INSTITUTIONALIZING SAFE SPORTS

Drafted by: Atty. Alberto C. Agra
with drafting support from OpenAI
June 18, 2026

1. Premise

Safe Sports is not merely the absence of injury, abuse, or misconduct. It is the proactive creation, promotion, and maintenance of a sporting environment where safety, respect, dignity, accountability, excellence, and athlete welfare are fundamental, non-negotiable, and paramount considerations.

Safe Sports recognizes that every participant in sport has the right to train, compete, officiate, coach, volunteer, and participate in an environment that is **safe, respectful, inclusive, and conducive to personal growth and human development**.

The **Noble Purpose of Sports** which is to develop a **healthy and alert citizenry** and to promote **total human liberation and development** cannot be fully achieved without Safe Sports. Safety is not an obstacle to excellence; rather, it is a **prerequisite to sustainable excellence, meaningful participation, and the holistic development of athletes and other stakeholders**.

2. Proposed Definition

"Safe Sports" refers to an environment, culture, system, and set of practices in which all participants in sports, including athletes, student-athletes, coaches, trainers, officials, administrators, volunteers, parents, spectators, and other stakeholders, are protected from physical, psychological, emotional, sexual, medical, and environmental harm, and are able to participate, train, compete, officiate, and engage in sports in a manner that promotes their health, safety, dignity, well-being, development, human rights, and pursuit of excellence.

3. Five Pillars of Safe Sports

Safe Sports is anchored on the following pillars:

1. **Safe People**

   Ensuring that athletes, coaches, trainers, officials, administrators, volunteers, and other stakeholders possess the competence, integrity, qualifications, ethical standards, accountability, and commitment necessary to promote safety, welfare, and respect in sports.

2. **Safe Places**

   Ensuring that sports venues, facilities, equipment, courses, training sites, accommodations, and competition environments are reasonably safe, properly maintained, adequately supervised, medically supported, and free from avoidable hazards and unreasonable risks.

3. **Safe Spaces**

   Fostering a culture of dignity, respect, inclusion, and belonging that is free from bullying, hazing, harassment, discrimination, abuse, retaliation, exploitation, violence, and other forms of harmful conduct.

4. **Safe Practices**

   Ensuring that training methods, competitions, supervision, travel, athlete selection, coaching techniques, and other sporting activities are conducted in a safe, ethical, responsible, transparent, and athlete-centered manner.

5. **Safe Processes**

   Establishing effective policies, reporting mechanisms, grievance procedures, investigations, disciplinary systems, educational programs, and accountability measures that prevent misconduct, address violations, and provide appropriate remedies and protection for affected persons.

4. Ten Inclusions

Safe Sports includes, among others:

1. **Physical Safety**

   The prevention of injuries, illness, overtraining, unsafe training methods, hazardous facilities and equipment, and other unreasonable risks.

2. **Medical Safety**

   The availability of appropriate medical protocols, emergency action plans, first aid, qualified medical personnel, and access to medical care and treatment.

3. **Psychological and Emotional Safety**

   Protection from bullying, harassment, intimidation, humiliation, hazing, coercion, retaliation, and other forms of abuse.

4. **Sexual Safety and Safe Spaces**

   Protection from sexual abuse, exploitation, misconduct, harassment, grooming, gender-based violence, sexist, misogynistic, homophobic, transphobic, or other discriminatory conduct.

5. **Child and Athlete Protection**

   Safeguarding minors and vulnerable athletes from neglect, abuse, exploitation, and other harmful conduct.

6. **Ethical and Responsible Coaching**

   Ensuring that coaches, trainers, and officials possess the necessary qualifications, competence, integrity, professionalism, and duty of care, and recognize that their relationship with athletes is fiduciary in nature, requiring them to act in the best interests of athletes and to prioritize athlete welfare, safety, and development over personal, institutional, or competitive interests.

7. **Safe Governance and Accountability**

   The establishment of policies, reporting mechanisms, investigations, disciplinary processes, transparency measures, and remedies for violations.

8. **Inclusive and Non-Discriminatory Participation**

   Ensuring equal opportunity, accessibility, and respect regardless of age, sex, gender, disability, ethnicity, religion, nationality, socioeconomic status, or other protected characteristics.

9. **Risk Management and Preparedness**

   The identification, assessment, mitigation, and management of risks associated with sports activities, events, training, travel, facilities, and environmental conditions.

10. **Athlete-Centered Development**

    Promoting the holistic development, welfare, education, character formation, mental well-being, long-term participation, and overall flourishing of athletes, consistent with the Noble Purpose of Sports.

Safe Sports is a shared responsibility and anchored on a trust relationship. Every athlete, coach, official, parent, school, club, league, event organizer, National Sports Association, educational institution, private organization, and government agency has a duty to contribute to and uphold a safe sporting environment.

Safe Sports is not merely a best practice; it is an essential condition for the integrity, sustainability, and noble purpose of sport. It is a fundamental human right.