

St. Albert Pickleball Club Board Policies

Operational

Ombudsperson

Policy

At the AGM, the SAPC membership may, from time to time, elect an Ombudsperson to provide an impartial and confidential service to members who have been unable to resolve their concerns about the application of any SAPC policy, rule or procedure.

Purpose

To provide independent redress for complaints and accountability to the membership on the just application of the powers invested in the SAPC Board.

Clarification

1. The Ombudsperson shall be independent of all existing administrative or governance structures of the SAPC.
2. The Ombudsperson will ordinarily be elected by the members at a General Membership Meeting
3. The Nominating Committee will propose two nominees.
4. The appointment shall be made for a term of two years, renewable by re-election or acclamation for further terms of two years.
5. The Ombudsperson will submit an annual report to the AGM, including statistics on the concerns and complaints received, and shall make recommendations, as necessary.
6. The Ombudsperson may not impose remedies or sanctions, or enforce any policy, rule or procedure.
7. The Ombudsperson may make appropriate recommendations with regard to resolving complaints or improving policies, rules or procedures to the SAPC Board.

The Ombudsperson is expected to:

1. assist members to resolve complaints informally, and quickly and, when appropriate, recommend solutions to help resolve complaints;
2. explain decisions taken by club representatives when complaints are not substantiated;
3. inform members about existing policies, rules and procedures and advise them as to the appropriate channel of redress for any concern or complaint they may have;

4. when appropriate, conduct an independent and objective inquiry into complaints when normal recourses have been exhausted;
5. when appropriate, conduct an independent and objective inquiry into the application of any policy, rule or procedure of the club;
6. bring to the attention of the SAPC Board any policies, rules or procedures which appear unclear or inequitable and offer advice on the development of new policies or procedures.
7. maintain suitable records of complaints, findings and recommendations. Such files shall be destroyed according to the Records Retention Schedule.

The role of the Ombudsperson is to promote:

1. fairness;
2. reasonable promptness in decisions affecting members;
3. decision-making that is based on adequate and appropriate procedures, criteria and rules;
4. clear communication, to those affected, of the procedures, criteria and rules used in making decisions.

Complaint Resolution

1. In dealing with complaints, the Ombudsperson shall act impartially, acting neither as an advocate for the member seeking assistance nor as a defender of the club but rather, shall seek to promote procedural fairness and a reasonable outcome. In so doing, the Ombudsperson shall endeavour to maintain harmonious relations with all members using tact, diplomacy and sensitivity.
2. The Ombudsperson shall have prompt access to such records, reports or documents and personal accounts of events as are required to fulfill the ombudsperson function. Requests for such access shall receive priority from all members.
3. A complaint should be brought to the attention of the Ombudsperson becoming aware of the situation giving rise to the complaint. This period may be extended at the discretion of the Ombudsperson.
4. If the Ombudsperson decides to inquire into a matter, the Ombudsperson shall make every effort to consult the relevant parties and give such parties the opportunity to reply.
5. Upon the conclusion of an inquiry, the Ombudsperson shall advise the member seeking assistance of any findings and any formulated recommendations. In addition, the Ombudsperson may bring any such findings to the attention of the SAPC Board and make whatever recommendations deemed appropriate.
6. The Ombudsperson shall use judgement as to the appropriateness of intervention and may refuse to take up a case or may withdraw from a case if continued involvement is ill-advised. In such cases, the Ombudsperson shall inform the member seeking assistance as to the reasons why and recommend an appropriate channel of redress, if applicable.
7. The Ombudsperson shall not inquire into any matter that is before a court of law or is pending at or before any administrative tribunal outside the SAPC. In addition, upon being informed that a legal claim or that a notice of a potential legal claim has been received by

the SAPC, the Ombudsperson shall immediately withdraw from a case and shall cease any communication with the member seeking assistance.

Confidentiality and Protection from Reprisals

1. The member seeking assistance shall be informed that should the pursuit of any inquiry necessitate the disclosure of details, any disclosure shall be limited to those who, in the opinion of the Ombudsperson, have a need to know.
2. Should a member seeking assistance decide to withdraw an application, the Ombudsperson shall respect this decision.
3. The Ombudsperson shall respect the confidentiality of any confidential information or materials which is accessed or consulted.
4. No member who seeks the assistance of, files a complaint with, or cooperates in any manner with the Ombudsperson, shall not be subject to any reprisals for so doing. The appropriate procedure set out in the relevant SAPC policy shall be followed in cases of alleged reprisals.

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