. All hearings are conducted via a recorded video conference.
 - d. Three (3) to five (5) Board members will be scheduled for a Conduct Board hearing. The Conduct Board hearing may proceed with an even number of members. Under this circumstance, the Hearing Administrator will participate as a voting member of the Board.
 - e. The Hearing Administrator is responsible for maintaining an orderly hearing process. Only those recognized by the Hearing Administrator may speak at the hearing. The Hearing Administrator may also exclude persons from the hearing if they are disruptive. Further, the Hearing Administrator may postpone a hearing because of disruptive behavior among the participants and/or observers. Disruptive behavior by participants or observers may form the basis of a separate or additional charge (pursuant to §3 of the Code of Conduct).
 - f. The Respondent(s) and the Hearing Administrator shall have the privilege of presenting witnesses. All witnesses are subject to questioning by the Respondent(s), the Hearing Administrator, and the members of the Conduct Board.
 - g. The Conduct Board, at the discretion of the Hearing Administrator, may accept pertinent records, exhibits, and/or written statements as evidence for consideration.

- h. All procedural questions are subject to the final decision of the Hearing Administrator.
- i. After the hearing, the Conduct Board will move to a closed session to determine, by majority vote, whether the Respondent has violated the Code of Conduct. The Hearing Administrator may remain present during this session.
- j. The Conduct Board's deliberation shall consider only the weight and credibility of the statements and evidence presented.
- k. If the board finds the Respondent(s) responsible for violating the Code of Conduct, it will then enter the sanctioning phase of the Hearing. In this phase the Conduct Board determines the sanction(s) it will recommend being imposed upon the Respondent(s). When the Conduct Board enters the sanctioning phase, the Hearing Administrator will share with the Board any information on prior disciplinary actions and/or sanctions placed upon the Respondent that relate(s) to the Board's determination of recommended sanctions.
- l. Following deliberation by the Board, its finding regarding the responsibility or non-responsibility of the Respondent and any sanctions recommended in those cases where the Respondent is found in violation, are to be submitted to the Hearing Administrator.
- m. Within ten (10) calendar days of notification, the Hearing Administrator will notify the Respondent(s) of the finding and any recommended sanction(s).
- n. The finding and recommended sanction(s) shall stand if no appeal is filed within seven (7) calendar days of notification.
- o. If the Respondent fails to attend a scheduled hearing, the hearing will be held in the Respondent's absence, and the Respondent will be assumed to have entered a claim of 'Not Responsible' to each allegation but forfeited his/her ability to present information on her/his behalf. Findings and recommended sanctions will be based on the information presented and not upon the Respondent's failure to appear. If the Hearing Administrator learns that the Respondent's failure to

appear is for good cause, the Hearing Administrator may grant a new hearing.

§5: SANCTIONS, TEMPORARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVES

1. Failure to comply with sanctions and directives is a violation of US Open Policy subject to additional conduct charges.
2. Disciplinary sanctions shall be communicated to Respondents in writing via email, which is the official means of communication between the US Open and Respondents.
3. Sanctions are determined by the seriousness of the violation and are not necessarily progressive. For example, a Respondent with no prior disciplinary record may be assigned a sanction commensurate with the offense up to and including suspension or expulsion.
 - A. **Verbal Reprimand:** A documented verbal statement by an appropriate US Open Official to the Respondent that they have violated the Code of Conduct. This statement should include the nature of the violation and the sanctions for repeated infractions of US Open rules.
 - B. **Written Reprimand:** A written statement by an appropriate US Open official to the Respondent indicating that they have violated the Code of Conduct. This statement should include the nature of the violation and the sanctions for repeated infractions of US Open rules.
 - C. **Restitution:** Reimbursement for damage, destruction, or misappropriation of US Open property. Restitution for personal property cannot be resolved via the Conduct System.
 - D. **Disciplinary Probation:** A trial period during which a Respondent who has been found responsible of a violation can demonstrate that they can act as a responsible and effective member of the US Open community.
 - E. **Social Probation:** A period which a Respondent may not participate in certain US Open Social activities, events, organizations, teams, or clubs. The exception will be attendance at and/or participation in educational programs.

- F. **Denial or Restriction of the Use of US Open Facilities:** An official notification by an appropriate US Open official of denial or restriction of the use of specific US Open facilities or buildings.
- G. **Suspension:** The Respondent will be required to sever connections with the US Open for a given period. Depending on the circumstance of the suspension, the US Open may ask the Respondent to leave US Open Premises.
- H. **Expulsion:** The Respondent will be required to sever, completely and permanently, all connections with the US Open. The Respondent must leave US Open Premises immediately upon receipt of official notice of an expulsion. The expelled may not visit US Open Premises unless prior permission by an appropriate US Open official has been granted and all the proper authorities notified. Any violators of these restrictions may be subject to arrest for trespassing.
- I. **Other Sanctions:** Other sanctions deemed appropriate by the Hearing Administrator or Conduct Board.
 - i. Note: A Respondent who is suspended/expelled from the US Open shall be liable for any fees due to the US Open and shall not be entitled to a refund of any fees paid.

4. **Transcript Notation Policy**

- A. The US Open will record the outcome of certain disciplinary actions in the form of a Transcript Notation. For Respondents who withdraw from the US Open prior to a disciplinary hearing, the Respondent's Transcript shall also be noted accordingly.
- B. Removal of Notations: The Ethics Officer shall review requests for Transcript notation removals and will decide in a way that balances the Respondent's rights and transparency.
- C. Respondents who are found Responsible for conduct violations may request a removal of a Transcript notation one (1) year after Result. Notations for suspensions and expulsion shall not be removed. If a finding of responsibility is vacated for any reason, any such Transcript notation shall be removed.

5. **Administrative Directives**

- A. **Interim Suspension:** Depending on the nature and/or severity of the violation of the Code for Conduct, the US Open may issue an Interim Suspension that will require the Respondent's to immediately leave US Open Premises and cease participation in US Open activities pending a hearing. Interim Suspensions will only be imposed to ensure the safety and well-being of members of the US Open

community or US Open property, or to protect the Respondent's own physical or emotional safety and well-being.

- B. **No Contact Order:** A written directive prohibiting social contact with a protected individual or group, either directly or through a third party. If the Respondent and complainant observe each other in a public place, it is the responsibility of the Respondent to leave the area immediately and without directly contacting the protected person.

§6: CONDUCT APPEALS

1. Appeal Overview

- A. A finding and/or Sanction may be appealed by the Respondent, the Hearing Administrator, or the Ethics Officer. Appeals must be received within five (5) calendar days after the delivery of notice to Respondent(s). Such appeals shall be submitted in writing.
- B. If the Respondent cannot file their appeal within the 5-day filing deadline, the individual may request an extension before said deadline expires by contacting the Hearing Administrator via email.

2. Appeal Grounds

- A. An application for appeal may only be filed on the grounds below and must meet at least one (1) of the below standards to be considered for appeal.
 - i. **Procedural Error:** A determination as to whether the original hearing was conducted fairly and properly in accordance with the guidelines detailed in this document. Deprivation of due process shall be considered procedural error. A procedural error and its impact on the case outcome must be clearly described in the appeal.
 - ii. **New Evidence:** This refers to new evidence that was unavailable during the Administrative Review or Conduct Board Hearing that could have significantly affected the original finding or sanction. A summary of the new evidence and its potential impact must be included. This does not include information available but not disclosed at the Conduct Hearing by choice (i.e., opting not to disclose information for any reason).

- iii. Inappropriate Sanction: A sanction imposed as a result of the original Conduct Hearing that is significantly disproportional or unusual.

3. Appeal Outcomes

A. The Ethics Officer may, after reviewing all available information, elect to:

- i. Agree with the finding(s) and recommended sanction(s).
- ii. Agree with the finding(s) and either reduce or increase the sanction(s).
- iii. Disagree with the finding(s) and revise or impose a sanction(s).
- iv. Remand the case back to the US Open Conduct Board for a new hearing.
- v. Dismiss the case.

B. The Ethics Officer will report the result of the appeal to both the Respondent and the Hearing Administrator in a timely manner.

§7: DISCIPLINE OF ORGANIZATIONS

1. Organizations that participate in the US Open shall be prohibited from authorizing the conduct described in § 3: Prohibited Conduct.
2. If an organization is alleged to be involved in an activity judged by the Ethics Officer or designee to be detrimental to the safety or well-being of members of the US Open community or property, the Ethics Officer or designee can suspend all activities of the organization immediately pending a hearing which is to be scheduled as soon as possible.
3. Organizations are afforded the same due process rights as individuals. These rights are detailed in this document. All formal communication will occur via email with the person who serves as the organization's principal officer.
4. Disciplinary action for an organization does not preclude disciplinary action for an individual if an individual is specifically charged in the same incident(s).

§8: Code of Conduct Flow Chart

