



West Virginia Soccer Association

**October 18, 2022
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Dear Club and League Representatives:

Recently, our National Governing Body (NGB), U.S. Soccer, released the findings of a yearlong independent investigation into allegations of abusive behavior and sexual misconduct in women's professional soccer. [The report](#) makes clear that changes are needed at every level of our sport. In brief, Investigator Sally Yates wrote, 'Some of the misconduct dates to predecessor (women's professional) leagues and some to youth soccer. The roots of abuse in women's soccer run deep and will not be eliminated through reform in NWSL (National Women's Soccer League) alone'.

The report's findings should serve as an instant reminder on the need to continue our collaborative efforts on protecting our participants. [WVSA's Athlete & Participant Safety Program](#), encompasses/describes our specific Background Screening process, Mandatory Reporting Requirements, Training/Education, Prohibited Conduct, Limits related to One-on-One interactions, as well as Monitoring and Enforcement.

The U.S. Center for SafeSport training modules required of our team officials, club/league board members, etc., are intended to provide tools, vocabulary, and information to better monitor our sport, minimize the opportunities for sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and other types of misconduct, and respond to concerns. In addition, the [U.S. Center for SafeSport has rolled out optional trainings for](#) parents and athletes. They include: 'Parent's Guide to Misconduct in Sport' training (30 min. course), 'SafeSport for Youth Athletes' (ages 13-17) and 'SafeSport for Kids' (ages 5-12). These trainings are free, and the youth trainings require parental consent. To access the parent and youth trainings, [click here](#) and create an account. Once the account is created, these courses are displayed in 'My Courses'. Parents and minor athletes may create unaffiliated accounts which will provide access to U.S. Center for SafeSport parent and youth trainings, free of charge.

According to Ms. Yates, from youth to pro leagues and everywhere in between, abuse and misconduct became 'normalized'. Players were 'conditioned to accept and respond to abusive coaching behaviors as youth players,' the report states. 'By the time they reach the professional level, many do not recognize the conduct as abusive.' As U.S. Soccer President, Cindy Cone relayed, 'We all can – and must – do better'.

In closing, should you or others need to make a report on suspected violations of WVSA's Athlete and Participant Safety Program, [click here](#). Also, the U.S. Center for SafeSport's Centralized Disciplinary Database can be accessed by visiting their website.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Dave Laraba, WVSA Executive Director at dave@wvsoccer.net or call 304-654-1849.