

Addressing Conflict in Sport: A Guide to Determining the Right Place for Your Concern

Conflicts and concerns arise in every sport environment. This guide outlines the difference between **club-level issues**, **Volleyball Alberta (VA) issues**, and **maltreatment**, which must be reported directly through the **Alberta Safe Sport Complaint Mechanism (ABSSCM)**.

This tool is meant to be used *before filing a complaint* to help you navigate the correct pathway and ensure concerns are addressed appropriately, respectfully, and efficiently.

1. Start With Direct, Respectful Communication (Most Concerns)

Many issues - miscommunication, expectations, team dynamics, disagreements - are best resolved through conversation with the person involved (coach, team manager, parent). Use:

- “I” statements
- Clarifying questions
- Private, calm conversation
- The 24-Hour Rule (unless safety is at immediate risk)

If unresolved, follow your **club’s** escalation process.

2. Issues That Stay at the Club Level

These concerns **should NOT** go to the ABSSCM:

- Team selection / roster decisions*
- Playing time *
- Coaching decisions or style
- Communication issues
- Team expectations
- Scheduling
- General behaviour concerns that **do not** meet AB UCC definitions
- Parent or spectator behaviour
- Operational issues (fees, refunds, fundraising, etc.)

*Unless the behaviour includes suspected **maltreatment** (abuse, harassment, discrimination, etc.)

For further detail please see Appendix A on page 4

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Clubs are responsible for:

- Day-to-day supervision and behaviour management
- Codes of conduct
- Local conflict resolution
- Addressing inappropriate but non-maltreatment behaviour
- Enforcing club policies
- Documentation and follow-up
- Referring possible maltreatment to the ABSSCM

3. Concerns Addressed by Volleyball Alberta

VA becomes involved when issues exceed the authority or scope of the club. Examples:

- Violations of VA policies (e.g. recruiting, illegal rosters, age falsification)
- Repeated behaviour-pattern concerns not resolved at the club level
- Conflicts between clubs
- Misconduct at VA events (pre-match, in-match, or post-match)
- Referee-related concerns that require VA follow-up
- Violations of competition regulations
- Incident reports from VA tournaments

VA does **not** investigate maltreatment. All maltreatment must go to the ABSSCM.

4. When to Report to the ABSSCM (Maltreatment)

The **ABSSCM** handles all behaviour defined as *maltreatment* under the **AB UCC**:

- Abuse (physical, emotional, sexual)
- Harassment
- Discrimination
- Grooming or boundary violations
- Neglect
- Sexual misconduct

These concerns must **not** be handled by clubs or VA.

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Reporting Process:

- Use the “Report a Complaint” button on the VA website or call 1-855-603-0483
- Select **AB UCC Violation**
- An independent ALIAS case manager contacts the complainant within 48 working hours
- Reports are confidential and managed outside of clubs and VA

5. Quick Reference – Where Does My Concern Belong?

Type of Concern	Handled By
Team selection, playing time, communication, coaching style	Club
Spectator behaviour, team expectations, operational matters	Club
Policy violations (recruiting, illegal rosters, age falsification)	Volleyball Alberta
Behaviour concerns between clubs	Volleyball Alberta
In-match code-of-conduct issues	Referees / VA staff on site
Pre- or post-match misconduct at VA events	VA Venue Coordinator
Harassment, abuse, discrimination, grooming, neglect	ABSSCM (Independent)

6. Confidentiality

All reports made through the ABSSCM or through VA’s ALIAS reporting pathways are handled:

- Independently
- Professionally
- Confidentially
- Without involvement from the club or team staff

This ensures fairness, emotional safety, and protection for all participants.

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7. Summary

- Most concerns start and end at the club level.
- VA handles policy compliance and event-specific issues.
- All maltreatment must go directly to the ABSSCM.

This guide helps ensure concerns reach the right place and are addressed with clarity, consistency, and fairness.

APPENDIX A

Concerns Addressed at The Club Level			
Category	Description	Examples of Behaviours	How to Address It
Inappropriate Behaviour (Not a Violation of AB UCC)	Actions that are unhelpful, unprofessional, or poor practice, but do not meet the AB UCC threshold for maltreatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coach raises voice to give direction - Frustrated tone without insults - Inconsistent communication - Occasional abruptness - Minor conflict between coach and athlete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Speak directly with the coach or team staff - Use club feedback or complaint processes - Encourage improved communication and expectations
Concerning Behaviour	Behaviours that may not yet be maltreatment but could become harmful if repeated or escalating. These need attention and documentation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coach frequently yells in a way that seems emotional rather than instructional - Negative comments not directed at an individual but creating discomfort - Increasing tension or patterns of poor behaviour - Comments that approach disrespect but fall short of abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss concerns with team/club leadership - Document the behaviour - Monitor for patterns over time - Seek help from Volleyball Alberta if unsure or if club is not addressing concerns.

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Club operations, philosophy & governance	Team fees, refunds, fundraising, financial matters	-A parent wants a refund after a child leaves or is removed partway through a season	Discuss concerns with team/club leadership
Coach concerns	Knowledge gaps, tardiness, overtraining, communication, general conduct	-A coach consistently fails to plan and prepare for training -Coach absenteeism	Discuss concerns with team/club leadership
Team concerns	Selection processes, Composition of teams, Playing time guidelines, Team operations	- Number of athletes selected for a team -Who is selected	Discuss concerns with team/club leadership
Athlete expectations	Outcomes for athlete attendance or behaviour	- An athlete misses practices - An athlete misses team meetings or curfews	Discuss concerns with team/club leadership