



**USA Deaf Sports Federation**  
www.usdeafsports.org

## **BYLAWS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA DEAF SPORTS FEDERATION**

**Effective January 16, 2023**

### **Bylaws**

These bylaws shall establish the governing body of the USA Deaf Sports Federation, Inc. (USADSF). The governing body of USADSF shall be the Board of Directors. The Board shall function in a professional and executive capacity and shall have the authority in all policy matters including an oversight of the Executive Director who carries out the policies and oversees all personnel, programs and operations.

#### 1.0 NAME

The name of this corporation shall be the USA Deaf Sports Federation, Inc. (hereafter called USADSF).

#### 2.0 MISSION

USADSF shall be a private nonprofit, nonsectarian, and nonpartisan organization without statutory members. Its mission is to empower USA Deaflympic and Deaf National Team athletes to continuously reach their highest competitive potential.

#### 2.1 Core Principles: The Core Principles of USADSF are:

2.1.1 We promote accessible, inclusive, and safe sports environments and experiences for Deaf and Hard of Hearing athletes.

2.1.2 We work persistently to unlock structural barriers and build pathways to excellence for Deaf and Hard of Hearing athletes.

2.1.3 We advocate for the equitable representation of Deaf and Hard of Hearing athletes

2.1.4 We engage as a global leader to advance the Deaflympic movement.

2.1.5 We hold ourselves and our affiliated organizations accountable to a high bar of excellence.

2.1.6 We honor the diversity, intersectionality, and cultural authenticity of our athletes.

2.1.7 We uphold the integrity of sport, including clean sport and fair play.

## 2.2 Purpose

2.2.1 serve as the governing body for athletic activity in the United States directly related to international athletic competitions for the deaf;

2.2.2 represent the United States as its National Deaf Sports Federation in relations with the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf and the Pan American Deaf Sports Organization (PANAMDES);

2.2.3 organize, and oversee the representation of the United States in the competitions and events of the Deaflympic Games, World Deaf Championships, the Pan-American Games for the Deaf, and any ICSD-sanctioned competition, and obtain, ctly or by delegation to the appropriate National Sport Organization representation for those games;

2.2.4 certify National Sport Organization for any sport that is included on the program of the Deaflympic Games, the Pan-American Games, or the ICSD-sanctioned events;

2.2.5 facilitate, through orderly and effective administrative procedures, the resolution of conflicts or disputes that involve any of its members and any athlete, coach, trainer, manager, administrator, official, or national sport organization, and that arise in connection with their eligibility for and participation in the Deaflympic Games, World Deaf Championships, the Pan-American Games, and ICSD-sanctioned competitions;

## 3.0 MEMBERSHIP

### 3.1 Classification of Memberships

USADSF shall have different classifications of membership, however, membership does not govern the organization.

3.1.1 National Sport Organization - See 8.1.1 National Sport Organization below.

3.1.2 National Sport Committee - See 8.1.2 National Sport Committee below.

3.1.3 Individual Membership - all participants of an United States delegation to any ICSD-sanctioned event shall be a USADSF member in good standing. Memberships to the USADSF shall be good for one year and may be renewed indefinitely as long as the member is in good standing.

## 4.0 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### 4.1 Purpose

The Board shall be a policy-making Board vested with the governance of USADSF. Board members shall be accountable and responsible for:

- 4.1.1 creating and revising bylaws as needed;
- 4.1.2 creating and revising as needed policies in conjunction with approving guidelines and objectives;
- 4.1.3 approving USADSF's objectives and goals as outlined in the strategic plan;
- 4.1.4 ensuring community visibility and respect for USADSF;
- 4.1.5 maintaining a professional working relationship with National Sport Organizations [NSO] and National Sport Committees [NSCs];
- 4.1.6 performing fiduciary duties in overseeing the fiscal resources of USADSF;
- 4.1.7 conducting an annual evaluation of the executive director; and

### 4.2 Make-up of the Board

The Board shall consist of nine (9) members. Four of these members shall serve as officers (see 4.3 Officers), two as NSO representatives and three as Board appointees. The Board will maintain a majority of Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. No more than seventy (70) percent of the ICSD Executive Board may be the same gender.

### 4.3 Officers

The officers of the Board shall be President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, who shall serve for a limit of two terms of four years each. The officers shall be elected by the Board and the terms of officers shall be staggered as follows: the positions of President and Treasurer shall be up for election within sixty (60) days after the completion of the summer Deaflympics whereas the Vice President and Secretary shall be elected after the completion of the winter Deaflympics.

### 4.4 NSO Chairs

The NSO Chairs shall consist of the Summer NSO Chair and the Winter NSO Chair, to be elected every four years within sixty (60) days following the Summer Deaflympics and the Winter Deaflympics, respectively. NSO Chairs shall complete their terms before applying for regular board membership.

#### 4.5 Appointed

The remaining Board positions shall be appointed, based on individual areas of expertise to match the needs of USADSF at any given time. The appointees shall serve a two-year term and can be re-appointed at the pleasure of the Board.

#### 4.6 Resignation and Removal from Board

When a Board member resigns, the vacancy shall be filled at the next regular board meeting in which the President shall nominate a new person to finish the term, and this appointment shall be subject to a simple majority vote.

A Board member who misses three (3) consecutive meetings or four out of six (4 of 6) meetings may be removed from the Board membership at the discretion of the Board.

In any other situation, a Board member can be removed by a simple majority vote of the Board. This member shall have the right to due process, per Robert's Rules of Orders (newly revised), Disciplinary Procedures, and Sections 61-63.

#### 4.7 Liability

USADSF shall insure and maintain liability insurance coverage for members of the Board.

### 5.0 DUTIES OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### 5.1 Duties of the President

The President shall preside at all Board meetings and shall enforce the provisions, objectives, and purpose thereof. The President shall serve as the spokesperson of the organization, only on Board approved matters.

5.1.1 The President shall appoint members of the Board to be chairpersons for committees with the exception of the finance committee (chaired by the Treasurer.)

5.1.2 The President shall represent USADSF at the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf (ICSD) Congress and events.

5.1.2.1 Representation at each ICSD event must be approved by the Board.

5.1.2.2 If the President cannot attend an ICSD event, an alternate USADSF representative shall be appointed by the Board.

### 5.2 Duties of the Vice President

The Vice President shall serve in the absence of the President. Upon the vacancy of the President, the Vice President shall fill the Presidential term until the next election.

### 5.3 Duties of the Secretary

The Secretary shall keep accurate records of the Board meetings and all business transacted at such meetings. He/she shall keep and safeguard all records of regular, closed, and special Board meetings.

The Secretary shall maintain communication with Board members in regards to Board meeting times and dates and other pertinent events. This person, with the President, shall also develop and disseminate meeting agendas.

### 5.4 Duties of the Treasurer

The Treasurer shall present and distribute quarterly financial status reports to the Board and shall serve as the Chairperson of the Finance Committee.

The Treasurer shall make recommendations to the Board for approval of a CPA audit firm as well as represent the Board at CPA financial audit entry and exit conferences. It is the responsibility of the Treasurer to ensure that income tax returns are filed on time. Copies of the CPA Financial Audit report shall be distributed to the board during the fall board meeting.

The Treasurer shall provide the Board with quarterly financial statements which includes the (1) Statement of Financial Position, (2) Statement of Activities, (3) Statement of Cash Flows, Investment Statement, and (4) Budget vs. Actuals.

The Treasurer shall provide the Board with an annual budget to be approved during the fall board meeting.

Lastly, the Treasurer shall be bonded.

### 5.5 Duties of the NSO Chairs

The elected Summer NSO Chair and the elected Winter NSO Chair shall serve as co-chairs of the NSO Council. The NSO Chairs shall organize quarterly meetings of the NSO Council, maintain a list of designated representatives from each NSO, establish meeting agendas, and review and consult on upcoming USADSF proposals, and liaise with the USADSF Board on NSO interests.

The elected NSO Chairs shall serve on the USADSF Board, represent the voice of the NSO Council, and vote in USADSF Board meetings on behalf of the NSO Council.

## 6.0 MEETINGS

### 6.1 Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the Board shall be held at least three times a year. Regular Board meetings shall be conducted in person twice a year, and conducted in a video conference once a year. A simple majority of the Board members present shall constitute a quorum.

### 6.2 Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by the President or a majority of the Board members. The call for a special meeting shall be given at short notice in advance by written notice which shall state the purpose of the meeting. No business other than that stated shall be conducted. Video conferences shall be used for special meetings.

### 6.3 Video Conferences

Video conferences may be called on an immediate basis to deal with specific topics or issues that may arise. Video conferences shall not replace regular Board meetings.

Video conferences shall be permitted for committee work and communication.

### 6.4 Meeting Agendas

It shall be the responsibility of the Secretary to distribute agendas for any type of meeting mentioned above.

For regular Board meetings, agendas shall be distributed at least one week in advance. For special meetings and video conferences, agendas shall be distributed at least one day in advance.

## 7.0 COMMITTEES

### 7.1 There shall be five (5) standing committees:

7.1.1 Finance Committee,

7.1.2 Governance Committee,

7.1.3 Development Committee, and

7.1.4 Ethics Committee

In addition, the President may establish ad hoc committees for special purposes. Each committee shall have a chairperson and two members.

## 7.2 Duties of the Standing Committees

7.2.1 The Finance Committee shall oversee the investments and accounts of USADSF, implement standard accounting practices in accordance with the GAAP, and make recommendations to the USADSF Board. The Finance Committee shall be chaired by the USADSF Treasurer. The Finance Committee shall assist the Treasurer in coordinating external financial audits of the organization.

7.2.2 The Governance Committee shall oversee board compliance with the USADSF's charter, articles, or bylaws; reviews and updates the organization's bylaws periodically to keep policies and procedures up to date; Helps to review and approve policy changes suggested by management. The Governance Committee shall also serve as the nominating committee. The Governance Committee shall conduct annual audits of National Sport Organizations and National Sport Committees.

7.2.3 The Development Committee shall develop a realistic fundraising strategy; set an expectation for minimum donation from each trustee; plan the flagship fundraising event; and identify potential sponsors, donors, and grants.

7.2.4 The Ethics Committee shall be an independent committee and its members shall serve as the review panel for grievances and complaints brought to USADSF.

## 8.0 NATIONAL SPORT ORGANIZATIONS

### 8.1 Definitions

8.1.1 A National Sport Organization (NSO) is an affiliated organization that governs and administers its specific sport on a national level.

8.1.2 A National Sport Committee (NSC) is an organization that operates as a Committee. NSCs can apply to be a National Sport Organization if they fulfill certain criteria, in particular:

8.1.2.1 registered as an 501(c)3 non-profit with bylaws acceptable to USADSF;

8.1.2.2 have a deaf president and a majority of deaf members holding executive positions; and

8.1.2.3 maintain active participation and collaboration within the USADSF.

### 8.2 USADSF Authority

The USADSF Board has the power to elect properly qualified organizations to membership in each of the categories of membership listed in this Section 8, to transfer a member organization from one membership category to another and to terminate a member organization's membership. The USADSF Board will specify the date upon which the rights

and duties of new and transferred members will become effective. If no date is specified, such rights and duties will become effective immediately.

The USADSF Board has the power to certify qualified members as NSOs, to renew such certifications according to policies and procedures it approves, and to review all matters relating to the continued certification of an NSO. In that regard, the USADSF Board may take such action as it considers appropriate, including, but not limited to, placing conditions upon the continued certification of an NSO, placing an NSO on probation, suspending an NSO or decertifying an NSO, provided that notice of any such proposed action will be given to the NSO.

### 8.3 NSO Certification Requirements

In order to fulfill its membership obligations and to be considered a member in good standing with the USADSF, the NSO must cooperate with and satisfy all aspects of the USADSF's NSO Certification program as set out herein and in supporting USADSF policies. Any entity not so certified, and any entity decertified by the USADSF will automatically be ineligible for membership.

8.3.1 National Sport Committee Certification Requirements shall follow the same requirements listed in 8.4 unless otherwise stated.

### 8.4 Certification Standards

To be certified, an NSO must satisfy these requirements:

#### 8.4.1 Governance and Compliance:

8.4.1.1 fulfill all responsibilities as an NSO as set forth in this Article

8.4.1.2 adopt and maintain governance and athlete representation policies complying with the requirements of these Bylaws

8.4.1.3 adopt and maintain appropriate good governance practices

8.4.1.4 be recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax exempt organization under the Internal Revenue Code. Prospective National Sport Committees shall provide a National Sport Committee Charter for approval by the USADSF Board of Directors.

8.4.1.5 adopt and enforce a code of conduct for its employees, members, board of directors, and officers including clear conflicts of interest principles

8.4.1.6 adopt and enforce ethics policies and procedures



8.4.1.7 demonstrate commitment to diversity and inclusion

8.4.1.8 satisfy such other requirements as are set forth by the USADSF

#### 8.4.2 Financial Standards and Reporting Practices.

8.4.2.1 demonstrate financial operational capability to administer its sport

8.4.2.2 be financially and operationally transparent and accountable to its members and to the USADSF

8.4.2.3 submit its complete IRS Form 990 and audited financial statements, including management letter and budget, to the USADSF annually. National Sport Committees are not required to submit a complete IRS form but shall submit an annual financial report to the USADSF.

8.4.2.4 post on its website its current bylaws and other organic documents, its IRS Form 990 for the three most recent years, and its audited financial statements for the three most recent years. This is not applicable to National Sport Committees.

8.4.2.5 satisfy such other requirements as are set forth by the USADSF

#### 8.4.3 Athlete Safety

8.4.3.1 comply with all applicable athlete safety and child protection laws

8.4.3.2 comply with the policies and requirements of the United States Center for Safe Sport

8.4.3.3 maintain and enforce an athlete safety program consistent with the policy(ies) and standards directed by the USADSF

8.4.3.4 comply with the anti-doping policies of the USADSF and with the policies and procedures of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA)

8.4.3.5 satisfy such other requirements as are set forth by the USADSF

#### 8.4.4 Sport Performance

8.4.4.1 establish clear athlete, team, and team official selection procedures approved by a Designated Committee (as that term is defined in Section 8.5.1 below) and by the USADSF, for Delegation Event teams as applicable, and timely disseminate such procedures to the athletes and team officials

8.4.4.2 effectively conduct, in accordance with such selection procedures, a selection process, including any trials (as approved by the USADSF), to select athletes for Delegation Event teams

8.4.4.3 competently and timely recommend to the USADSF athletes, teams, and team officials for Delegation Event teams as applicable

8.4.4.4 maintain and implement effective plans for successfully training for Delegation Event athletes

8.4.4.5 satisfy such other requirements as are set forth by the USADSF

#### 8.4.5 Operational Performance

8.4.5.1 demonstrate managerial capability to administer its sport

8.4.5.2 obtain and keep current insurance policies in such amount and for such risk management as appropriate, and issue to USADSF a current Certificate of Insurance (COI). NSCs are exempt from this requirement

8.4.5.3 actively seek, in good faith, to generate revenue in addition to any resources that may be provided by the USADSF, sufficient to achieve financial sustainability

8.4.5.4 cooperate with the USADSF in preventing the unauthorized use of the names and trademarks of the USADSF, the words “Deaflympic” and “Pan American,” in reference to PANAMDES events, and their derivatives, as well as their symbolic equivalents

8.4.5.5 satisfy such other requirements as are set forth by the USADSF

#### 8.5 NSO Non-Compliance

In the event the USADSF receives a grievance from a complaint or an audit report from the Governance Committee that a NSO is not in compliance, the USADSF shall implement a designated review panel. The designated review panel shall create a written report of its recommendation and justification to the USADSF Board. The USADSF Board will determine whether:

8.5.1 To place the NSO on probation for a specified period of time, not to exceed 180 days, which it considers necessary to enable each NSO to comply with such requirements; or

8.5.2 to decertify the NSO.

The President may then adopt the USADSF Board's recommendation, in whole, of the committee's findings with justification.

### 8.6 Application to Replace a NSO or NSC

Any sports organization or committee may seek to replace an incumbent as the NSO or NSC for a particular sport by following steps in the Application to Replace a NSO Policy. A copy of the application will also be served on the incumbent NSO.

## 9.0 NATIONAL SPORT ORGANIZATIONS COUNCIL

### 9.1 Duties

There will be a NSO Council recognized by the USADSF Board and made up of designated representatives of each NSO. The NSO Council shall serve as a source of NSO opinion and advice to the USADSF Board with regard to both current and contemplated policies of the USADSF. The NSO Council will elect two members to the USADSF Board as set out in '4.0 Board of Directors' of these Bylaws. NSO Council leadership will meet regularly with the USADSF Board to discuss issues of importance to NSOs.

### 9.2 Composition

The NSO Council shall include up to two members selected by each NSO. If the NSO selects more than one member, at least one of each gender shall be represented.

### 9.3 Elections of NSO Chairs

Candidates for the Summer NSO Chair and the Winter NSO Chair shall be nominated by NSOs, Ad Hoc Committees, and/or the USADSF Board. However, only the affiliated NSOs and Ad Hoc Committees may elect the NSO Representatives. Self-nominations by a representative of an affiliated National Sports Organization or recognized Ad-Hoc Committee shall be accepted. The Summer NSO Chair shall be elected by a simple majority (50 percent + 1) of the Summer NSO Council members present. The Winter NSO Chair shall be elected by a simple majority (50 percent + 1) of the Winter NSO Council members present. Elections may take place in person or by a video conference.

## 10.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND CODE OF ETHICS

### 10.1 Conflict of Interest

The Board shall periodically publicize the conflict of interest policy according to the current laws and regulations in effect. The Board and employees of USADSF shall adhere to such policies. Members of the Board are expected to refrain from any activity or investment that might constitute, or appear to constitute, a conflict of interest. A conflict of interest arises when a situation or set of circumstances develops and causes, or is perceived to cause a

member to consider interests other than USADSF in arriving at a business decision or fulfilling his or her responsibility to the organization.

In the course of Board membership, Board members may be exposed to personnel or financial information about USADSF. Board members shall not disclose, disseminate, or use information or be in violation of personnel employment practices in any way that may constitute a personal gain.

No person employed with USADSF shall be allowed to work in act line of supervision of a family member or Board member unless exempted by the Board of Directors.

### 10.2 Code of Ethics

The Board shall adopt the Code of Ethics as established by the Board. Violation of the Code of Ethics shall be grounds for removal from the Board. In fulfilling their duties, members of the Board shall:

10.2.1 Carry out duties in the best interests of USADSF and maintain its image in the most favorable light possible;

10.2.2 Make reasonable inquiry before voting on any matter before the Board;

10.2.3 And strive to ensure that all employees, athletes and fellow Board members are not subject to discrimination or harassment of any kind.

## 11.0 ORGANIZATION OF EVENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

### 11.1 Games Organization

The organization of events is governed by the rules of the ICSD and PANAMDES. Selection of the host cities for the Deaflympic Games will be made in accordance with ICSD regulations. Selection of the host cities for the Deaf Pan American Games (Regional Deaf Championships) will be made in accordance with special provisions in PANAMDES regulations. Selection of the host cities for the World Deaf Champions will be made in accordance with ICSD regulations.

### 11.2 Bid Procedures

Any individual, group, committee, organization, municipality, or entity interested in bidding for the privilege of organizing an event in the United States under the auspices of ICSD shall follow the procedures established by the USADSF.

## 12.0 PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

### 12.1 Robert's Rules of Order

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall be the parliamentary authority for the conduct of Board meetings, whenever not in conflict with the bylaws stated herein.

## 13.0 AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

Proposed amendments to these bylaws shall be presented to the Chairperson of the Governance Committee at least thirty (30) days before the next meeting for consideration. The Chairperson shall share the proposed amendments at the Board meeting and present the committee's recommendations. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of Board members present and through proxy shall be necessary for ratification of each proposed amendment.

## 14.0 DISSOLUTION OF ORGANIZATION

Upon the dissolution of the organization, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not disposed of shall be disposed of by a Court of Competent Jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the organization is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.