

OWN THE PODIUM (“OTP”) Appeal Policy

Definitions

1. Terms have the following meanings in this Policy:
 - a) **Affected Party** – Any individual or entity, as determined by the Appeal Manager, who may be affected by a decision rendered under the *Appeal Policy* and who may have recourse to an appeal in their own right
 - b) **Appeal Manager** – An individual, who may be any staff member, Committee Member, volunteer, Director, or an independent third party, who is appointed to oversee the *Appeal Policy*. The Appeal Manager will have responsibilities that include using decision making authority empowered by the *Appeal Policy*
 - c) **Appellant** – The Party appealing a decision
 - d) **Board** – The Board of Directors of OTP
 - e) **Days** – Days including weekends and holidays
 - f) **Director** – An individual appointed or elected to the Board of Directors of OTP
 - g) **External Discipline Panel** – A Panel that made a decision regarding a complaint submitted pursuant to the *Discipline and Complaints Policy*
 - h) **Organizational Participant** – Refers to all categories of individual members and/or registrants defined in the By-laws of OTP who are subject to the policies of OTP, as well as all people employed by, contracted by, or engaged in activities with, OTP including, but not limited to, employees, contractors, volunteers, managers, administrators, committee members, and Directors and Officers.
 - i) **Parties** – the Appellant, Respondent, and any Affected Party
 - j) **Respondent** – the body whose decision is being appealed or, in the case of an appeal of a decision by an External Discipline Panel, the other party to the dispute

Purpose

2. This *Appeal Policy* provides Participants with a fair and expedient appeal process.

Scope and Application of this Policy

3. This Policy applies to all Organizational Participants.
4. Any Organizational Participant who is directly affected by a decision made by OTP shall have the right to appeal that decision if there are sufficient grounds for the appeal under the **Grounds for Appeal** section of this Policy.
5. This Policy **will apply** to decisions relating to:
 - a) Conflict of Interest
 - b) Discipline
6. This Policy **will not apply** to decisions relating to:
 - a) Employment
 - b) Policies, and procedures established by entities other than OTP
 - c) Budgeting and budget implementation
 - d) The organization's operational structure and committee appointments
 - e) Decisions or discipline arising within the business, activities, or events organized by entities other than OTP (appeals of these decisions shall be dealt with pursuant to the policies of those other entities)
 - f) This Policy shall not apply to OTP categorization of sports for targeting purposes or funding recommendations to National Funding Parties
 - g) Commercial matters for which another appeals process exists under a contract or applicable law
 - h) Decisions made by the Office for the Sport Integrity Commissioner ("OSIC")
 - i) Decisions made under this Policy

Timing of Appeal

7. Organizational Participants who wish to appeal a decision have ten (10) days from the date on which they received notice of the decision to submit the following:
 - a) Notice of the intention to appeal

- b) Their contact information
 - c) Name and contact information of the Respondent and any Affected Parties, when known to the Appellant
 - d) Date the Appellant was advised of the decision being appealed
 - e) A copy of the decision being appealed, or description of decision if written document is not available
 - f) Grounds for the appeal
 - g) Detailed reasons for the appeal
 - h) All evidence that supports these grounds
 - i) Requested remedy or remedies
8. An Organizational Participant who wishes to initiate an appeal beyond the ten (10) day period must provide a written request stating the reasons for an exemption. The decision to allow, or not allow, an appeal outside of the ten (10) day period will be at the sole discretion of the Appeal Manager and may not be appealed.

Submitting an Appeal

9. Appeals of decisions made by OTP can be submitted to the CEO of OTP to be heard pursuant to this Policy.
10. Except where an appeal proceeds before the SDRCC, the CEO of OTP shall appoint an Appeal Manager and shall follow the process outlined in this *Appeal Policy*.

Grounds for Appeal

11. A decision cannot be appealed on its merits alone. An appeal may only be heard if there are sufficient grounds for appeal. Sufficient grounds include OTP:
- a) Made a decision that it did not have the authority or jurisdiction (as set out in the OTP's governing documents) to make
 - b) Failed to follow its own procedures (as set out in OTP's governing documents)
 - c) Made a decision that was influenced by bias (where bias is defined as a lack of neutrality to such an extent that the decision-maker appears not to have considered other views)
 - d) Exercising its discretion for an improper purpose;

- e) Made a decision for which there is no evidence to support

Screening of Appeal

12. The Appeal Manager (who must not be in a conflict of interest or have any direct relationship with the parties) has the following responsibilities:
 - a) To determine if the appeal falls under the scope of this Policy
 - b) To determine if the appeal was submitted in a timely manner
 - c) To decide whether there are sufficient grounds for the appeal
13. If the Appeal Manager denies the appeal on the basis of insufficient grounds, because it was not submitted in a timely manner, or because it did not fall under the scope of this Policy, the Appellant will be notified, in writing, of the reasons for this decision. This decision may not be appealed.
14. If the Appeal Manager is satisfied there are sufficient grounds for an appeal, the Appeal Manager will appoint an Appeal Panel which shall consist of a single Arbitrator, to hear the appeal.
15. In extraordinary circumstances, and at the discretion of the Appeal Manager, an Appeal Panel composed of three persons may be appointed to hear the appeal. In this event, the Appeal Manager will appoint one of the Panel's members to serve as the Chair.

Determination of Affected Parties

16. To confirm the identification of any Affected Parties, the Appeal Manager will engage OTP. The Appeal Manager may determine whether a party is an Affected Party in their sole discretion.

Procedure for Appeal Hearing

16. The Appeal Manager shall notify the Parties that the appeal will be heard. The Appeal Manager shall then decide the format under which the appeal will be heard. This decision is at the sole discretion of the Appeal Manager and may not be appealed.
17. If a party chooses not to participate in the hearing, the hearing will proceed in any event.
18. The format of the hearing may involve an oral in-person hearing, an oral hearing by telephone or other electronic means, a hearing based on a review of documentary evidence submitted in advance of the hearing, or a combination of these methods. The hearing will be governed by the procedures that the Appeal Manager and the Panel deem appropriate in the circumstances. A preliminary conference to discuss these procedures may be held with the Parties.
19. The following guidelines will apply to the hearing:

- a) The hearing will be held within a timeline determined by the Appeal Manager
- b) To keep costs to a reasonable level the Panel will conduct the appeal by means of a telephone or videoconference, unless an in-person hearing is deemed necessary by the Appeal Manager.
- c) The Parties will be given reasonable notice of the day, time and place of an oral in-person hearing or oral hearing by telephone or electronic communications.
- d) Copies of any written documents which any of the Parties wishes to have the Panel consider will be provided to all Parties in advance of the hearing
- e) The Parties may be accompanied by a representative, advisor, or legal counsel at their own expense
- f) The Panel may request that any other individual participate and give evidence at an oral in-person hearing or oral hearing by telephone or electronic communications.
- g) The Panel may allow as evidence at the hearing any oral evidence and document or thing relevant to the subject matter of the appeal, but may exclude such evidence that is unduly repetitious and shall place such weight on the evidence as it deems appropriate
- h) If a decision in the appeal may affect another party to the extent that the other party would have recourse to an appeal in their own right under this Policy, that party will become an Affected Party to the appeal in question and will be bound by its outcome
- i) The decision to uphold or reject the appeal will be by a majority vote of Panel members

20. In fulfilling its duties, the Panel may obtain independent advice.

Appeal Decision

21. The Appellant must demonstrate, on a balance of probabilities, that OTP has made a procedural error as described in the **Grounds for Appeal** section of this Policy and that this error had, or may reasonably have had, a material effect on the decision or decision-maker.
22. The Panel shall issue its decision, in writing and with reasons, within seven (7) days after the hearing's conclusion. In making its decision, the Panel will have no greater authority than that of the original decision-maker. The Panel may decide to:
 - a) Dismiss the appeal and confirm the decision being appealed;
 - b) Uphold the appeal and refer the matter back to the initial decision-maker for a new decision; or

- c) Uphold the appeal and vary the decision where it is found that an error occurred and such an error cannot be corrected by the original decision-maker for reasons which include, but are not limited to, lack of clear procedure, lack of time, or lack of neutrality.
23. The Panel will also determine whether costs of the appeal, excluding legal fees and legal disbursements of any parties, will be assessed against any party. In assessing costs, the Panel will take into account the outcome of the appeal, the conduct of the parties, and the parties' respective financial resources.
24. The Panel's written decision, with reasons, will be distributed to all parties, the Appeal Manager, and OTP. In extraordinary circumstances, the Panel may first issue a verbal or summary decision soon after the hearing's conclusion, with the full written decision to be issued thereafter. The decision will be considered a matter of public record unless decided otherwise by the Panel.

Timelines

25. If the circumstances of the appeal are such that adhering to the timelines outlined by this Policy will not allow a timely resolution to the appeal, the Appeal Manager and/or Panel may direct that these timelines be revised.

Confidentiality

26. The appeals process is confidential and involves only the parties, the Appeal Manager, the Panel, and any independent advisors to the Panel. Once initiated and until a decision is released, none of the Parties will disclose confidential information to any person not involved in the proceedings.

Final and Binding

27. No action or legal proceeding will be commenced against OTP in respect of a dispute unless OTP has refused or failed to provide or abide by the dispute resolution process and/or appeal process as set out in OTP's policies.

Jurisdiction

28. This Policy shall be governed and construed in accordance with the laws of the Province of Ontario.

Last updated : January 13,2023