



Complaints and Disciplinary Policy

Introduction & Scope

Triathlon Ireland (hereinafter referred to as TI) is committed to providing all its clients with a high-quality service. While we work hard to achieve this, we are aware that on occasion, complaints and disciplinary issues will arise. As a result, and in keeping with our commitment to excellence in governance and customer service, we have introduced a combined Complaints and Disciplinary Policy & Procedure, now incorporating mediation as an optional resolution step, transparency in disciplinary outcomes, and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

This document may be amended from time to time by the Board or by officers of the Association authorised by the Board to do so. The definitive text of this document in force from time to time is the version contained on the TI website. Any printed text or electronic copy held elsewhere is only a snapshot of the text at the time it is printed, copied, or downloaded.

TI will follow up all complaints, including those that are raised anonymously. In some cases, without an identified complainant, TI is unlikely to be able to proceed with the complaint process. However, an initial assessment will be conducted to determine whether sufficient substance exists to warrant further investigation or a risk assessment.

Principles

- Where possible, TI will seek to resolve complaints and disciplinary matters informally at staff level.
- Mediation will be encouraged as a means of resolving disputes before escalating to formal disciplinary proceedings.
- All complaints and disciplinary matters will be handled fairly, transparently, and impartially.
- Making a complaint or facing disciplinary action will have no implications for an individual's future dealings with TI if the process is conducted in good faith.
- Formal complaints and disciplinary procedures will be invoked where necessary, ensuring transparency and fairness.
- Serious misconduct, safeguarding concerns, or potential criminal activity will be escalated appropriately.
- All complaints and disciplinary matters will be kept confidential and involve only necessary personnel or external parties.
- TI will conduct regular reviews of this policy to ensure its effectiveness, with updates every two years or as needed.

Protection Against Retaliation

- TI strictly prohibits any form of retaliation against individuals who make complaints in good faith. Any such retaliation will be treated as a separate disciplinary matter.

Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with the conduct of the organisation, its staff, committees, volunteer officers, athletes, or alleged unfair practice in connection with the sport. A disciplinary issue arises when a breach of TI rules, codes of conduct, or governance policies is suspected.

Grounds for Complaint or Disciplinary Action

Grounds include but are not limited to:

- Maladministration (e.g., delays, mistakes, or failure to follow procedures).
- Failure to provide access to information or providing incorrect advice/information.
- Disrespectful or impolite treatment.
- Discrimination or unfair treatment.
- Conduct that brings or is likely to bring the sport into disrepute.
- Breach of any TI Rules or Codes of Conduct.
- Breach of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of TI
- Serious misconduct, including gross negligence or inappropriate behaviour.
- Violations of anti-doping regulations as referred by Sport Ireland.

Differentiation Between Minor and Major Infractions

- Minor infractions (e.g., first-time policy breaches, rudeness) will first be addressed through informal resolution and, if necessary, a warning.
- Major infractions (e.g., repeated misconduct, harassment, safeguarding breaches, anti-doping violations) will be formally investigated with potential disciplinary sanctions.

The Complaints procedure does not cover any of the following:

- High Performance/Talent Programme selections
- Complaints regarding decisions made by Referees/Technical officials at events held under the jurisdiction of TI or its affiliated clubs
- Matters that are the subject of litigation or insurance claim
- Matters that have been referred to the Ombudsman.

Complaint and Disciplinary Process

You can make a complaint or be the subject of a complaint or disciplinary action if you are:

- An individual member of TI
- A team

- An association
- A club
- A commission, committee or subcommittee
- A grouping within or affiliated to TI
- A parent of a child member
- A participant in a TI event holding a one day membership
- A club/event organiser may be subject to a complaint if a third-party contractor, acting on its behalf or hired by the club/event organiser for a TI sanctioned or affiliated event, engages in conduct that brings the sport into disrepute.
- all persons engaged by TI in any capacity, including but not limited to event staff, officials, volunteers, and external service providers such as photographers, content providers, and activators

Stages of Complaint Resolution

Stage 1: Express dissatisfaction directly to the person you are dealing with. They will attempt to resolve the issue informally.

Stage 2: If unresolved, request mediation.

Stage 3: If mediation is unsuccessful or not suitable, contact the Complaints Officer via complaints@triathlonireland.com. The Complaints Officer will formally investigate your complaint.

Stage 4: If the matter is of a disciplinary nature, it may be escalated to the TI Disciplinary Committee.

Mediation Process

When Mediation is Applicable:

- Mediation is encouraged for interpersonal disputes where a resolution is possible without formal disciplinary action.
- Mediation is voluntary and must be agreed upon by both parties.
- Not applicable in cases of serious misconduct, safeguarding breaches, or legal/ethical violations.

How Mediation Works:

- A neutral, trained mediator facilitates discussions between parties.
- The goal is to reach a mutually acceptable resolution.
- Mediation sessions remain confidential.
- If successful, a written agreement is documented and signed by both parties.

Outcomes of Mediation:

- If an agreement is reached, no further disciplinary action is required.
- If unsuccessful, the complaint proceeds to formal disciplinary procedures.

Timeframes for Resolution

- **Acknowledgment of Complaint – Within 3-5 working days**
 - Complaint receipt is acknowledged via email.
 - Initial assessment to determine if the complaint is within the scope of the policy.
- **Informal Resolution (if applicable) – Within 10 working days**
 - Attempt to resolve the issue at the staff or manager level.
 - If unresolved, the complainant is informed about alternative dispute resolution (ADR) options such as **mediation**.
- **Mediation – Within 15 working days**
 - Both parties agree to mediation
 - A mediation officer is appointed.
 - If successful, a written agreement is signed.
 - If unsuccessful, the complaint moves to the formal process.
- **Formal Complaint Investigation – Within 30 working days**
 - The **Complaints Officer** conducts an in-depth investigation.
 - Evidence collection, witness statements, and responses from relevant parties.
 - Decision is made and communicated to the complainant.
- **Disciplinary Committee Hearing (if required) – Within 30 working days of escalation**
 - If a disciplinary hearing is necessary, the accused is given **at least 14 days' notice** before the hearing.
 - The Disciplinary Committee reviews evidence, interviews involved parties, and reaches a decision.
- **Outcome Notification – Within 10 working days after decision**
 - The complainant and the respondent are informed of the outcome.
 - Sanctions (if any) are implemented.
- **Appeals Process (if applicable) – Within 7 working days from the outcome**
 - Appeal must be submitted in writing with grounds for appeal.
 - An **Appeals Panel** reviews the case within **14 days**.
 - Final decision communicated within **7 days of appeal review**.
- **Final Arbitration (if applicable, e.g., SDSI cases) – Varies per case**
 - If the complainant is unsatisfied with the appeal decision, they may refer the matter to **Sport Dispute Solutions Ireland (SDSI)** for arbitration.
 - Arbitration timeline depends on SDSI procedures.

Disciplinary Committee and Sanctions

Role and Responsibilities

- A **Disciplinary Committee (DC)** will be convened where necessary to handle formal disciplinary cases.
- The DC will consist of three individuals from TI's appointed Disciplinary Panel who have no conflict of interest in the matter.
- The DC will assess all available evidence, conduct interviews, and make a determination based on the facts.
- A fair hearing will be granted to the accused, allowing them to present their side before any decision is made.
- The DC will operate in accordance with principles of **natural justice** and procedural fairness.

Investigation Procedures

- Upon receipt of a disciplinary complaint, a **preliminary review** will be conducted within **seven days** to determine if formal proceedings are necessary.
- If a case proceeds, the accused will receive a **written notice of disciplinary action** with full details of the allegations, relevant evidence, and a date for a hearing.
- The accused will be given at least **14 days' notice** before any disciplinary hearing.
- Witness statements, supporting documents, and any relevant evidence will be gathered and shared with both parties in advance.
- If the accused chooses not to attend, the case will proceed in their absence.
- The hearing will be chaired by the DC, and all parties will have an opportunity to present their case.

Sanctions and Penalties

Depending on the severity of the case, the DC may impose:

- **Warning:** A formal notice regarding inappropriate behavior.
- **Reprimand:** A stronger warning outlining possible further consequences.
- **Suspension:** Temporary ban from TI-related events and activities.
- **Expulsion:** Permanent removal from TI membership.
- **Fines:** Financial penalties where applicable.
- **Competition Ban:** Restriction from participating in TI-sanctioned events.
- **Probation:** A period during which the individual must demonstrate adherence to TI's code of conduct.

A disciplinary matrix will be developed to ensure consistency in sanctions across cases.

Appeals Process

- The accused has the right to appeal any disciplinary decision within seven days of the outcome being communicated.
- Appeals must be submitted in writing, detailing the grounds for appeal, which may include:
 - New evidence not previously available.
 - Procedural errors that may have affected the outcome.
 - Disproportionate sanction compared to the offense.
- A separate Appeals Panel will be convened, consisting of independent members.
- The Appeals Panel will review the evidence and deliver a final decision within 14 days.
- If the accused remains unsatisfied, they may seek arbitration through Sport Dispute Solutions Ireland (SDSI).

Complaints and Disciplinary Process for Affiliated Clubs

- Affiliated clubs must develop their own complaints and disciplinary procedures aligned with TI's principles.
- Each club must appoint a Complaints and Disciplinary Officer.
- Clubs **must** follow structured complaint resolution and disciplinary procedures and include policy as part of club affiliation requirements. Please see sample policy [here](#)
- Serious disciplinary matters must be reported to TI for oversight.
- Club policies must be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with TI guidelines.

Transparency in Disciplinary Hearings & Decisions

To align with best practices in sports governance, TI is committed to enhancing transparency in its disciplinary processes while maintaining appropriate confidentiality for those involved. Transparency helps to:

- Maintain trust and integrity in the sport.
- Ensure accountability in decision-making.
- Provide educational value for members on acceptable standards of behavior.
- Deter future misconduct through clear precedent-setting.

Publication of Disciplinary Outcomes

While individual privacy and due process will be respected, TI will publish summary reports of disciplinary decisions where appropriate, balancing transparency with fairness.

Types of Cases Where Transparency Applies

TI will publish summary decisions for the following categories of cases:

- Doping Violations
- Serious Misconduct Affecting Sport Integrity
- Repeated or Severe Code of Conduct Breaches

What Will Not Be Published

- Minor Infractions – Cases of rudeness, first-time low-level misconduct, or informal resolutions will not be made public.
- Internal Mediation Outcomes – If a matter is resolved via mediation (e.g., a dispute between two members), the details remain confidential.
- Sensitive Personal Information – No identifying details of minors, victims, or those involved in safeguarding issues will be shared.

Format & Method of Publication

- Published decisions will be anonymised where necessary, except in cases where naming is required.
- Summaries will be made available on the TI website.

Appeals & Transparency

- If an individual appeals a decision, the appeal ruling may also be published with an updated outcome.

Anonymous complaints

Anonymous Complaints are recognised by TI as a necessary avenue for individuals who may fear retaliation or wish to maintain confidentiality. TI will review and assess anonymous complaints to determine their credibility and whether they warrant further investigation, considering factors such as the seriousness of the allegations, the availability of supporting evidence, and any potential risks to sport integrity, safety, or policy compliance. If an anonymous complaint contains sufficient evidence, TI may proceed with an investigation, though its ability to act may be limited without a named complainant. In cases involving safeguarding, anti-doping violations, or misconduct, such complaints may be escalated to the appropriate authorities or disciplinary committees. However, complaints lacking sufficient detail or supporting evidence may not advance to a formal investigation. Where due process requires an identified complainant, TI will encourage individuals to come forward confidentially with protective measures in place.

Support for Complainants & Accused Individuals

- TI will provide access to a designated welfare officer.
- Individuals facing disciplinary action may have a support person or legal representative present during hearings.

Virtual or In-Person Hearings

- Disciplinary hearings may be conducted virtually or in person, depending on the circumstances and logistical feasibility.

Contact Us

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