

World Chase Tag® (WCT) Athlete and Team Code of Conduct

Once adopted, this Code is a **mandatory part of the Rulebook**. It governs respect, integration, and behavior on and off the Quad™. It does not govern game mechanics (scoring, starter-plate timing, etc.), which live in the Rulebook itself, except where behavior and safety are involved.

Applies to: All athletes, team staff, and team representatives at WCT sanctioned events (the Quad™, training areas, accreditation, the venue, official hospitality and media areas, and official WCT online channels). It also covers conduct between WCT participants **outside the venue and online**, before and after the event, where that conduct concerns another participant, a team, WCT, or the sport.

1. Core principle

Athlete protection is WCT's top priority. It comes before moral, commercial, or production considerations. Every rule below should be considered in that light: when in doubt, WCT acts to protect the safety, dignity, and wellbeing of athletes.

WCT also recognizes that it has, in the words of the athletes themselves, one of the best communities in sport. This Code exists to keep it that way, by setting clear expectations before problems arise.

2. Guiding principles

1. **Neutrality through the IOC model.** WCT keeps the sport neutral and follows the International Olympic Committee (IOC) approach to political expression.
2. **Respect for all.** Every athlete, official, volunteer, staff member, and spectator is entitled to be respected, regardless of nationality, religion, race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation.
3. **One standard for everyone.** Every rule applies equally to all teams and athletes. WCT will not apply a rule to one team and not another.
4. **Discrimination or threats already cross the line.** Any discrimination, threat, or abuse is a breach in itself.

3. Countries and IOC alignment

- WCT follows the **IOC guidelines strictly** on country participation.
- **If a country is banned by the IOC, for any reason, that country is banned from WCT for the same reason and the same duration.** WCT does not impose, or lift, country bans independently of the IOC.
- Absent of an IOC ban, WCT does not exclude any team or athlete on the basis of nationality.

4. Team identity

- WCT teams are **clubs, not national teams**. A team must not present itself as the national team of any country at a WCT event or on WCT channels. (This will be revised if WCT introduces a national-team or World Cup format.)

5. The Quad™ is a neutral, political-free space

5.1 The principle

The Quad™ is sacred and **MUST** be kept free of any political statement. This applies to **all** political expression, whatever its content or direction: positive or negative, pro or anti. By way of example and without limitation, the following are **not permitted on the Quad™**: anti-racism, pro-LGBT, anti-war, pro-country, anti-country, pro-person X, anti-person X, or support for any cause other than WCT (including disease, accident, or charitable causes, however worthy).

5.2 No political items, clothing, marks, or gestures on the Quad™

No item or clothing carrying or signalling a political message may be worn or displayed on the Quad™. This includes, by way of example and without limitation: scarves, headwear, or garments worn or displayed as a political or national-cause symbol, clothing with political writing, writing on the body, and political body gestures (for example a raised fist used to signal political engagement). The test is the message an item sends in context, not the item itself: where a garment or accessory is clearly being used to make a political statement, it is not allowed on the Quad™.

Religious dress worn as faith is not a political statement. Genuine religious dress worn as personal faith (for example a hijab) is **not** prohibited by this section, subject only to the safety requirements that apply to all athletes' equipment. This Code prohibits political demonstration, not personal faith. Where an item could reasonably be read either way, the pre-clearance rule in 5.3 applies.

5.2b Flags on and around the Quad™

Teams may carry or display only their own official WCT team flag on and around the Quad™ and in team areas. No country flag, and no other team's flag or banner, is permitted. - Teams may enter the Quad™ only with their own WCT team flag.

Spectators may display flags of the countries of participating teams, subject to venue rules. (Spectator policy is set with venue operations.)

5.3 Intention vs. interpretation

A political statement can arise:

- **by intention:** the athlete or team deliberately makes it; or

- **by interpretation (“in the reading”)**: an act that is not intended as political but is reasonably read as political by others.

Intentional political statements are sanctioned more harshly than unintentional ones. However, all athletes and teams are responsible for being careful. If there is any chance an act, item, or gesture could be read as political, the team **MUST** ask WCT HQ in advance. Pre-clearance is the athlete’s responsibility.

5.4 Sanctions for politicising the Quad™

Using the Quad™ as a political space, despite this Code, carries sanctions decided by WCT according to the severity and intent of the action, which may include:

- **Ranking penalty** (affecting the team’s WCT ranking and its chances of qualifying for the next Worlds);
- **Ban** (temporary or permanent) for athletes or teams;
- **Reduced or zero cash prize** for the event, where the team was due one;
- combinations of the above.

6. Where expression IS allowed (off the Quad™)

Outside the Quad™, athletes are free to be themselves and to defend causes they believe are just, **within the framework in Section 7**.

Permitted spaces and moments include:

- Personal time and personal channels (their own social media and accounts);
- Interviews with quad-side / floor reporters, that is, the roving athlete-side reporter, not the official commentary and analysis desk. (At WCT7: with the quad-side reporter, e.g. Greg; not the commentary desk of Dan and Connor.);
- From exiting the tunnel until reaching the athlete barriers (the red and blue corners), for example during team entrances.

Return to neutral at the barriers. Once an athlete reaches the barriers, they **MUST** return to a neutral position before the match starts and remain neutral for the entire duration of the match.

The trophy and medal ceremony is sacrosanct and forms a protected part of the event schedule. No athlete may make any political statement or gesture during the ceremony, whether that is verbally, or through clothing, items, signs, symbols, or any other form of expression.

7. Framework for permitted expression (sport values)

Where expression is allowed (Section 6), it **MUST** stay within a framework aligned with the values of sport. The following are **forbidden** and may result in sanctions (temporary or permanent ban, fines, etc.): racism, anti-religious hatred, homophobia, bullying, harassment, sexism, support for genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes, and support for war in general positions.

Permitted messages should follow the values of sport, as expressed across other major sports: **unity, anti-racism, anti-homophobia, anti-sexism, anti-religious hatred and humanist values**. If unsure how to phrase something, ask WCT HQ first and look to how established sports word such messages.

8. Handshakes, hugs, and acknowledging opponents

- Refusing to shake hands or hug an opponent before, during, or after a match is not in itself forbidden and is not treated as a political statement unless a team deliberately turns it into one. WCT accepts that not everyone will like each other and that match or chase frustration is human.
- However, refusing to shake hands or otherwise shunning someone **on the basis of their origin, race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation is discrimination** and is not allowed.
- A single occurrence does not make a pattern; patterns of such behavior will be subject to investigation which may result in sanctions.

9. Conduct toward people: no ostracization, threats, or manipulation

- No athlete or team may ostracize, boycott, threaten, pressure, or run petitions or campaigns against another athlete or team, in person or online.
- “Behind-the-back” manipulation. Trying to influence or recruit other teams or athletes into being hostile toward, or shunning, another athlete or team is unacceptable bullying and is a breach of this Code.
- Respect extends to WCT staff, volunteers, and security: Athletes should follow accreditation, entry, and security processes even when inconvenient, and raise any problem through the Athlete Manager (Section 12) rather than through confrontation.
- Social media: comments online (including political ones) fall under both the expression framework (Section 7) and the anti-harassment rules. Insulting, harassing, or threatening other athletes, staff, or officials online is a breach.

10. Threats and abuse (including online and off-venue)

WCT treats threats and abuse against any participant as among the most serious breaches of this Code. No athlete or team should ever feel unsafe, or hunted for taking part in a Chase Tag® event.

- **Zero tolerance.** No one may threaten, intimidate, or abuse another participant, inside or outside the venue, by any means (face-to-face, direct message, social media, group chats, email, or any other channel). This covers conduct aimed at an individual or a whole team, single acts or coordinated campaigns (organized pile-ons, doxxing, sharing private information). Examples: threats of violence, threats to a person's safety or family, discriminatory or hateful abuse, sexual harassment, stalking, repeated unwanted contact.
- **If you are affected:** report to the WCT Athlete Manager (Section 12) as soon as you safely can; preserve evidence (screenshots, handles, dates, times, witnesses); you may bring a support person. If in immediate danger, contact venue security or emergency services first.
- **WCT's response:** welfare first; confidentiality; interim protective measures (keeping parties apart, restricting contact, suspending accreditation pending review); investigation and sanctions at the serious end of the ladder; and support to report to police where conduct may be criminal.
- **No retaliation.** Retaliation against anyone who reports, supports, or witnesses a report in good faith is itself a breach. A good-faith report that is not upheld is not penalised; a knowingly false or malicious report may be.

11. The WCT Athlete Manager and the reporting / mediation process

11.1 The role

WCT will create a dedicated Athlete Manager (an Ombudsman / HR-style contact), present and identifiable to all teams at every WCT Event Pyramid event.

This person:

- provides a safe, neutral channel to report issues such as threats, discrimination, or disputes, on the ground and during or after the event;
- mediates disputes between athletes or teams;
- maintains a formal record / paper trail of incidents so WCT can track patterns and escalate consistently.

11.2 Resolve directly first, where safe

For ordinary disagreements, athletes are encouraged to speak with the other person directly first, honestly and in good faith, before escalating. Many conflicts are best resolved by conversation.

Exception: discrimination, threats, or abuse should be reported directly to the Athlete Manager (do not require the affected person to confront the other party first), and protective measures apply.

11.3 Mediation

Where direct resolution is not possible or tension already exists, WCT mediates, typically bringing together the **Athlete Manager, the two team captains, and the two individuals** to find a solution that works for everyone.

WCT applies a standard conflict-management approach:

1. investigate the root cause;
2. talk to both sides neutrally;
3. set ground rules;
4. brainstorm collaborative solutions; and
5. establish an actionable plan.

12. Cheating and integrity

- Cheating, or attempting to cheat, harms the game and the community and is a breach of this Code.
- WCT will develop and publish a clear anti-cheating process (detection, reporting, investigation, and sanctions).

13. Substances: doping, alcohol, and cannabis

- No doping. WCT follows the IOC anti-doping guidelines. The use of banned performance-enhancing substances or methods is prohibited and is sanctioned in line with those guidelines.
- WCT will implement alcohol and cannabis testing at the next World Championship (WCT8). A positive result leads to immediate disqualification.
- WCT has minors competing and many young people and families attending its events. Athletes are role models, and a clean, substance-free field of play protects them and the wider community.

14. Facilities and shared spaces

- Athletes and teams **MUST** keep changing rooms, training areas, and shared spaces clean, and treat venue facilities, equipment, and furnishings with respect.
- Changing rooms **MUST** be handed back in the condition they were received. Before leaving, teams **MUST** remove rubbish, strapping and tape, food and drink and all personal belongings and report any damage. (At WCT7, some teams gave back their changing rooms in very poor, dirty conditions. This is not acceptable.)
- Cleaning fees may apply. Where a team returns a changing room or shared space in poor or excessively dirty condition, WCT may charge a cleaning fee deducted from the team's cash prize where applicable, or invoiced to the team. Deliberate or repeated mistreatment of facilities, or damage, may also be treated as a conduct breach and sanctioned under Section 15.

- Follow venue and security processes at entry and backstage; raise problems through the Athlete Manager rather than confronting staff.

15. Investigation and sanctions

WCT assesses breaches fairly and proportionately. A non-exhaustive ladder:

1. **Informal reminder / verbal warning.**
2. **Formal written warning.**
3. **In-match cards** (yellow/red) for on-Quad™ behavioral and safety breaches (See Sporting Regulations).
4. **Financial penalty:** fines **deducted from any cash prize** the team wins at the event; where there is no prize or it is smaller than the penalty, the balance carries as a debt to be settled before a future WCT entry.
5. **Ranking penalty:** lowering the team's official WCT ranking (affecting qualification for the next Worlds).
6. **Eviction / suspension** from part or all the current event.
7. **Disqualification**, and for serious or repeated breaches, **temporary or permanent ban** from WCT events.

Sanctions may be combined. Intentional acts are sanctioned more harshly than unintentional ones. Aggravating factors include targeting an individual or group, organizing or manipulating others, repeat behavior, and any conduct affecting athlete safety.

16. Appeals

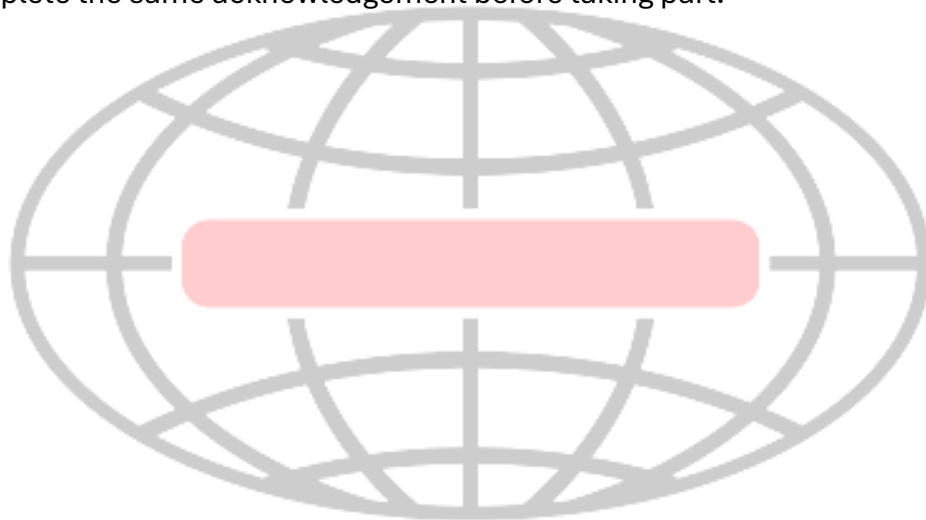
- **WCT Disciplinary Appeals Panel.** An independent panel of [three] members for each appeal, where none of the members involved in the original decision are present and none of the members are connected to an involved team.
- **Window:** appeal in writing within 7 days of notification (or within 24 hours where the sanction affects continued participation in a running event).
- **Process and outcome:** the Panel follows the following process:
 - a) reviews the record and the appellant's submission,
 - b) may request more information, and
 - c) issues a written decision within 14 days (or as soon as practicable mid-event).

The Panel may uphold, reduce, or overturn the sanction; its decision is **final**. Lodging an appeal does not automatically pause a sanction; the Panel may, where it considers it fair to do so, temporarily suspend the enforcement of any sanction pending further review or appeal.

17. Acknowledgement (mandatory)

Agreement to this Code is a **condition of entry** and a mandatory part of the Rulebook, captured at registration:

- **Each athlete** confirms they have read, understood, and agree to abide by this Code; registration cannot complete without it.
- **Each team captain** additionally confirms, on behalf of the team, that all members and staff are aware of and will abide by it.
- WCT links the current version at the point of acknowledgement and records the version and date each person accepted. Late additions or substitutes **MUST** complete the same acknowledgement before taking part.



WCT™