

1. Introduction

BISFed's Code of Ethics is based on the relevant parts of the International Paralympic Committee and International Olympic Committee Codes of Ethics and aims to preserve the highest possible ethical values. BISFed, its Officers and Members, together with their athletes, coaches and associated team members (called the 'BISFed Family' in this document) are expected to behave in accordance with this Code of Ethics and the Fundamental Principles laid down by the IPC and IOC.

This Code of Ethics covers the following main topics:

- Integrity of Conduct, (including Conflicts of Interest)
- Behaviour at Boccia Events
- Safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults
- Conduct in connection with Elections
- Administration of the Code of Ethics in the case of an alleged breach
- Sanctions

This Code is written as a guide to how BISFed expects all parties to behave. It does not set out to cover every possible set of circumstances which might occur, but BISFed will take a robust position if and when a breach of the Code is alleged to have occurred. The Code will be updated from time to time as required.

2. Fundamental Principles

The Fundamental Principles require the BISFed Family to:

- 2.1 Respect the Paralympic spirit, including a commitment to friendship, solidarity and fair play.
- 2.2 Respect the principle of universal and political neutrality in the Paralympic Movement.
- 2.3 Maintain harmonious relations with state authorities, while respecting the principle of autonomy.
- 2.4 Respect international conventions on protecting human rights insofar as they ensure in particular:
 - 2.4.1 Respect for human dignity;
 - 2.4.2 Rejection of discrimination of any kind on whatever grounds, be it race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status; and
 - 2.4.3 Rejection of all forms of harassment, be it physical, professional or sexual, and any physical or mental injuries;
- 2.5 Ensure that athletes are able to perform in safe conditions at all boccia events.

3. Integrity of Conduct

3.1 The BISFed Family is expected to act with the highest level of integrity, at all times; in particular when taking decisions they must act impartially, objectively, and with independence of mind and professionalism. They should refrain from any act involving fraud or corruption and should not act in a manner likely to tarnish BISFed's reputation.

3.2 No member of the BISFed Family may (either directly or indirectly) solicit, offer or accept any form of remuneration or commission, nor any concealed benefit or service of any nature, connected with BISFed sanctioned events, except by contractual agreements with the Host Organising Committee of such Events.

3.3 Only tokens of friendship of nominal value, in accordance with local customs, may be offered or accepted by the BISFed Family.

3.4 The BISFed Family must commit to combat all forms of cheating (including respecting the provisions of the WADA Code and the manipulation of competition results in any way) and must undertake to refer any suspicion of such behaviour to the relevant BISFed Official.

3.5 Betting (or support for betting) on the outcome of any boccia match or competition is expressly prohibited.

4. Behaviour at Boccia Events

4.1 Members of the BISFed family are expected to respect the spirit of fair play and sportsmanship at all boccia events.

4.2 Aggressive behaviour towards opponents, officials or other participants will not be tolerated.

5. Safeguarding (of Young People and Vulnerable Adults)

5.1 Safeguarding is the process of protecting the health, well-being and human rights of individuals, (in particular of young people and vulnerable adults) to ensure protection from abuse, harm and neglect. BISFed aims to provide enjoyment and wellbeing at BISFed events by ensuring that the risk of harm to children, young people and vulnerable adults is minimised.

5.2 Everyone in the BISFed Family is expected to raise any safeguarding concerns or allegations with an appropriate official.

5.3 Safeguarding Principles: BISFed expects all Host Organising Committees, athletes, coaches, Team managers, officials and volunteers to behave according to the following principles:

- 5.3.1 Treat everyone, regardless of age, gender, ability, race, cultural background, religious beliefs or sexual identity with equal respect.
- 5.3.2 Act as an ambassador and role model for the sport and treat others with respect and fairness.
- 5.3.3 Respect everyone involved in boccia; in particular, bullying or taking advantage of another person is not admissible.
- 5.3.4 Demonstrate fair play. Foul, abusive or offensive language is not allowed.
- 5.3.5 Not abuse or misuse any relationship of trust, nor any position of power or influence.
- 5.3.6 Not use any form of communication which brings the game into disrepute; not to make any inappropriate comment, including on social media and email.
- 5.3.7 Not to decide whether or not a child or adult has in fact been abused; but rather to report any concerns about a child's or adult's welfare.
- 5.3.8 Abide by the safeguarding and welfare guidelines set out by the organisers of the event.
- 5.3.9 Report any suspected misconduct or abuse by anyone involved in boccia.
- 5.3.10 Uphold appropriate boundaries and in particular refrain from initiating inappropriate personal relationships, especially when one person is under 18 years of age.
- 5.3.11 Not to participate under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances.
- 5.3.12 Safeguarding Policy and Procedure development is detailed at Appendix 1.

6. Conduct in connection with Elections

6.1 BISFed expects that all elections (e.g. for vacant Board positions) will be conducted with fairness, and in accordance with the principles of democracy.

6.2 Candidates may promote their candidature, but only through media generally available to all members of the BISFed Family (e.g. emails or social media.)

6.3 Gifts, promises, and inducements: Candidates may not offer any kind of inducement including to those holding voting rights in an election.

6.4 Respect: Candidates must show due respect to all other candidates and may not produce any statement whether written or spoken which is likely to harm the character of another candidate.

6.5 Block voting: those holding votes are not allowed to collude with other voters in order to sway the potential outcome of an election. Each voter should make a balanced judgement regarding their preferred candidate(s.)

7. Procedures in connection with ball tampering

7.1 BISFed has introduced new Boccia Rules, effective from 2022, requiring the use of 'licenced' boccia balls. The purpose of these new Rules is to make play in BISFed-sanctioned competitions as fair as possible. If an athlete is disqualified from a BISFed-sanctioned competition for ball tampering, the athlete will be reported under this Code of Ethics, and an Ethics Commission will be convened within two calendar weeks of the end of the competition at which the athlete was disqualified (see Clause 8.)

7.2 If the athlete in question immediately admits the allegation of ball tampering, the Ethics Commission will impose a period of ineligibility from attending up to three eligible competitions for a first offence. If an athlete commits a second offence within three years of a first offence, the period of ineligibility for this second offence will be six competitions. Any further offence will result in a ban from attending any future BISFed-sanctioned competitions. (An eligible competition is a competition that the athlete could reasonably have attended and/or qualified for irrespective of whether the athlete could have been selected to attend by their BISFed Member. For example, if the athlete is from Region A and the next sanctioned competition is for athletes from Region B only, this would not be an eligible competition and would not count towards the period of ineligibility.) Once a sanction is imposed under Clause 7.3 the case is deemed resolved without the need for a hearing by the Ethics Commission.

7.3 If the athlete does not accept the charge of ball tampering together with a sanction under Clause 7.3, the athlete must appeal, and within three weeks of the end of the competition at which the disqualification occurred, submit evidence to support the appeal together with a fee of £350 towards the cost of the Ethics Commission and the cost of testing the ball(s) which are alleged to have been tampered. (This fee will be reimbursed to the athlete if the Ethics Commission upholds the appeal.) The Ethics Commission will review the evidence submitted and will decide either to: a) accept the athlete's appeal and dismiss the charge of ball tampering; b) dismiss the athlete's appeal and confirm a period of ineligibility from competition; or c) request an independent report on whether the ball has been altered from its manufactured state (normal wear and tear excepted), in order further to inform the Commission's decision. If an independent report is commissioned, the report will be presented both to the Ethics Commission and the athlete. The Ethics Commission will set a date for a hearing (using video conference facilities) which the athlete must attend. Following the hearing, the Ethics Commission will decide whether to uphold or dismiss the appeal and will confirm the decision in writing to the athlete within two calendar weeks of the date of the hearing. If the appeal is dismissed, the Ethics Commission may impose a period of ineligibility from attending up to six eligible competitions for a first offence. If an athlete commits a second offence within three years of a first offence covered in this Clause 7.3 the period of ineligibility for this second offence will be six competitions. Any further offence will result in a ban from attending any future BISFed-sanctioned competitions. The athlete may appeal the decision of the Ethics Committee under Rule 9.1.4 below.

8. Administration of the Code of Ethics in the case of an alleged breach

8.1 Ethics Commission: BISFed will establish an Ethics Commission which will convene in the event of an alleged breach of this code. The Ethics Commission will consist of: The Head of Staff; one BISFed Board Member (who must be independent of any party to the alleged breach); one independent individual (e.g. an Athlete Representative.)

8.2 In the event of an alleged breach:

8.2.1 The person(s) who have observed the incident should immediately report the situation, in confidence) to the highest ranking BISFed official present (e.g. the Technical Delegate or BISFed Board member present.)

8.2.2 The person(s) who have observed the incident should document the circumstances involved: (e.g. time at which it happened; the exact situation – where did it occur, who was involved, what happened, who else observed the incident) and submit a confidential report to the person notified in 8.2.1.

8.2.3 The BISFed Head of Staff will convene the Ethics Commission as soon as possible, either in person or by telephone conference. The Ethics Commission will review the report and may ask the reporter and the alleged perpetrator to present their side of the case. In exceptional circumstances, the Ethics Commission may make a request to the BISFed Board that expert legal opinion be sought. In most situations, however, it is expected that the Ethics Commission, on consideration of all the evidence, will make a judgement as to the likely truth or otherwise of the incident, and will impose (if appropriate) a sanction as below.

9. Sanctions

9.1 Sanctions for a breach of this Code of Ethics will depend on the severity of the breach, and will vary from:

9.1.1 A formal warning and an instruction that the person(s) or organisation responsible should cease from the activity in future.

9.1.2 Disqualification from participation in the event in question (e.g. disqualification of an athlete or team from a competition; disqualification of a candidate from participating in an election.) In such circumstances, any medals or World Ranking points awarded will also be forfeited.

9.1.3 In the most severe cases, disqualification from Membership of BISFed, with the further possibility that BISFed will commence or support civil or criminal legal proceedings against the person(s) accused of a breach of this Code.

9.1.4 In the event that the person or organisation accused of the breach wishes to appeal the decision of the BISFed Ethics Commission, they will have the right to make an appeal to the BISFed Board, who will convene an Appeal Sub-Committee consisting of the President and two further Board Members, but not including any Member who has already participated in the relevant Ethics Commission. The decision of this Sub-Committee will be final.

Appendix 1 - WORLD BOCCIA SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

WORLD BOCCIA acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, guidance and complies with best practice.

This statement of intent recognises that the welfare and interests of children and adults at risk are paramount in all circumstances. Future policies will aim to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, all children, and adults at risk:

- have a positive and enjoyable experience of sport and activity in WORLD BOCCIA activities in a safe and where appropriate a child, young person, or adult at risk centred environment.
- are protected from abuse whilst participating in WORLD BOCCIA programmes or activities.

WORLD BOCCIA acknowledges that some children, young people, and adults at risk or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to a range of abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

As part of our safeguarding policy WORLD BOCCIA will:

- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children, young people, and adults at risk.
- ensure that everyone associated with the activities of WORLD BOCCIA understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify, and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children, young people, and adults at risk.
- ensure appropriate action is taken and procedures are followed in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern.
- ensure that confidential, detailed, and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.
- prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals.
- ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.

The organisation will ensure that it has in place:

- Background Checks (when appropriate and necessary).
- Safeguarding policy and procedures.
- A safeguarding plan which is reviewed annually as part of the operational planning process.
- Commitment and progress towards the achievement of sector-led safeguarding standards will be reported in the annual report of WORLD BOCCIA.

WORLD BOCCIA will work with members to ensure that Member, HOCs and the wider network have in place the following minimum safeguarding standards.

- Safeguarding policy and implementation plan detailing:
 - Procedures for reporting concerns about a child, young person, or adult at risk.
 - Recording safeguarding incidents, concerns, and referrals.
 - Dealing with complaints by parents and young people
 - Procedures for recruiting staff/volunteers, which includes guidance on those roles that require DBS checks.
 - A rolling programme of safeguarding awareness training for all roles that provide regular and/or significant responsibility for/contact with children and adults at risk.

WORLD BOCCIA will ensure that the board is aware of its responsibility for safeguarding. Safeguarding will also feature on the organisations risk register.

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted will become mandatory for everyone involved with WORLD BOCCIA.

Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion/release from the organisation's activities.

Monitoring

The agreed WORLD BOCCIA Safeguarding policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and/or best practice guidance.
- As a result of any other significant change or event.

Revision of Policy

This policy is not intended to be contractually binding. WORLD BOCCIA reserves the right to amend and/or withdraw this policy from time to time for any reason, including without limitation, to take account of changes in the law, best practice and/or operational requirements.

Review Date: Q3 – 2024