



# Table Tennis NT

## COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

### 1. Complaints

Table Tennis NT aims to provide a simple, confidential and trustworthy procedure for resolving complaints or grievances based on the principles of natural justice.

Any person (a complainant) may report a complaint about a person, people or organisation bound by the association's policies (respondent) if they feel they have been harassed, bullied or discriminated against or there has been a breach of the association's policies.

In the first instance, complaints should be reported to the Member Protection Information Officer or to a Board member.

Our association will take all complaints seriously, whether they are about behaviour on or off the playing arena. Complaints will be handled based on the principles of natural justice (procedural fairness), that is:

- § all complaints will be taken seriously;
- § if the complaint is proceeded with formally, both the person making the complaint (complainant) and the person the complaint is against (respondent) will be given full details of what is being said against them and have the opportunity to respond (give their side of the story);
- § irrelevant matters will not be taken into account;
- § decisions will be unbiased and fair; and
- § any penalties imposed will be fair and reasonable.

If appropriate, more serious complaints regarding matters covered by Table Tennis Australia policies and regulations may be escalated to Table Tennis Australia.

If the complaint relates to suspected child abuse, sexual assault or other criminal activity, then our association will need to report the behaviour to the police and/or relevant government authority.

### 2. Complaint Handling Process

When a complaint is received by our association, the person receiving the complaint (e.g. President, Member Protection Information Officer, Board member) will:

- § listen carefully and ask questions to understand the nature and extent of the problem;
- § ask what the complainant would like to happen;
- § explain the different options available to help resolve the problem;
- § take notes; and
- § maintain confidentiality but not necessarily anonymity.

There are several options for action on a complaint, depending on the nature and seriousness of the complaint and the wishes of the complainant:

- § self-management - the complainant tries to resolve the problem directly with the person who is the subject of the complaint;
- § obtaining information & support - the MPIO can provide information and options as to how the complainant might proceed;
- § informal internal complaints resolution process - eg informal mediated resolution;
- § formal internal process - written complaint and formal internal investigation;
- § an appeals process if the complainant or the person complained about is dissatisfied with the process or outcome of the investigation;
- § external options - either the serious nature of the complaint may require referral to external authorities or the complainant may choose to refer the matter to an external body.

Once the complainant decides on their preferred option for resolution, the association will assist, where appropriate and necessary, with the resolution process. This may involve:

- § supporting the person complaining to talk to the person being complained about
- § bringing all the people involved in the complaint together to talk objectively through the problem (this could include external mediation);
- § gathering more information (e.g. from other people that may have seen the behaviour);
- § seeking advice from Table Tennis Australia or from an external agency (e.g. NT Department of Sport & Recreation or the anti-discrimination agency);
- § referring the complaint to the local table tennis association or to Table Tennis Australia; and/or
- § referring the complainant to an external agency such as a community mediation centre, police or anti-discrimination agency.

In situations where a complaint is referred to Table Tennis Australia and an investigation is conducted, the association will:

- § co-operate fully;
- § ensure the complainant and respondent are not victimised;
- § where applicable, ensure the complainant is not placed in an unsupervised situation with the respondent(s); and
- § act on Table Tennis Australia's recommendations.

At any stage of the process, a person can seek advice from or lodge a complaint with an anti-discrimination commission or other external agency.

### **3. Disciplinary Measures**

Our association will take disciplinary action against anyone found to have breached our policy or made false and malicious allegations. Any disciplinary measure imposed under our policy must:

- § Be applied consistent with any contractual and employment rules and requirements;
- § Be fair and reasonable;
- § Be based on the evidence and information presented and the seriousness of the breach;
- § Be determined by our Constitution, By Laws and the rules of the game.

Possible measures that may be taken include:

- § verbal and/or written apology;
- § counselling to address behaviour;
- § withdrawal of any awards, placings, records, achievements bestowed in any tournaments, activities or events held or sanctioned by our association;
- § suspension or termination of membership, participation or engagement in a role or activity;
- § de-registration for a period of time or permanently;
- § a fine; or
- § any other form of discipline that our association considers reasonable and appropriate.

#### **4. Appeals**

The complainant or respondent can lodge one appeal against decisions of or disciplinary measures imposed to the association. Appeals must be based on either a denial of natural justice, because of unjust or unreasonable disciplinary measure(s) being imposed, or on the grounds that the decision was not supported by the information/evidence presented and available to the decision maker/association. In an appeals process, the Board will appoint a different investigator and the appeal will be heard by a panel of 3 people appointed by the Board, including an appropriately qualified person who is not a member of the association.

**Approved by Table Tennis NT Board:**

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Updated