Sunderland Strollers

Grievance and Disciplinary Policy

Complaints and Disputes

1. All concerns, allegations or reports of malpractice or abuse relating to the welfare of vulnerable adults will be recorded and responded to swiftly and appropriately in accordance with the Club's and England Athletics' safeguarding policy and procedures. The Welfare Officer shall be the lead Committee Member for all Members in the event of any safeguarding concerns.

2. If the dispute or potential misconduct does not constitute serious misconduct or a safeguarding issue under England Athletics' safeguarding regulations, then it may be suitable to be managed at Club level. Examples of potential misconduct which should normally be dealt with at Club level include, but are not exclusively, disputes over selection, social media comments, disputes between Members or coaches, disputes over coaching practices.

3. Any complaints of serious misconduct (including, without limitation, theft, doping violations, fraud, physical violence, safeguarding policy breaches, serious breach of applicable health and safety, gambling and/or ticketing regulations or any act or omission of the Member which in the opinion of England Athletics, acting reasonably, brings or is likely to bring the sport of athletics into disrepute) regarding the behaviour of Members shall be reported and dealt with by England Athletics in accordance with its disciplinary procedures.

Informal Complaints

4. England Athletics' Club Guide to Managing Club Disputes and Complaints (the "**EA Guide**") sets out the various ways of informally resolving complaints between Members.

5. If a dispute or difference arises between any Member of the Club about the validity or propriety of anything done by any Member and it cannot be resolved informally by agreement, the parties to the dispute or difference must first try in good faith to settle the issue by mediation before taking any further action.

6. The mediation process is set out in the Appendix to the EA Guide.

Formal Disputes/Alleged Misconduct

7. Any disputes formally made to the Club regarding the behaviour of Members or allegations of potential misconduct (improper or unprofessional conduct) (together referred to as a "**Complaint**") shall be dealt with in accordance with the EA Guide. A Complaint must be presented in writing to the Club Secretary (or where the matter relates to the Club Secretary or the Club Secretary has already been involved in trying to facilitate an informal resolution, the Complaint must be submitted instead to the Club Welfare Officer).

8. The Club Secretary (or Club Welfare Officer if relevant) will investigate a Complaint in accordance with the EA Guide. If, having gathered the necessary evidence, the Complaint is considered to be sufficiently evidenced and/or of a serious nature, the Club Secretary will appoint 3 (three) Members (who have no direct or indirect interest/involvement in the matter) to sit on a disciplinary or grievance panel to hear the Complaint (the "**Disciplinary Panel**"). Alternatively, in the event that the Complaint is against a Committee Member, the Club

Secretary will appoint 3 (three) Committee Members to the Disciplinary Panel (who have no direct or indirect interest or involvement in the matter). One member of the Disciplinary Panel will be appointed its Chair.

9. Further to the investigation of a Complaint, in the event that the Complaint is sufficiently evidenced to be found proven but is of a low threshold/first time offence, the Club Secretary has the discretion to issue a warning in respect of the misconduct committed. Examples of this shall include (but are not limited to) the first occasion of number swapping in a race, a first and minor breach of the Club's various policies.

10. Further to the investigation of a Complaint, in the event that the Complaint is not sufficiently evidenced or deemed to be of a serious nature, the Club Secretary will conclude the investigation and confirm in writing the outcome to the relevant parties.

11. Further to clause 8, in the event that a Disciplinary Panel is convened, the Club will inform the relevant Member in writing of the Complaint and the date and time of the Disciplinary Panel. This may be held in person or online. The Member should be given reasonable opportunity to attend and be informed of their right to have an accompanying person at the meeting. The Disciplinary Panel process will take place in accordance with the EA Guide.

12. In the event that misconduct is found to be proven, the powers of the Disciplinary Panel are to issue:

    (a) a warning in respect of the misconduct committed;

    (b) temporary suspension of Club membership

    (c) temporary or permanent restriction of Club membership

    (d) termination of Club membership or removal from any official position within the club

    (e) a requirement to complete education or training a recommendation to England Athletics for a suspension from competition (or official participation within athletics), or from taking part in any event organised or run under the UK Athletics Rules for Competition for a specified period;

    (f) a recommendation to UK Athletics for a suspension of their licence to coach or officiate for a specified period any combination of the above.

13. Where appropriate, and at the absolute discretion of the chair of the Disciplinary Panel, details of a decision, including sanctions imposed, may be communicated to UK Athletics, England Athletics, the county association, club or other body where it is considered necessary to ensure compliance with a sanction, or for the safety and wellbeing of those engaged in athletics activity.

14. Subject to rule 15, a decision of the Disciplinary Panel shall be final and binding. The Disciplinary Panel shall provide its decision and written reasons to the complainant as soon as reasonably possible after hearing the Complaint.

Appeals

15. Any appeal must be received in writing by the Club Secretary within 7 (seven) days of receipt of the written reasons of the Disciplinary Panel and, if the appeal is brought for valid reasons, the process set out in the EA Guide will be followed.

16. Valid reasons would be for example that the Disciplinary Panel: erred in its decision making process, were biased, did not consider relevant information, that new evidence has come to light since the Disciplinary Panel which would have a material effect on the outcome, or came to a conclusion which no reasonable Disciplinary

Panel could have done, rather than that the outcome is a decision which the complainant does not like or agree with.

17. The Club should acknowledge receipt of an appeal and decide whether sufficient grounds are provided/ evidenced to support a challenge to the decision of the Disciplinary Panel within 7 (seven) days of receipt. If so, an appeal panel process will commence as set out in the EA Guide. If insufficient grounds are provided/ evidenced, the appeal will be dismissed.

Records

18. A record of the proceedings and decisions of disciplinary/appeal panels, including any sanctions imposed, shall be confidentially and securely held on file by the Club for as long as it is deemed appropriate in accordance with the Club's privacy notice.

Related links to policies and guidelines

England Athletics codes of conduct
England Athletics safeguarding
England Athletics Guide to Managing Club Disputes
Sunderland Strollers Club Constitution

Useful contacts

Club Secretary – clubsecretary@sunderlandstrollers.co.uk
Club Welfare Officer – welfare@sunderlandstrollers.co.uk
UK Athletics Safeguarding tel: 07920 532552 email: safeguarding@uka.org.uk
England Athletics Welfare email: welfare@englandathletics.org

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