

USA Gymnastics SAFE SPORT POLICY

UNDERSTANDING PHYSICAL MISCONDUCT

Gymnastics training free from abuse does not mean the training must be free from the expectations and accountability that come with developing successful athletes. Abusive behaviors have no place in the sport of gymnastics and should not be viewed as synonymous with high performance.

Physical misconduct of any kind is against USA Gymnastics Safe Sport Policy and includes any action or behavior that causes or reasonably threatens to cause physical harm to another person. Many people think of physical punishment in the direct sense such as hitting, pushing, or throwing objects. However, there are other “not so obvious” behaviors that are also considered physical punishment under USA Gymnastics Safe Sport Policy.

Some of those behaviors can include:

- Isolating an athlete from the rest of the team for the sole purpose of punishment without parameters and for an indefinite amount of time
- Forcing an athlete to hold a painful stance that serves no purpose of training
- Actions interfering with hydration, nutrition, food or sleep
- Conditioning against professionally acceptable standards

USA Gymnastics Safe Sport does not set policy on the type of conditioning a coach should or must use when training their athletes. We realize that every athlete’s training plan should be individualized for the skill level and age of the athlete. When determining if conditioning could possibly violate Safe Sport Policy, please reference the following guide:

STANDARDS TO CONSIDER WHEN CONDITIONING

Age of the athlete
Physical development of the athlete
Consistency and fairness for the entire team
Health concerns of the athlete such as asthma, underweight or overweight
Fatigue due to long practices, travel, or long competition weekends
Previous physical training from gymnastics or other sports
Intent of the conditioning assignment
Gradual, safe progression of timed activities or sets, repetitions, weights
History with a specific exercise

CONDITIONING THAT COULD VIOLATE SAFE SPORT

Using conditioning as retaliation for making a report
Conditioning against the medical advice of a doctor
Conditioning that causes a reasonable person to be fearful of the exercise
Unrealistic increase in conditioning from one day to the next
There is no legitimate training purpose identified
Athlete begged to stop and was ignored
Athlete had a physical reaction such as vomiting, bleeding, uncontrolled shaking, crying
Parents or other coaches voiced concern
Conditioning is used strictly as punishment and lacks fairness and consistency

