



USA Powerlifting

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February 13, 2018

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Senator Jerry Morgan, Chairman
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, Insurance, and Data Security

Senator Richard Blumenthal, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, Insurance, and Data Security

Dear Senators Morgan and Blumenthal,

Prior to answering your questions, please allow me to provide some background on USA Powerlifting. We are 501(c) (3) organization founded as the American Drug Free Powerlifting Association in 1981. We became the U.S. affiliate of the International Powerlifting Federation, the international governing body of powerlifting. We are not an Olympic sport, but participate in the IOC recognized World Games every four years. Because of the indirect relationship with the IOC, we are not a recognized governing body by the USOC.

That being said, we take our responsibility to our athletes very seriously, in the areas of drug testing, fair competition, and athlete protection. Accordingly, we have developed policies that in many ways parallel the Olympic sports, some of which, because of our non-affiliate status, go beyond those formally recognized bodies. For example, we have contracted with SafeSport and Verified Volunteers for background screening and education of volunteers, officials, administrators, and competition directors. USA Powerlifting has a policy of zero tolerance for harassment, sexual harassment, and/or sexual abuse. Many of executive board members are mandatory reporters professionally, being medical professionals, officers of the Court, members of the military, or other professions where disclosure and active reporting of abuse must occur. Each complaint of abuse if investigated immediately, with immediate provisional suspension of membership and participation in any way including coaching, lifting, officiating, or spectating at USA Powerlifting events and activities pending conclusion of those investigations. While we have not been the point of initial contact in criminal matters related to abuse, were that to occur, law enforcement would be notified immediately consistent with our requirements as mandatory reporters.

With that background, please see the answers to the seven questions posed in your letter:

1. As referred to above, our policies dictate reports to law enforcement in any matters of sexual abuse or assault. We do not investigate prior to reporting, rather receive and summarize the information and forward it to the law enforcement body with jurisdiction.
2. USA Powerlifting does not make distinctions between those who are members of USA Powerlifting and those who are employed or engaged outside USA Powerlifting. Each complaint is received, investigated (as in the case of

The American Drug Free Powerlifting Association, Inc.

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allegations of harassment rather than alleged criminal offenses), and/or reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

3. USA Powerlifting has never employed a NDA related to allegations of abuse. As a matter of confidentiality and respect for victims, we do not disclose information related to a complaint or report by a victim publicly. However, they are neither advised not to do so or restricted in any way.
4. No, we have no other contracts related to disclosure of abuse or discussions, either public or private by athletes or other members. USA Powerlifting has a Code of Conduct describing appropriate athlete behavior, including respect for others. It is based on the USOC Code of Conduct, and similar to the Code of the IOC.
5. These unfortunate incidents have not altered our practices. Our responsibility to our athletes, officials, and other participants has not changed and our perception of our responsibilities to these groups and individuals pre-dates these events.
6. USA Powerlifting has not been party to USOC actions or decisions related to these matters. We are unable to provide further information.
7. As we are not a USOC recognized sport (at least at this point), no report was prepared for or on USA Powerlifting. We have contracted with SafeSport independently, and are implementing their recommendations presently.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to these matters. As the largest sanctioning body of powerlifting events in the U.S., and being responsible for sending 32 National Teams to participate internationally, we take our responsibility to provide a safe and fun competition environment very seriously. USA Powerlifting has in place very clear policies assuring freedom from abuse and harassment. We also fully support any legislation or regulations to make reporting of sexual abuse require mandatory reporting to law enforcement and defining those who must report. It is our belief that it should apply to anyone in positions of authority and trust in sports.

Respectfully,

Priscilla Ribic

Priscilla Ribic, Executive Director for the USA Powerlifting Executive



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