EGCA Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Framework

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Summary of key responsibilities

This summary highlights the main requirements of the EGCA Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Framework. The full Code is deliberately detailed because the matters it covers are important and may have serious consequences for individuals, clubs and EGCA. Its length reflects EGCA's commitment to conducting its activities responsibly, consistently, accessibly and fairly, and to setting clear expectations before problems arise. This summary does not replace the full Code. Clubs and individuals remain responsible for understanding and complying with the provisions that apply to them.

Everyone involved in an EGCA tournament must behave respectfully, protect safety and welfare, support fair competition, declare conflicts of interest, protect confidential information and report concerns promptly. Before participation, clubs must make the full Code available in an accessible format and ensure that players, coaches, team staff, delegates and accompanying supporters understand the general standards and the requirements relevant to their roles.

Concerns may be reported to office@egca.info. Anyone who believes that a person is in immediate danger, that a crime may have occurred or that urgent safeguarding action is required must contact the appropriate emergency service or responsible authority without waiting for EGCA. No one will face disciplinary action for making an honest report that is not upheld, and no one may retaliate against a person who raises a concern or assists an enquiry in good faith. EGCA will use a fair, impartial and proportionate process when considering alleged misconduct. Sanctions may affect tournament participation, accreditation or non-elected EGCA roles. Decisions concerning club expulsion or elected office remain subject to the authority and procedures set out in the EGCA Statutes.

Reading this summary alone is not sufficient. Clubs should draw particular attention to sections 3, 4, 5 and 6 and ensure that everyone attending on their behalf receives and understands the sections relevant to their role. Officials should also receive section 7 where relevant.

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1. Purpose and principles

EGCA organises and supports European club goalball competitions. This Code explains the behaviour expected at EGCA tournaments and activities linked to them. It aims to keep people safe, support fair and inclusive competition, protect the integrity of EGCA events and provide a fair way to deal with misconduct.

Respect: treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and care.

Inclusion: identify and remove barriers so that blind and partially sighted people can take part fully.

Integrity: make honest and fair decisions without improper influence.

Safety: the physical and emotional welfare of participants comes first.

Fairness: concerns are handled consistently, promptly and without retaliation.

Cooperation: clubs work constructively across countries, languages and cultures for the benefit of European club goalball.

2 Scope and responsibility

2.1 For this Code, **"Board"** means the EGCA Executive Board; **"club"** means an EGCA member club; **"EGCA tournament"** includes the official tournament and the linked activities described in section 2.2; **"misconduct"** means conduct that breaches this Code; and **"panel"** includes a single impartial decision-maker where EGCA appoints one person rather than a group.

2.2 This Code applies to EGCA member clubs and everyone taking part in or supporting an EGCA tournament. This includes players, coaches, team staff, referees, table officials, classifiers, delegates, volunteers, club representatives, event organisers, contractors and other accredited people. It applies at the venue and during official activities linked to the tournament. These activities include registration, meetings, ceremonies, official transport, accommodation arranged for the event and relevant online communication.

2.3 This Code does not normally apply to a club's own activities, training or national competitions. It may apply if conduct is directly linked to an EGCA tournament or affects a person's eligibility or safety at an EGCA event. Outside EGCA tournaments, clubs and individuals must follow their own club rules, national governing body rules and national law. Safeguarding, criminal law, anti-doping rules and other legal requirements take priority. EGCA will work with the responsible authority when needed.

2.4 EGCA may consider conduct after a tournament has ended if it happened during the tournament or was directly linked to it. Evidence may include a livestream, video or audio recording, photograph, official report, message, social media post or other reliable information. EGCA may still investigate conduct that was not seen, understood or reported at the time. Reports and decisions to consider conduct after a tournament are subject to the reporting provisions in section 9 and the effective-date provisions in section 14.

3 Standards expected of everyone at EGCA tournaments

3.1 Everyone must follow the current IBSA Goalball Rules and Regulations, EGCA competition rules and lawful instructions from authorised tournament officials. The IBSA rules cover match play, equipment, penalties, protests, referee powers and other technical matters. This Code covers wider behaviour that is not fully covered by the rules of play.

3.2 Everyone must be treated with dignity. Discrimination, harassment, bullying, intimidation, threats, humiliation, victimisation and abuse are prohibited.

3.3 Language and behaviour must be respectful in person and in all tournament-related communication, including email, messages, social media and livestreams. Abuse, insults, threats, discrimination, offensive language and swearing at another person are not acceptable. This applies in every language, including a person's first language. Conduct may still be misconduct if other people did not understand it at the time.

3.4 Personal boundaries, privacy and confidentiality must be respected. Personal, medical or safeguarding information must not be shared without authority.

3.5 Physical, verbal, emotional, sexual or financial abuse, exploitation, grooming and retaliation are prohibited.

3.6 A position of trust, authority, influence or access to athletes must not be misused.

3.7 Venue, official travel, accommodation, emergency and safeguarding arrangements must be followed.

3.8 No person may participate in or perform an EGCA tournament role while impaired by alcohol, illegal drugs or another substance that makes participation unsafe.

3.9 Prohibited substances or methods must not be possessed or used. Applicable anti-doping rules and investigations must be observed.

3.10 Betting on an EGCA event by a person participating in it or holding inside information is prohibited. No person may manipulate or improperly influence a match, draw, decision or result.

3.11 No one may offer, ask for or accept a bribe, hidden payment, inappropriate gift, favour or benefit linked to an EGCA decision or competition.

3.12 Anyone who has, may have or appears to have a conflict of interest must declare it. They must follow any instructions given to manage the conflict.

3.13 Confidential or inside information must not be misused for personal or competitive advantage.

3.14 EGCA, club and tournament property, funds, equipment, data and credentials must be protected and used only for authorised purposes.

3.15 A concern must be reported without delay where there is a reasonable belief that a person may be at risk, a crime or safeguarding breach may have occurred, competition integrity may have been affected, or serious misconduct may have taken place. Everyone must cooperate honestly with reasonable and proportionate enquiries.

3.16 No person may retaliate against, disadvantage or threaten anyone who raises a concern or assists an investigation in good faith.

3.17 Everyone must follow final decisions, sanctions and reasonable actions required under this Code.

4 Responsibilities of clubs

4.1 Accept responsibility for the conduct of the club's players, coaches, team staff, delegates and accompanying supporters throughout the EGCA tournament.

4.2 Ensure everyone attending on the club's behalf understands the standards in this Code that apply to their role before the tournament.

4.3 Have a suitable team contact for conduct, welfare and safeguarding matters during the event.

4.4 Provide accurate entries, eligibility information, declarations and documents by the required deadlines.

4.5 Cooperate with tournament organisers to ensure that event information and arrangements are accessible to the club's delegation.

4.6 Take reasonable steps to safeguard members of the club's delegation during official tournament travel, accommodation and activities.

4.7 Take reasonable steps to manage the behaviour of supporters linked to the club if their behaviour affects safety, access, fairness or the reputation of the tournament.

4.8 Do not try to influence officials. Any hospitality offered to officials must be reasonable, open and not linked to a decision.

4.9 Tell EGCA without delay about any serious incident, safeguarding report, police involvement or current sanction that may affect participation in the tournament.

4.10 Preserve relevant evidence, cooperate with authorised EGCA enquiries and implement any interim measure or final sanction.

5 Code of Conduct for players

5.1 Players must follow the current IBSA Goalball Rules and Regulations and EGCA competition rules. They must compete honestly, respect the spirit of the game and follow this Code.

5.2 Players must respect opponents, teammates, coaches, officials, volunteers and spectators in victory and defeat.

5.3 Players must respect instructions from referees and tournament officials. Any question, protest or appeal about a match must use the process in the current IBSA Goalball Rules and Regulations and any extra EGCA competition rules.

5.4 Players must not deliberately falsify documentation or eligibility information or otherwise act dishonestly in connection with entry to or participation in an EGCA tournament.

5.5 Relevant health, access or support needs should be shared confidentially with an appropriate team representative so that reasonable tournament arrangements can be considered.

5.6 Players must attend matches and official activities prepared and punctually or notify the appropriate team representative as early as possible if unable to participate.

5.7 Players must not deliberately provoke, intimidate or endanger another person, or engage in conduct that goes beyond a match penalty and may amount to misconduct under this Code.

5.8 Non-public tournament information must not be sought or shared for betting, manipulation or unfair sporting advantage.

5.9 Conduct at the venue and during official tournament travel, accommodation, ceremonies and tournament-related online activity must not cause, or create a serious risk of causing, identifiable harm to other participants, the safety or integrity of the tournament, or the legitimate reputation of the club, EGCA or European club goalball.

6 Code of Conduct for coaches and team staff

6.1 Coaches and team staff are expected to place player welfare, dignity and safe participation ahead of competitive results.

6.2 Appropriate professional boundaries must be maintained throughout the tournament. A position of trust, authority or dependency must never be exploited.

6.3 Instructions and feedback must be respectful. Fear, threats, humiliation, discriminatory language, collective punishment and unsafe practices are not acceptable.

6.4 Team activities at the tournament must be supervised responsibly, taking account of venue risks, emergency arrangements and individual access or support needs.

6.5 Coaches and team staff must not shout at, pressure, intimidate, approach or try to influence a referee, goal judge, table official, classifier or other tournament official while a decision is being discussed. This includes comments or instructions from the team bench, whether they are direct or indirect and whatever language is used. It may be considered misconduct to make an official feel unable or uncomfortable about giving an honest and independent decision. This applies even if the behaviour does not change the match decision.

6.6 Officials and opponents must be treated with respect. Technical concerns must be raised calmly through the head coach, team manager or formal protest process.

6.7 Coaches and team staff must not instruct, encourage, conceal or assist cheating, abuse, match manipulation, deliberate eligibility misrepresentation or anti-doping violations.

6.8 Medical, classification, safeguarding and personal information must be handled confidentially and only for a proper tournament purpose.

6.9 Any conflict of interest relevant to the tournament must be declared promptly.

6.10 Welfare or safeguarding concerns must be reported through the appropriate route rather than investigated personally.

7 Code of Conduct for officials

7.1 Officials must apply the current IBSA Goalball Rules and Regulations and EGCA tournament guidance fairly and consistently. Match decisions and penalties are for the appointed officials. Conduct outside or beyond the rules of play may be reported and considered under this Code.

7.2 Officials must prepare properly, arrive punctually, wear the required uniform and perform their duties to an appropriate professional standard.

7.3 Decisions must not be affected by nationality, club links, friendships, pressure, gifts or personal interests.

7.4 Officials must declare any conflict of interest as soon as possible. They must step away from the role if there is a reasonable concern that they may not be impartial.

7.5 Decisions must be communicated calmly, clearly and accessibly while maintaining appropriate authority.

7.6 Officials must always treat players and team staff with respect.

7.7 Confidential information about appointments, protests, disciplinary matters or participants must not be disclosed without authority.

7.8 Hospitality, gifts or favours beyond reasonable arrangements authorised for the tournament must not be requested or accepted.

7.9 Serious incidents must be recorded and reported accurately, promptly, objectively and without speculation or embellishment.

7.10 Officials must remain calm when challenged and use tournament procedures to manage misconduct.

7.11 Rules knowledge and role-specific competence must be current.

7.12 Officials must not perform their role while impaired or where fitness, fatigue or another factor makes safe and fair performance unlikely.

8 Safeguarding, equality and accessibility

8.1 Everyone at an EGCA tournament must be treated fairly and with respect. Abuse, discrimination, exploitation and retaliation are not accepted.

8.2 EGCA will provide information in an accessible electronic format and make reasonable adjustments so that people can report concerns and take part in meetings or hearings.

8.3 If someone is in immediate danger, or a crime may have happened, contact the emergency services or responsible authority in the country where it happened. A report to EGCA must not delay this.

9 Raising and receiving concerns

9.1 Any concern about conduct at, or directly linked to, an EGCA tournament should be sent to office@egca.info. A participant, club, official, witness or person acting for someone who needs support may make a report. EGCA will make sure that the report is handled by someone who is not involved in the matter and does not have a conflict of interest.

9.2 The report should give as much useful information as possible, including what happened, when and where it happened, who was involved, any witnesses and any evidence. A person will not face action for making an honest report that is not upheld. A report that is knowingly false or malicious may itself be misconduct.

9.3 **Reporting period.** Concerns must be reported as soon as reasonably practicable and normally within 30 calendar days of the incident. For a continuing course of conduct, the period runs from the most recent incident forming part of that conduct. A report should not be delayed while all supporting evidence is collected. Relevant evidence may be provided afterwards, subject to the case timetable and a fair opportunity for the person or club concerned to respond.

9.4 **Late reports.** A report received after the normal reporting period will not automatically be rejected. An impartial person appointed by the Board will decide whether there are sufficient reasons to consider it, taking account of the reason for and length of the delay, when the concern or relevant evidence could reasonably have been identified, any fear of retaliation or accessibility or language barrier, the seriousness of the allegation, any continuing risk and whether a fair investigation remains possible. The decision and reasons must be recorded and communicated to the reporting person and, where appropriate, the person or club concerned.

9.5 **Exceptions to the normal reporting period.** The normal 30-day reporting period does not apply to safeguarding concerns, suspected criminal conduct, anti-doping matters or serious threats to competition integrity, including suspected match manipulation or bribery. These concerns must still be reported promptly. EGCA will consider its authority, any applicable legal or external reporting deadlines and whether referral to another competent authority is required. The absence of an internal reporting deadline does not extend EGCA's authority or remove the requirement for a fair process.

9.6 **Match protests and technical decisions.** A report under this Code is separate from a match protest, video-review request or technical appeal. It does not extend the deadlines for those procedures or provide an alternative route to reopen a technical match decision. A later disciplinary sanction may affect competition points, rankings or placements only where that sanction is expressly authorised by the rules applicable to the conduct and the requirements of section 11.4 are met.

10 Disciplinary procedure

10.1 **Action during a tournament.** Before each tournament, EGCA will appoint an official representative from the Competition Committee or the Board ("EGCA Representative"). The EGCA Representative may deal with conduct that needs an immediate response during the tournament, including behaviour that threatens safety, seriously disrupts the event, puts an official or participant under pressure or may affect fair competition. The representative may take temporary action needed to protect people and allow the tournament to continue, including giving a formal instruction, limiting contact, removing someone from the venue or suspending their accreditation for the rest of the event. Before imposing an interim measure, the representative should, where reasonably practicable, tell the affected person what the concern is and allow a brief response. Any interim measure must be necessary, proportionate, time-limited and reviewed if circumstances change. It must not be treated as evidence that misconduct has occurred. The representative must record the action taken and the reasons for it and report the matter to the Board after the tournament.

10.2 **Concerns received after a tournament.** Concerns sent to office@egca.info after an event will be passed to the Board, or to a person appointed by the Board, for an initial review. The review will consider how serious the concern is, whether anyone remains at risk, whether EGCA has authority to deal with it, whether another organisation must be told and whether there is enough information to continue. The Board may ask the Competition Committee for technical advice. However, a Competition Committee member must not decide the case if they were involved in the event or may be a witness.

10.3 **What happens next.** Action taken by the EGCA Representative during a tournament is temporary. It is not a final disciplinary decision. After the tournament, the Board will decide whether to close the matter, refer it to a club or another organisation, deal with it informally or use the full disciplinary procedure. Serious or repeated misconduct, and matters involving safeguarding, competition integrity or EGCA, should normally use the full procedure.

10.4 **Choosing the decision-maker.** If a full disciplinary case is needed, the Board will appoint an impartial person or panel to consider it. No one may decide the case if they took the immediate decision at the tournament, made the allegation, are an important witness or have a close link to

anyone involved. The Competition Committee may provide facts or technical advice but must not decide the case if this would create a conflict of interest.

10.5 **Telling the person about the allegation.** The person accused of misconduct must be told what the allegation is, which parts of the Code may have been broken, what may happen and how they can respond.

10.6 **Evidence.** Relevant information may include written accounts, official reports, video, audio, messages, records and witness evidence. Only material necessary to decide the case should be collected and shared.

10.7 **Response and meeting.** The person accused may provide evidence, name relevant witnesses and ask for a meeting. Most cases may be decided from written evidence. A meeting should be offered if it is important to decide who is telling the truth, important facts are strongly disputed, or a serious sanction may be imposed. A person involved in the disciplinary process may be accompanied or supported by a person of their choice, provided this does not compromise the fairness, safety or confidentiality of the process. EGCA will arrange reasonable adjustments, accessible information and interpretation or language support where reasonably required.

10.8 **Level of proof.** A breach is proved where the panel decides, on the balance of probabilities, that it is more likely than not to have happened. The panel must assess the quality, reliability and overall weight of the evidence, taking particular care where the allegation or possible consequences are serious.

10.9 **Decision.** The panel will give a written decision with reasons. It will explain the allegation, the main evidence, what the panel decided, any sanction within its authority, when it starts and how to appeal. Where expulsion of a member may be justified, the panel will make findings and a recommendation to the Executive Board, which will decide the matter in accordance with the Statutes. Personal and safeguarding information must be protected.

10.10 **Timing.** EGCA should normally acknowledge a report within five working days, complete the initial review within 14 calendar days and tell the affected parties whether the matter will proceed. Where a full disciplinary procedure is used, EGCA should provide an indicative timetable and explain any material delay. These periods may be extended where this is necessary for safety, fairness, translation, accessibility, evidence gathering or cooperation with another authority.

10.11 **Communication.** EGCA will tell the person who raised the concern when the process has concluded and, where lawful and appropriate, whether the concern was upheld and whether action has been taken. Detailed personal information or the precise sanction may be withheld where confidentiality, safeguarding or data protection requires this.

11 Sanctions and remedial action

11.1 Sanctions under this Code are separate from match penalties, forfeits, fines or other action under the IBSA Goalball Rules and Regulations or EGCA competition rules. EGCA must not use this disciplinary process to reconsider a technical match decision. However, EGCA may consider the same incident under this Code if it also involves serious, repeated or wider misconduct. Any action must be lawful and proportionate. EGCA will consider the seriousness of the conduct, the harm or risk caused, whether it was deliberate, previous behaviour, cooperation, genuine regret, action already taken and the need to protect people and fair competition. EGCA may use one or more of the following actions:

a) advice, mediation or an agreed behaviour plan, where appropriate and safe;
b) a formal warning or reprimand;
c) an apology, education, supervision, safeguarding or accessibility action, or another lawful and proportionate restorative measure, including correcting or removing harmful content and returning, repairing or replacing property where appropriate;
d) conditions on accreditation, attendance, contact, duties or participation, including proportionate monitoring, reporting or evidence of compliance;

e) removal from a match, venue, non-elected role, appointment, award or programme, provided that an elected Board member may be dismissed only by the General Assembly in accordance with the EGCA Statutes;
f) suspension for a stated period or number of EGCA events;
g) restriction or withdrawal of EGCA accreditation, attendance, appointment, participation, approval to host or organise an EGCA event, or other tournament privileges;
h) expulsion of a member club by the Executive Board in accordance with the EGCA Statutes;
i) ineligibility for a non-elected EGCA committee, contract or representative role, or a recommendation to the General Assembly concerning eligibility for or removal from elected office where permitted by the Statutes;
j) referral to a club, national federation, IBSA, anti-doping body, safeguarding authority, police or other competent organisation;
k) publication of an anonymised or limited decision where necessary for transparency, deterrence or participant safety and consistent with data protection requirements; and
l) for the most serious misconduct, deduction or removal of competition points, reduction or removal of a ranking, or withdrawal of a competition placement, subject to section 11.4.

11.2 Any sanction affecting club membership may be imposed only in accordance with the EGCA Statutes. A member may be expelled only by the Executive Board, on the grounds and through the warning and internal appeals process set out in the Statutes. A disciplinary person or panel may make findings and recommendations but may not itself expel a member. A temporary restriction on tournament participation does not suspend or terminate membership.

11.3 Where a sanction continues for more than one competition season, the written decision must state whether and when it may be reviewed, the criteria for review and any conditions for return to participation or appointment. EGCA may require evidence that relevant conditions have been completed before reinstatement.

11.4 **Competition points, rankings and placements.** A sanction under section 11.1(l) may be imposed only following the full disciplinary procedure. The panel must explain why the misconduct is sufficiently serious to justify the sanction, why a lesser sanction would not be sufficient, and how the club or team affected is responsible under this Code. The written decision must identify the competition and season affected, the points, ranking or placement to be removed or adjusted, and how the revised standings will be calculated. The panel must consider the effect on other teams and any penalty already imposed for the same conduct. The sanction must be consistent with the EGCA Statutes and applicable competition rules, must not be used to reopen a technical match decision, and remains subject to appeal under section 12.

12 Appeals

12.1 A person or club directly affected by a final decision may appeal within 14 calendar days of receiving it. The appeal must explain at least one of the following: the process was seriously unfair; the evidence did not reasonably support the decision; important new evidence is available that could not reasonably have been provided earlier; or the sanction is clearly too severe.

12.2 A person or panel that was not involved in the first decision will consider the appeal. They may keep, change or overturn the decision, order a new hearing or reject the appeal, subject to any authority reserved to the Executive Board or General Assembly by the EGCA Statutes. Where the appeal concerns expulsion of a member, the appeal outcome will be referred to the Executive Board for the formal decision required by the Statutes. The sanction will stay in place during the appeal unless the appeal body temporarily stops it. The appeal decision is final within EGCA. This does not remove any rights under the EGCA Statutes or the law.

13 Data, confidentiality and records

13.1 Information must be kept confidential and shared only with people who need it to protect safety, ensure a fair process, enforce a decision or meet a legal duty. EGCA cannot promise complete confidentiality. Records must be accurate, stored securely, kept only for as long as needed and transferred safely when office-holders change. EGCA should keep a restricted record of current sanctions so that tournament and accreditation decisions are applied consistently.

14 How this Code is applied

14.1 **Effective date and earlier conduct.** This Code takes effect on 1 January 2027. It does not create a disciplinary breach or authorise a sanction for conduct occurring before that date. Any earlier conduct may be considered only under the rules and powers applicable to it. Later amendments must state their effective date and must not retrospectively create a breach or increase the sanctions available for earlier conduct.

14.2 **Applicable law and authority.** This Code operates within EGCA's lawful authority under its Statutes and must be applied consistently with applicable law, including the law governing EGCA as a registered association, any applicable European Union requirements and mandatory requirements in the country where an event takes place. Applicable law takes priority over EGCA's internal rules.

14.3 **Relationship with other rules.** Within EGCA's internal governance, the legally effective Statutes take priority over this Code. The Code must be read alongside EGCA competition regulations, the current IBSA Goalball Rules and Regulations and any other external sporting requirements binding on EGCA or the relevant competition. Match play, technical decisions, protests and technical appeals remain governed by the applicable competition and playing rules; wider misconduct is considered under this Code.

14.4 **Conflicts and clarification.** No provision gives a Board member, committee or panel powers reserved to another body by law or the Statutes. Any unresolved conflict must be referred to the Board for clarification and, where necessary, legal advice before a final disciplinary decision is made. This does not prevent lawful and proportionate urgent protective action.

14.5 EGCA will maintain and publish a current, accessible route for reporting concerns and will ensure that each report is passed promptly to an appropriate impartial person.

14.6 As part of the EGCA membership process, each club confirms acceptance of this Code on behalf of the club and the people it enters, accredits or brings to EGCA tournaments.

14.7 Before participation in an EGCA tournament, each club must take reasonable steps to make this Code available in an accessible format to its players, coaches, team staff, delegates and accompanying supporters and explain how concerns can be reported.

14.8 EGCA provides accessible tournament information and role-specific guidance where needed.

14.9 EGCA will have a clear process for declaring conflicts of interest and deciding when someone must step away from a case. EGCA will also ensure that impartial people are available to consider disciplinary cases and appeals.

14.10 The Board will review this Code after the first competition season and at least every two years after that.