



SAFE SPORT

## DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

USA Track & Field (USATF) is committed to providing a safe, healthy environment and up-to-date information for all members. While cross country season comes to an end, we're excited to share the latest updates to the Safe Sport Program, focusing on ensuring secure and supportive environments for athletes, coaches, and participants.



Here's what's new in December:

### Safe Sport All Stars



This month, we would like to recognize Chris Thomas as our December Safe Sport All Star. His peers shared that he consistently demonstrates Safe Sport best practices when caring for athletes, always providing treatment in observable and interruptible settings and maintaining a clean, professional environment. They highlighted his positive energy, clear communication, and calm, supportive presence that help athletes feel comfortable and cared for. Thank you Chris for keeping our sport safe!

*We love recognizing our members' efforts to keep our sport safe.  
To nominate a Safe Sport All Star, please email [usatfsafesport@usatf.org](mailto:usatfsafesport@usatf.org)!*

# **December Focus: Understanding Power Imbalance**



## ***What is a Power Imbalance?***

It's when someone holds more authority or influence than another, like a coach and an athlete.



## ***True Consent Can't Exist if There's a Power Imbalance.***

For example, an athlete may fear consequences of saying no to their coach.



## ***Power Imbalance Can Happen at Any Age!***

Even in relationships like an adult athlete and coach, differences in authority, influence, and decision-making power can create an unequal dynamic.



## ***Spotting Harmful Situations***

Being aware of the common power differences can help coaches, parents and others spot potentially harmful situations.



Research shows that abuse and misconduct in sport often have roots in power differences. These power imbalances are most obvious in the coach-athlete relationship but can also be present among athletes.



# ***In-Program Contact: What It Is and Why Is It Important***



*Adult Participant* + *Minor Athlete* + *Related to participation in sport* =

## ***In-Program Contact***

An **Adult Participant** consists of any adult (18 years of age or older) who is:

1. A member or license holder of USATF
2. An employee or board member at USATF (or USATF Affiliate)
3. Within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of USATF (or USATF Affiliate)
4. Authorized, approved, or appointed by USATF (or USATF Affiliates) to have regular contact with or authority over Minor Athletes

A **Minor Athlete** is an Amateur Athlete under 18 years of age who participates in, or participated within the previous 12 months in, an event, program, or competition that is part of, or partially or fully under the jurisdiction of, USATF (or USATF Affiliates).

### **Some examples of In-Program Contact include, but are not limited to:**

Competition	Pre/Post Competition Meals or Outings	Team/Sport Related Relationship Building
Practices	Team Travel	Award Ceremonies
Camps/Clinics	Review of Film	Banquets
Training/Instructional Sessions	Celebrations	Fundraising Events

This is important to understand because many policies outlined in the MAAPP impose certain requirements on Adult Participants who are having In-Program Contact with Minor Athletes.

**Know Your MAAPP Policies!**

# Stay Updated with the SafeSport Code

## SAFESPORT CODE UPDATE

Incorporating feedback from stakeholders, the Center updated and revised the SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement. The 2026 SafeSport Code will go into effect on January 1, 2026 and will be posted for the public at the beginning of the new year.

### WHAT IS THE SAFESPORT CODE?

*The SafeSport Code outlines the Center's authority, what types of abuse and misconduct are prohibited, and how it handles related reports and cases within the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement.*

***This applies to all Participants involved in the Movement.***



*Click here to see the current SafeSport Code  
&  
where the updated 2026 SafeSport Code will live!*



# Stay Educated with SafeSport Trainings



USATF

SAFE SPORT

Creating a positive, respectful, and safe experience starts with education, and USATF makes it easy for everyone to get involved.

Here's a quick look at the available courses designed to educate parents and athletes of all ages:

*Through your **USATF Connect profile**, you can access free, age-appropriate SafeSport courses under the "Center for SafeSport Training" tab. Just click "Access Additional Trainings" to get started!*

## **ABUSE PREVENTION FOR ADULT ATHLETES**

This course covers key cultural, technical, and legal concepts to help adult athletes stay safe, including recognizing power imbalances, understanding consent, responding appropriately to misconduct, and overcoming common barriers to reporting.

## **SAFESPORT FOR KIDS (AGES 5-12)**

Tailored for young athletes, this course helps kids understand the difference between discipline and abuse, encourages them to speak to a trusted adult, and promotes teamwork.

*Parental consent is required for registration.*

## **SAFESPORT FOR YOUTH ATHLETES (AGES 13-17)**

This quick, interactive training focuses on preventing bullying and hazing, supporting friends who experience misconduct, and understanding how to report concerns.

*Parental consent is required for registration.*

*The US Center for SafeSport also offers additional continued education courses. These courses provide more concentrated subjects like reporting, policies, and other steps to protect athletes.*

**Use the link below to see all available trainings:**

[U.S. CENTER FOR SAFESPORT ONLINE TRAINING CATALOG](#)

# Report a Concern

USATF prioritizes participant health and safety. Report sexual misconduct to the U.S. Center for SafeSport using their online form.

For concerns of bullying, hazing, harassment, physical misconduct, or emotional misconduct, you may report to USATF via our online form, email [safesport@usatf.org](mailto:safesport@usatf.org), call (317) 713-4688, or text 833-9-USATF (987-2834).

We want all of our members to feel comfortable and safe. Your report can remain anonymous if you would prefer, but we encourage you to report incidents to us so we can continue to maintain a safe and encouraging environment for our sport.

## Contact Us:

Email: [usatfsafesport@usatf.org](mailto:usatfsafesport@usatf.org)

Phone: (317) 713-4688

Website: [www.usatf.org/safesport](http://www.usatf.org/safesport)



FOLLOW US @USATF



USA Track & Field

342 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 400, Indianapolis, IN 46204