

**Report of the Administrative/Legal Group (Group 4)
2022 Board of Directors and Governing Council Meetings
April 2022**

Administrative/Legal Group – Jaclyn Helms, Coordinator

Ethics Committee	Matthew O’Toole, Chair
Grievance Committee	Pilar Helm, Chair
Rules Committee	Lisa Erle, Chair
SkateSafe Committee	William Tran, Chair

It has been a busy and productive year for all areas, and that includes the Administrative/Legal Group. Committee heads and members have been diligent in their work as detailed in their committee reports. I would like to express deep gratitude to my committee chairs for their brilliance, kindness, and athlete-centered approach to all matters. Additionally, I would like to thank headquarters staff for their tireless support.

Ethics Committee – Matthew O’Toole, Chair

As of the writing of this report, the Ethics Committee has had a busy 2021-22 season. As chair of the Ethics Committee, I provide consultation to numerous parties regarding upholding the ethical standards of U.S. Figure Skating.

I initiated one disciplinary proceeding for membership suspension in accordance with Article XXV, Section 1 (B), of the U.S. Figure Skating bylaws. The Ethics Committee rules provide for the immediate suspension of a member at the request of the chair of the Ethics Committee directed to a vice president of U.S. Figure Skating. It is the practice and procedure of U.S. Figure Skating to immediately suspend a member where there is an indictment or arrest based upon an allegation of child abuse.

A rule amendment has been proposed to clarify that an official on inactive status must continue to adhere to U.S. Figure Skating codes and rules. This is a crucial loophole to close, as there have been infractions in the past season. This rule revision has been a joint partnership with Ethics and the Domestic Officials Recruitment and Management (DORM) Committees.

Additionally, this past season, the Ethics Committee partnered with the DORM Committee along with Juliet Newcomer, director of technical services, to create a new Ethical Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy for Officials.

This policy combined and replaced the Ethical Conduct and Conflict of Interest Procedures for Judges, the Technical Panel Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy, the U.S. Figure Skating Technical Panel Critique Guidelines, and the Synchronized Guidelines for Critiques at Synchronized Skating Competitions.

Upcoming projects include a review of the Ethical Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy for the 2022-23 season. The Ethics Committee will be partnering with both the Judges and Technical Panel Management Subcommittees of the DORM Committee on any needed updates.

I would like to extend my appreciation to the Board of Directors and the Administrative/Legal Group coordinator, Jaclyn Helms, for their continuing commitment and support to prevent abuse in our sport. Additionally, special thanks to Heidi DeLio-Thibert, Kelley Morris-Adair, Jackie Brenner and Kirsten Miller-Zisholz of the Professional Skaters Association (PSA) for their partnership and service on behalf of the Ethics Committee.

Grievance Committee – Pilar Helm, Chair

This report covers the period from September 2021 through the present.

Since September, one grievance matter concluded and resulted in a membership ban. A grievance that was previously stayed for a criminal investigation is now active, and a final resolution is pending.

There is one open grievance that has been stayed pending a determination by the U.S. Center for SafeSport, which currently has exclusive jurisdiction over the matter.

The respondents of two grievances that were resolved in February 2020 and May 2020 remain under “monitoring” status pursuant to the terms of the Stipulated Resolution documents.

I want to extend my sincere gratitude to the members of the Grievance Committee for their dedication and commitment, as well as U.S. Figure Skating staff and the Board of Directors for their unwavering support.

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Rules Committee – Lisa Erle, Chair

The Rules Committee's primary work for the 2021-22 season was working with the committees in their efforts to adapt the rules for the season as we continued to deal with the challenges of a global pandemic. Competitions and chairs of the committees for each of the disciplines continue to review and propose changes to their rules in order to provide our athletes meaningful opportunities in their skating journeys. We also worked with the Adaptive Skating Subcommittee on their proposals to expand the Skate United program.

Our main role as a committee continues to be working with Juliet Newcomer at headquarters to edit and update the rulebook to reflect the rule changes approved at the most recent Governing Council as well as for clarity and accuracy throughout the season. The Rules Committee works with all other committees on Technical Notifications when necessary, as well as ballots and rule changes as they adjust and develop their rules.

I would like to thank our group coordinator, Jaclyn Helms, as well as all my committee members for their input and support. I also thank all the committee chairs for their work on the rules and their patience with the process. And, of course, we send our utmost gratitude to Juliet Newcomer for her tireless work and guidance in keeping our various documents, rules and published rulebook up to date.

SkateSafe Committee – William Tran, Chair

This past year, we saw figure skating events, test sessions, and competitions return in a responsible way as we entered a new phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. And with the return of these activities, member safety continued to be a top priority for our organization. Our staff at headquarters was prepared for any increases in incident reports as activities resumed.

I had the honor of leading a strong SkateSafe Committee, where each member of the committee brought their own expertise and experiences to the table.

There are a few achievements that I would like to highlight on behalf of the SkateSafe staff and the SkateSafe Committee.

- We have implemented compliance requirements for prospective judges (aka trial judges). Previously, individuals who signed up to become trial judges were exempted from the SkateSafe and SafeSport compliance requirements until they received their first appointment. Our committee recommended that this gap be closed, and the staff at headquarters coordinated with those on the technological side to make this happen.
- We now have an advisory process to assist the executive director and U.S. Figure Skating general counsel when a member wishes to appeal the results of their background check. Last year we created guidelines for the advisory panel to consider, and we recently had the opportunity to implement this new process. I thank the committee members who served on that advisory panel.
- We successfully rolled out the first major rebranding of our program. All references to "SafeSport" now clearly mean the U.S. Center for SafeSport, and all references to "SkateSafe" refer to U.S. Figure Skating's own SkateSafe Program. After careful deliberation and legal diligence, the rebrand officially launched in September 2021. By December 2021, we were able to offer new print and digital signage for clubs to use.
- We issued a new SkateSafe Handbook. Effective Jan. 1, 2022, the SkateSafe Handbook includes updates and clarifications based on recent revisions to the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP).
- In October 2021, we were very fortunate to add headcount to our SkateSafe staff at headquarters when Julie Parkes joined the team as manager, SkateSafe education and outreach. Advancing our education efforts across the organization remains a top priority, and we're thrilled to have a dedicated staff member for this purpose. To highlight just a few of our educational initiatives, we promoted the virtual SafeSport Summit, Oct. 6-7, 2021. Additionally, our headquarters staff joined all three of the vice presidents' calls in September to provide insightful updates to our membership. We also continue to have monthly SkateSafe updates included in U.S. Figure Skating's "Clubs Matter" newsletters. As an example, in the February newsletter, we included one of our new education videos regarding Mandatory Reporting.

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Going forward, we are hoping to implement some other fresh ideas. A major goal of our committee is to leverage the fact that many of our committee members already attend events and competitions all over the country, in each region and section. As such, they can provide on-the-ground advice to local organizing committees as to how they can further implement SkateSafe best practices. We have also submitted a request for action to expand compliance requirements to certain important chair positions at the club level.

I want to conclude with some offering of thanks. First, I thank the 2021-22 SkateSafe Committee members for their continuing commitment to member safety. I also thank the past chairs, Patricia St. Peter and Alan Wolf, for their contributions. I thank Jaclyn Helms, who served as our Administrative/Legal Group coordinator this year. And perhaps most importantly, I must highlight the SkateSafe members of the headquarters staff — John Anderson, Denise Kay, Shelbi Meyer, and Julie Parkes. They are the heart and soul of our SkateSafe Program, and they always prioritize safeguarding our members. None of this would be possible without them. It is an honor and a pleasure to work with them.