WEIGHTLIFTING WALES
CODI PWYSAU CYMRU

WW Athlete Disciplinary Policy & Procedure

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1. Introduction

This policy and procedure is designed to help Athletes and Wales Weightlifting Federation CIC (WW) employees and directors deal with disciplinary situations that occur through misconduct. It applies to all lifting members.

WW recommends that wherever possible, minor discipline issues should be resolved informally. WW employees, where appropriate, should talk to the Athlete about the improvement in conduct or performance that is required. In some cases, additional training, coaching and advice may be what is needed.

There will be situations where matters are more serious or where an informal approach has been taken and not achieved the required results. In these cases, if informal action does not bring about an improvement, or the misconduct is considered too serious to be classed as minor, then WW employees/directors should consider taking formal action.

If the issue relates to:

- **An Athlete who is under 18 or an adult at risk[1], the designated safeguarding lead must be informed at the start.**
- **Bullying, harassment or discrimination, refer to the WW Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy.**
- **Matters that might be criminal, legal/safeguarding advice must be taken and the matter referred to the statutory authorities before proceeding further.**

Athletes under the age of 18, or classified as an adult at risk, should be supported by their parents or legal guardians, who shall act on their behalf.

The wellbeing of the athlete during this process is paramount and they must be supported by a WW employee who is not involved in the process, especially during any period of suspension.

2. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to ensure consistent and fair treatment of disciplinary situations and to encourage Athletes to maintain appropriate standards of conduct. WW employees and Athletes should ensure that Athletes have a good understanding of these procedures.

This policy does not confer contractual rights on individuals and will be reviewed in line with any legislative changes. The policy may be changed or amended at WW's discretion.

WW may at its discretion appoint external parties to conduct investigations and disciplinary hearings. This may be necessary because of: conflicts of interest; availability of resources; complexity; or specialist knowledge of the issues. WW's discretion is not limited by these examples.

[1] An adult who: has needs for care and support; and is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

3. Standards

WW has clear standards of conduct, which are reflected in WW's code of conduct, which are accessible via the Weightlifting Wales website or on request from the head office. They are explained to Athletes when they join WW and are reinforced through regular updates.

Athletes are responsible for representing WW – this includes maintaining high standards of behaviour and presentation of appropriate branded clothing where applicable.

4. Principles

The principles governing the policy and its application are:

- Consistency and fairness, with all Athletes treated with respect and dignity.
- Individuals' rights and responsibilities being respected.
- Openness and transparency.
- Proportionality and prompt resolution.
    - Minor instances of misconduct are to be addressed by means of informal counselling, guidance and instruction. However, if problems continue or WW regards matters to be sufficiently serious, this disciplinary procedure shall apply.
    - Cases which require application of the disciplinary procedure, but which are considered less serious are to be resolved through the fast-track process.
- No Athlete will be de-selected from the performance programme for a first breach of discipline, except in the case of gross misconduct.

In order to ensure that matters are dealt with fairly the following shall apply:

- Both WW employees and Athletes should raise and deal with issues promptly and should not unreasonably delay meetings, decisions or confirmation of those decisions.
- The Chief Operating Officer should ensure that any necessary investigations are conducted, to establish the facts of the case.
- The Chief Operating Officer should inform Athletes of the concern and give them an opportunity to put their case in response before any decisions are made.
- The Chief Operating Officer should allow Athletes to be accompanied at any disciplinary meeting.
- Athletes have the right to appeal any action taken against them under this procedure.

In the case of serious disciplinary issues and/or disciplinary appeals, consideration should be given to involvement of an independent investigator, to prevent any potential conflict of interest.

All warning letters issued under this policy are to be approved by a WW employee or director other than the Chief Operating Officer to ensure consistency and to ensure that appropriate records are maintained.

5. Gross Misconduct

The following are examples of Gross Misconduct which may result in immediate de-selection from athlete support programmes, competitions and suspension of membership. When Gross Misconduct has taken place, the Disciplinary policy supersedes other Athlete Selection Policies.

- Actual or attempted theft, fraud or dishonesty.
- Sports betting, corrupt conduct, and match fixing.
- Fighting, physical or sexual assault, violence, threatening behaviour or deliberate and serious damage to people or property.
- Anti-Doping Regulation violations.
- Gross insubordination, including failure to comply with reasonable requests/instructions.
- Incapacity for training owing to the use of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Serious breaches of WW code of conduct.
- Deliberate actions or omissions that bring WW's name into serious disrepute.
- Gross negligence or incompetence which causes serious loss, damage or injury.
- Serious breaches of WW's rules relating to Health & Safety (and hygiene).
- Serious breaches of WW's Mobile Phones and Driving Policies.
- Bullying or harassment on the grounds of sex, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief or any other protected characteristic of another Athlete, employee of WW, visitor or any other third party to whom WW has a duty to prevent such discrimination.
- Indecent, offensive or immoral behaviour.
- Offensive use of social media in a way which could be interpreted as inappropriate by WW, including unauthorised use or hacking of another person's account.
- Disclosure of confidential information pertaining to WW.
- Deliberate telephone, computer and e-mail misuse, including hacking and/or the access, downloading or transmission of any pornographic or otherwise offensive material.
- Violation of the rules outlined in the Code of Conduct.
- Encouraging or supporting a Paralympic Athlete to intentionally misrepresent themselves to a classification panel.
- Not knowingly be a member of, or endorse in any way, or train at, or otherwise attend, any gym/center/club which has had its license removed by WW.

6. Informal Resolution

Where conduct and behaviour are alleged to have fallen short of the standards expected by WW, the Chief Operating Officer should conduct an interview with the Athlete, find out if there are any problems, reiterate the required standards/improvements with timescales (usually immediate and sustained) and provide any help and support that may be needed. This will take the form of informal counselling, guidance and instruction and is NOT part of the formal procedure.

The Chief Operating Officer should take notes of any such discussions. These will be retained for 12 months in accordance with WW's data protection obligations.

In some cases, the problem may be more serious at the outset, or the counselling, guidance and instruction may not bring about the required resolution. If this is the case, the formal disciplinary procedure may apply.

6.1 Summary Resolution Option

For lower-level misconduct matters where:

- the facts are not in dispute,
- the athlete acknowledges the issue, and
- the matter does not amount to gross misconduct,
- WW may propose a summary resolution without the need for a formal disciplinary hearing. This will include:
- a written explanation of the issue and proposed action;
- a short meeting with the Chief Operating Officer to discuss and confirm the resolution;

and
- confirmation of the outcome in writing.

7. Disciplinary Process

7.1 Establishing the facts of each case

It is important to carry out an investigation without unreasonable delay to establish a fair and balanced view of the allegations against the Athlete, before deciding whether to proceed with a disciplinary hearing. Different people **must** carry out the investigation and disciplinary hearing, and it should not be carried out by an individual who is line-managed by the person conducting the disciplinary hearing.

Where the investigation reveals allegations of criminal conduct, the investigation will be handed over to the police and will be stayed until the conclusion of any resulting criminal proceedings. The Athlete may be suspended pending the outcome of those proceedings, where it is considered appropriate and proportionate to do so.

7.2 Informing the Athlete of the problem

If, at the end of the investigation, it is decided there is a disciplinary case to answer the Athlete should be notified of this in writing. All the information about the alleged misconduct and its possible consequences should be provided to the Athlete, to allow them to answer the case at a disciplinary hearing: this includes providing them with copies of any written evidence, such as witness statements. The Athlete must be informed of the possible outcomes of the hearing.

The Athlete must be given the details of the time and venue for the hearing and be advised of the right to be accompanied. WW will seek to ensure that the time, place and location of any disciplinary hearing are reasonable: it will take place as soon as is reasonably practicable.

7.3 Holding a Disciplinary Hearing

At least one WW director will sit on the disciplinary panel (and, if there is more than one panel member, the panel members will decide which one of them will act as Chairperson). The hearing will be held without unreasonable delay whilst allowing the Athlete reasonable time to prepare their case. What is judged to be reasonable will depend on the complexity of the case but will not be less than 5 working days from the date the letter notifying the Athlete of the hearing is sent. The Athlete and their companion must take all reasonable steps to attend. Where the Athlete persistently fails to attend a disciplinary hearing without good cause, WW may make a decision in the Athlete's absence on the basis of the evidence available.

At the hearing, the WW Chief Operating Officer will explain the role of all those attending and the allegation(s) against the Athlete and will then go through the evidence that has been gathered. The Athlete will be allowed to set out their case and answer any allegations that have been made. The Athlete will also be given a reasonable opportunity to:

- ask questions;
- present evidence;
- call relevant witnesses; and
- raise points about any information provided by witnesses.

Where the Chief Operating Manager or the Athlete intend to call relevant witnesses they should

give no less than 5 working days advance written notice that they intend to do so. The Chairperson conducting the hearing may also require that witnesses give oral evidence providing that notice has been given. Any written statements of case, witness statements or other documentary evidence should be exchanged at least 10 working days in advance of the hearing.

Firsthand evidence will always be the preferred form of evidence, but a disciplinary panel may be asked to consider second-hand (hearsay) evidence where appropriate, taking care as to what weight to give to it.

The main points of the discussion will be summarised by the Chairperson and the Athlete will be asked if they have anything further to say.

7.4 Athlete's companion

Athletes may be accompanied by a companion at any formal disciplinary, investigative or appeal hearing or meeting. Companions might be another athlete; a member of the coaching/support staff of the Athlete's choice; a parent or guardian; or a member of the BAC. Athletes may not choose a companion whose presence would prejudice the outcome of any hearing and direct witnesses to the alleged misconduct are not usually able to act as companions. If the chosen companion cannot attend the original date, an alternative date will be offered within the following 5 working days.

The companion may address the hearing to present and/or sum up the Athlete's case, respond on their behalf to any views expressed at the hearing and confer privately with them at any stage during the hearing. The companion does not have the right to answer questions on the Athlete's behalf, address the hearing if the Athlete does not want them to or prevent anyone, including the Athlete, from explaining their case.

Any companion who attends a hearing with an Athlete in connection with this disciplinary policy shall not be penalised in any way. No one shall be obliged to act as a companion if they do not wish to so.

7.5 Decide on the appropriate action

The Disciplinary panel conducting the disciplinary hearing must decide whether or not disciplinary action (or any other action) is justified and proportionate, and inform the Athlete accordingly in writing, giving the reasons for the imposition of any sanction, including any mitigating and/or aggravating factors. Save for cases in which the athlete persistently fails to attend a disciplinary hearing without good cause, no disciplinary action should be imposed without a hearing attended by the Athlete.

Where misconduct is confirmed, the possible outcomes include:

- **Written Warning**. For a first instance which is not Gross Misconduct, a Written Warning is appropriate.

- **Final Written Warning.** Where the Athlete is already subject to a Written Warning, and the misconduct is not Gross misconduct, a Final Written Warning is appropriate.

- **De-selection from the performance programme**. Where the misconduct is considered to be Gross Misconduct, or the athlete is already subject to a Final Written Warning, it may be appropriate to de-select the Athlete from the programme.

A Written Warning or Final Written Warning should set out:

- the nature of the misconduct and the change in behaviour required (with a timescale);
- how long the warning will remain current (up to a maximum of three years); and
- the consequences of further misconduct within the set period (including that it may result in de-selection).

A record of the warning will be kept on the Athlete's personal file for a period of two years from the date of issue.

In addition to Written Warnings, Final Warnings, and De-selection, the Disciplinary Panel may impose or recommend any of the following actions, either alone or in combination, depending on the severity and nature of the misconduct:

- Formal Apology: a written or verbal apology to affected individuals.
- Behavioural Agreement: a commitment to specified behavioural standards, monitored over a defined period.
- Targeted Education or Training: attendance at a training session, workshop, or mentoring on a relevant topic (e.g. anti-doping, respect in sport, safeguarding).
- Suspension from Specified Activities: e.g. temporary ban from competing, team activities, or accessing WW resources for a defined period (typically up to 6 months).
- Community Contribution: undertaking a form of restorative activity (e.g. volunteering at events, contributing to educational sessions).
- Reimbursement: repaying expenses or losses incurred through misconduct, if appropriate.

These measures may be used where the athlete's conduct does not warrant removal from the programme but merits proportionate action to correct behaviour and uphold standards.

The imposition of any sanction is always a matter at the discretion of the WW disciplinary panel or decision-maker, but non-binding indicative sanctions guidance is set out in Section 11 below.

7.6 De-selection from the performance programme

Some acts amounting to Gross Misconduct are so serious in themselves or have such serious consequences that they may require immediate suspension and de-selection from the performance programme without notice for a first offence.

7.7 Provide the opportunity to appeal

Where the Athlete believes that the disciplinary action taken against them is wrong or disprportionate they may appeal the decision. Appeals should be heard without unreasonable delay. The Athlete should let the WW Chairperson know the grounds (reason) for the appeal in writing within 10 working days of receiving written confirmation of the disciplinary warning or de-selection.

The grounds for an appeal could reasonably be one or more of the following:

- the correct process was not followed;
- the decision maker was biased;

- the decision was made without considering all the relevant facts;
- the decision was not one a reasonable person could have made;
- although the factual position is not in dispute, the sanction imposed is disproportionate.

Where the appeal is against:

- a written warning (including a Final Written Warning), it should be heard by the WW Chairperson or one independent non- executive WW director who has not previously been involved in the case; or

- de-selection (Gross Misconduct), it should be heard by the WW Chairperson and two independent non-executive WW directors who have not previously been involved in the case.

The Athlete has the right to be accompanied at appeal hearings and will be informed in writing of the results of the appeal hearing as soon as possible.

An appeal is final and concludes WW's procedure.

8. Additional Information

8.1 Suspension

WW reserves the right to suspend any Athlete who is suspected of serious misconduct, if it is considered in the interests of the individual and/or WW to do so. Suspension in these circumstances is to:

- ensure that an unhindered investigation can take place; and/or
- safeguard other Athletes on the programme.

Suspension is not disciplinary action or sanction and will be for as short a time as possible.

Any decision to suspend will be confirmed in writing and such written confirmation will state:
- the reasons for suspension;
- any conditions such as limitations from specific activities; and
- the likely duration before review.

8.2 Criminal Offences

Where allegations are made that may amount to a criminal offence, WW will co-operate fully with any police investigations. Where these issues are related to the potential conduct of an Athlete whilst overseas, Athletes should note that the legal jurisdiction of England and Wales does not cover overseas training events and competitions and will, therefore, be subject to the legislation and legal proceedings of the country in which the alleged offence occurred.

If an Athlete is charged with, or convicted of a criminal offence, WW will give consideration to what effect this has on the Athlete's eligibility to receive public funding or publicly funded benefits, in accordance with any applicable policy (e.g. WW or Sport Wales).

8.3 Confidentiality

Athletes should only discuss disciplinary matters with WW employees involved in the process and their companion. Breaching confidentiality may result in further disciplinary action being taken.

The outcome of a disciplinary hearing will normally remain confidential to the parties involved. Disclosure may be made in accordance with WW's legal, contractual or regulatory obligations.

8.4 Time limits

In cases where it is not practical to implement the procedure fully and expeditiously, for example in the absence of the WW employee, Athletes will be dealt with as closely as possible in accordance with this procedure.

Under normal circumstances the disciplinary process should be concluded in no more than 2 months. However, it is recognised that more complex cases could take up to 6 months. When any discipline process takes more than 20 working days, the WW employee conducting the process shall provide a written update to all parties on or before the 20 working day point, and no more than every 20 working days thereafter until the process is concluded.

8.5 Note taking and records

Should an investigation lead to a criminal investigation (or be drawn upon as part of any HR appeal procedures), all material obtained in the course of an investigation should be considered relevant and be made available to the police and, where applicable, to the Athlete.

WW will not make an audio recording of any investigations or meetings. Athletes are not permitted to record disciplinary interviews, meetings or hearings without prior consent.

WW requires meeting notes to be taken at all meetings to record decisions and outcomes. All interviews must have a written record, signed by the interviewer and the subject of the interview. The interview record will usually only contain firsthand evidence. Where appropriate, it may be necessary to include second hand (hearsay) evidence, such as comments made by a child witness who cannot be interviewed directly. Notes should not generally include statements of opinion or speculation[3].

The Athlete will be sent a copy of the interview or meeting notes produced, which will constitute the WW's record of proceedings.

All records detailing the nature of any sort of misconduct, the Athlete's defence or mitigation, the action taken and the reasons for it, whether an appeal was lodged, its outcome and any subsequent developments, will be kept confidentially by WW.

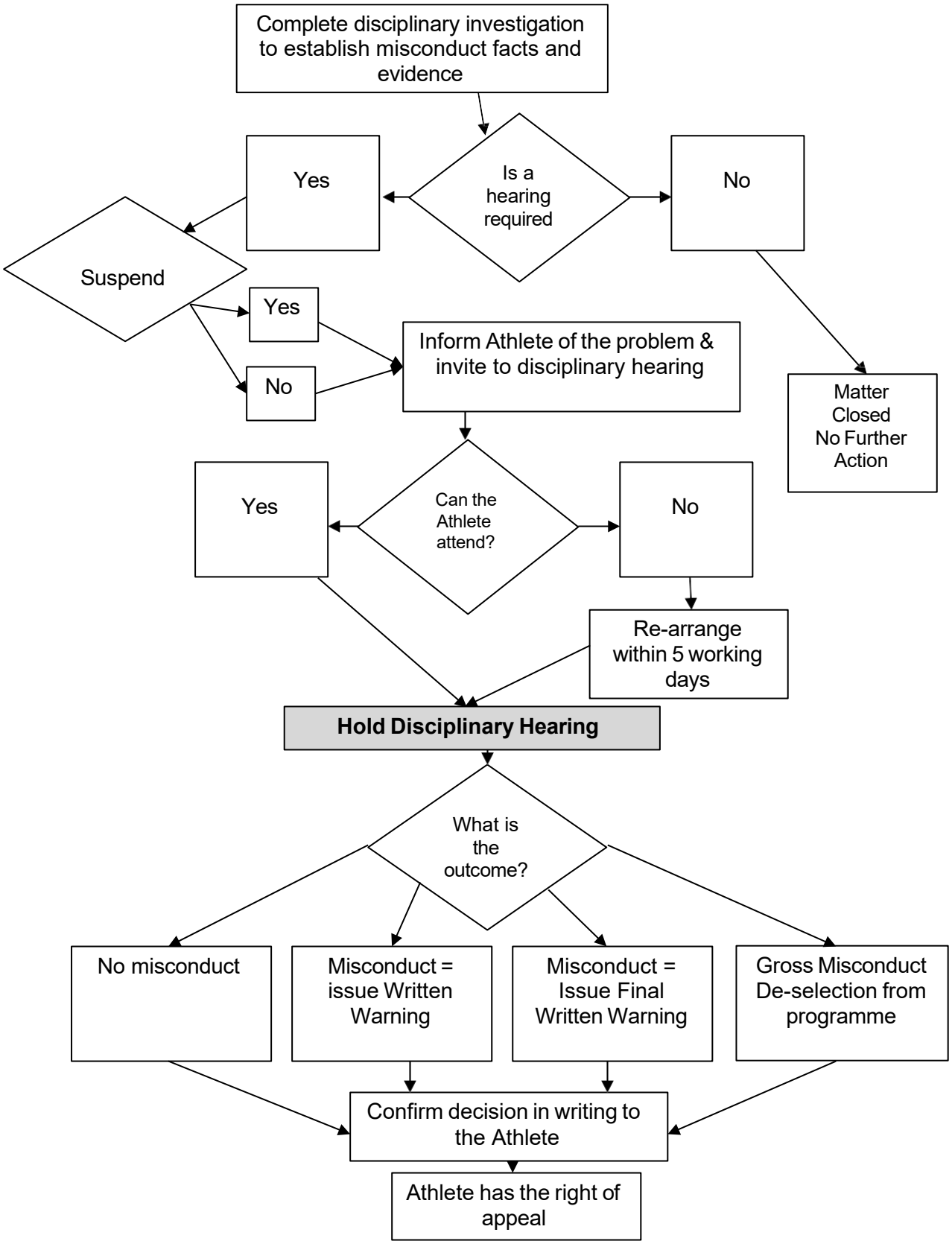
9. British Athletes' Commission (BAC)

The BAC exists to provide confidential and independent advice and support to all athletes on performance programmes. Any athlete who is subject to WW's disciplinary process should consider contacting the BAC as follows:

Email:	admin@britishathletes.org
Phone:	0203 126 4270
Web:	www.britishathletes.org

[3] First party evidence is evidence that the individual saw or heard. Hearsay is evidence that the individual was told by another party or overheard.

10. Process Flow Chart



11. Sanctions Guidance

Decision-makers are asked to consider the lists of aggravating and mitigating factors and the table of indicative outcomes which follow. These are provided for the assistance of athletes and decision-makers. They are not binding and are not exhaustive.

Aggravating Factors

These factors may justify a more severe sanction:

a) Premeditation - misconduct which is planned, deliberate, or repeated over time.

b) Abuse of Position or Trust - misconduct by an individual who held a position of authority (e.g., coach or senior athlete) or responsibility and abused that role.

c) Impact on Others - the conduct caused or risked significant harm to another person, including physical, psychological, reputational, or emotional harm.

d) Vulnerability of Victim - the affected person was particularly vulnerable (e.g. under 18, para-athlete, or new to the sport).

e) Lack of Remorse or Cooperation - failure to acknowledge wrongdoing, apologise, or cooperate with the investigation or hearing process.

f) Prior Disciplinary Record - previous similar or related misconduct, even if not identical in nature.

g) Damage to the Sport's Reputation - the behaviour brought the sport or Welsh Weightlifting into disrepute or undermined public confidence.

h) Disruption to Events or Programmes - the misconduct interfered with competitions, training programmes, or club activities.

i) Concealment or Deception - attempts to cover up the misconduct or mislead investigators.

Mitigating Factors

These factors may support a less severe sanction:

a) Early Admission of Misconduct - prompt acknowledgement of wrongdoing before or during the investigation.

b) Remorse and Apology – the athlete demonstrated genuine regret and offered a timely and sincere apology to affected parties.

c) Clean Disciplinary Record - no previous history of misconduct in the sport.

d) Cooperation with the Process - full, timely, and voluntary cooperation with the disciplinary process or hearing.

e) Age, Experience, or Capacity - youth, inexperience, or learning difficulty that may have affected judgement or understanding.

f) Provocation or Contributory Factors - the misconduct arose from provocation or a difficult personal or emotional situation.

g) Rehabilitation Efforts - evidence of steps taken to address the issue (e.g. behaviour training, counselling, or other relevant development).

h) Low Risk of Repetition - clear evidence that the individual has understood the consequences and is unlikely to reoffend.

i) Limited Impact - the misconduct had minimal or no actual impact on others or the organisation.

Note for Decision-Makers

Where multiple aggravating or mitigating factors are present, a balanced approach should be taken, weighing them proportionately.

The factors above are non-exhaustive; others may be considered where relevant to the specific circumstances.

Indicative sanctions

Type of Misconduct	**Typical First Action**	**Repeat or Aggravated Action**
Missed team obligations (e.g. lateness, admin)	Informal counselling or Written Warning	Final Warning or short suspension
Disrespectful behaviour / language	Written Warning	Final Warning + training requirement
Breach of kit/branding rules	Warning and education	Temporary exclusion from events
Inappropriate social media post	Written Warning + removal post	Final Warning or suspension
Conduct undermining WW values	Final Warning or suspension	De-selection from programme
Gross misconduct (e.g. doping, violence, harassment)	Immediate suspension and formal hearing	Potential de-selection and reporting