

October 24, 2024

Update on Gymnastics Ontario Ruling and Niagara Falls Lightning Gymnastics Club Action Plan

Dear Members,

We are writing to provide an important update on the recent rulings from Gymnastics Ontario (GO) and the corrective actions being implemented by the Niagara Falls Lightning Gymnastics Club (NFLGC) Board to ensure the safety and well-being of our athletes.

Gymnastics Ontario Ruling Overview:

Following complaints against coaches Andrei Gorodetski and Valentina Kashkevich, GO conducted a thorough investigation, resulting in the following key findings:

- Among other findings of fact, the Discipline Panel appointed to consider the allegations against Mr. Gorodetski and Ms. Kashkevich found that coaching practices carried out were against the best interests of the athletes' development as a whole person.
- As a result, both coaches were suspended from all Gymnastics Ontario activities for up to six months. Their GO suspension will be lifted on October 25, 2024, following successful completion of mandatory Safe Sport training and other courses.
- Following the GO suspension, a further one-week paid suspension is being implemented by NFLGC for both coaches which will end of November 1, 2024.
- Upon return, the coaches will be placed on probation for one year, with continuous monitoring to ensure compliance with GO's standards.

GO's statement has been communicated to all GO clubs and posted on the GO website:

[Gymnastics Ontario Membership Suspension – Andrei Gorodetski and Valentina Kashkevich](#)

"We take the safety of all our participants very seriously and are committed to learning from this and implementing whole-hearted changes to our systems that will improve our environment and our accountability to our community"

Chelsea Pitul, President of Niagara Falls Lightning Gymnastics Club

NFLGC Board's Comprehensive Action Plan:

The Board has developed an action plan to address the findings, protect our athletes, and ensure that the Club meets the highest standards of safety and governance. Below are the key elements of this plan:

1. Policy Revisions:

We will revise our Code of Conduct to include a zero-tolerance policy for emotional or physical abuse. The club's Discipline and Complaints Policy will also be updated to ensure transparency

and independence, with any issues related to athlete welfare handled by the Board or an independent third party.



2. Enhanced Communication:

We are establishing regular feedback sessions with parents and athletes to ensure their concerns can be raised safely and without fear of retaliation. In addition, confidential reporting mechanisms are being put in place.

3. Monitoring of Coaching Practices:

We will implement ongoing internal reviews and external third-party audits to ensure that all coaches are adhering to GO's coaching standards. Observations of training sessions will be conducted regularly to ensure compliance.

4. Coach Development and Training:

All coaches will undergo continuous professional development, including courses on Safe Sport, mental health, and positive coaching techniques. We will also mandate specific training on long-term athlete development to ensure athletes are developed safely and progressively.

5. Improved Injury Reporting:

A robust injury reporting system will be implemented to ensure that all incidents are documented, and parents are informed promptly. This will include regular injury trend reporting.

6. Cultural Shift and Leadership Evaluation:

The Board is committed to creating a culture that prioritizes athlete well-being, mutual respect, and positive collaboration. This may involve leadership changes if necessary to ensure a strong, athlete centered culture.

7. Board Training:

We are implementing a comprehensive training program for all Board members to ensure effective governance. This includes courses on safe sport, financial literacy, conflict resolution, and child protection.

Next Steps:

We are dedicated to the safety and well-being of every athlete in our club. These corrective actions are a crucial step toward rebuilding trust and ensuring that NFLGC provides a positive, supportive, and safe environment for all athletes, coaches, and families.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out. We will continue to provide updates as we make progress on these initiatives. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,
The Board of Directors
Niagara Falls Lightning Gymnastics Club