

IceWorks Skating Club Conflict Resolution Policy

At IceWorks Skating Club, we strive to provide all of our club members with a safe, positive, and fun environment in which to learn and develop both as athletes and as individuals. Our by-laws, skating guidelines and etiquette, and codes of conduct are provided so that we all may be reminded of this central purpose and know what is expected of us. Unfortunately, conflict is a part of any organization, and so we must be prepared to manage and resolve conflicts in a respectful and cooperative manner. The following procedure has been adopted by the Board of Directors to effectively resolve conflict within our club. *Please bear in mind that the IceWorks Skating Club can only take action with regard to our club and its members, and cannot intervene in any dispute that members may have with the IceWorks Skating Complex or facility personnel.*

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Any member having a complaint involving an infraction of IceWorks Skating Club's rules shall notify the appropriate Committee Chair(s) in writing. If a member is unclear as to which Committee is responsible for addressing the complaint, the member may contact a member of the Board of Directors for guidance. Within thirty days of receiving a written complaint, the Committee Chair shall review the issue with his/her committee, involve other Committees as appropriate, and attempt to solve the matter and respond to the initial complaint in writing.

Should a matter not be resolved at the Committee level, the member may direct his/her complaint to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. The complaint must be in writing and be submitted within fourteen days of receiving the written response from the prospective Committee Chair.

Within fourteen days of receiving the complaint, and after consultation with the respective Committee Chair and the IceWorks Skating Club's Executive Committee, the President may:

- a) Dismiss the complaint as being without merit
- b) Take further action to resolve the conflict, or
- c) Request that the Executive Committee appoint a panel of three impartial Club members to serve as mediators to attempt to resolve the matter.

These mediators shall clarify the dispute, interview the parties involved, identify any solutions or alternatives, and recommend any appropriate solutions and/or possible discipline. The mediators shall provide a written report of their findings and recommendations to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will then report to the elected Board of Directors for review and possible action. If the recommended action involves discipline, then Executive Committee and the Board of Directors shall follow the process set forth in the IWSC bylaws pertaining to Discipline.

A member's complaint may be held in abeyance by the President of IceWorks Skating Club should it be determined that there is another pending issue that may influence the conflict resolution process.

Throughout these processes, confidentiality is of utmost importance and is to be maintained by all parties reviewing the matter.

The following suggestions have been taken from the U.S. Figure Skating Conflict resolution and Conflict Management Guide. Following these guidelines can help us ensure that a conflict does not get out of hand.

Conflict Management Behaviors

The following behaviors can be useful in helping the board or members effectively deal with conflict. While these behaviors appear to be common sense, common sense is usually lacking when there is a conflict. It might sound trite, but putting yourself in the other person shoes and adopting the golden rule of “Do unto others ...” makes a whole lot of common sense, too.

- **Use “I” statements.** Let the other party know how you feel when the conflict is occurring as well as your reaction to the conflict. Also let the other person know which of your rights you feel is being ignored in the conflict. **Example:** *“I don’t like when you don’t follow through on your assigned tasks. It makes it difficult for me to do my job if yours isn’t getting done. This behavior is not considerate to me or my time.”*

- **Be assertive, not aggressive.** Speak about your feelings and your reactions. Keep the statements focused on how **you** are behaving, thinking, and feeling rather than on how the other is acting. Try to take the emotions out of it and focus on the issue or behavior that has caused the conflict.

- **Speak calmly, coolly and rationally.** In this way you will be listened to, and you will be able to maintain better control of yourself. Otherwise the other person may take on a defensive attitude.

- **Avoid blaming.** This will keep the communication flow going. It encourages understanding and empathy. It recognizes that for a conflict to exist there must be at least two parties who are adversely affected by the conflict.

- **Create an atmosphere of cooperation.** In an attempt to create an environment of cooperation after a conflict, all parties involved must feel that they are being listened to and understood; that their rights are being respected. They must feel the desire to work things out and a commitment to the process of working out the problems.

- **Be willing to forgive.** Forgiveness is a powerful tool. You have a chance for personal growth by forgiving others for their part in the conflict. At times, this is the only way to resolve a conflict.

- **Be willing to forget.** Once you have “resolved” a conflict and felt like you were listened to and understood, then “let go” of the conflict. Once you have implemented an agreed resolution, put aside the conflict. Put it behind you, move on and don’t bring it up in future discussions. In fact, you should have written proof of the resolution.

- **Be honest.** In resolving a conflict it is imperative that you be honest with yourself and others about your feelings, and reactions to the conflict and to the resolutions. If you are feeling uncomfortable with the outcome and it makes you feel “it is the way others wanted it to be,” then this resolution is a false one and will undoubtedly recur. You gain nothing by being dishonest in the management of conflict. You waste the time and energy of the board and end up feeling failure rather than growth.

- **Focus on people’s perceptions and how they are feeling rather than the content.**

Effective listening and responding are key elements in the productive resolution of conflict. Listen for the feelings and emotions of those involved and reflect them with understanding and acknowledgement. This creates an atmosphere of cooperation and active listening. It reduces defensiveness and it focuses on the process involved rather

than on the issues. Once the person feels listened to, clarify the issues and eliminate extraneous items.

- **Show respect for yourself and others.** You will gain more in resolving a conflict by showing respect (honey), than by showing disrespect (vinegar). If you are on the receiving end of disrespect, remove yourself as soon as possible. When things have cooled down, then the discussion can continue in a more respectful manner. If you lose your cool and become disrespectful, stop as soon as you can by either being quiet or removing yourself. Maintaining a respectful atmosphere is essential in resolving conflict.

- **Be willing to apologize or admit a mistake.** It is necessary to admit to one's mistake and to apologize for one's behavior before a stalemate in conflict resolution can be overcome. It takes courage, character and fortitude to admit an error or lack of judgment; an uncalled for action; disrespectful behavior; or a lack of concern or understanding. Stronger relationships can result when such willingness is exhibited.

- **Be willing to compromise.** If you cling to your position as the only one to be considered, you are closing out the other person or position. To succeed in resolving conflict, all parties must feel like they have gained in the resolution. In order to resolve a conflict where the opposing parties are at opposite extremes on an issue, there is a need to come to the middle if all are to experience a "winning" posture. Only through compromise can each be a winner in conflict resolution. Without compromise, you have either given in and lost or have gotten your way and lost. Ideally, all parties should feel they have won.