

## SECTION 5: STANDING ORDERS



### 5.6 ATHLETE FORUM PROCEDURES

---

#### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Virtus aims to be an athlete-centered organisation. The needs, views and opinions of athletes should be foremost in our decision-making, and Athlete Forums provide a vital opportunity to discuss, comment upon and raise questions about any aspect of Virtus activities.
- 1.2 Feedback from the meeting is given directly to the Governing Board who will use it to inform and guide the decision making process.
- 1.3 Athletes should feel able to raise any issue or concern in an open and fair environment without fear of how the information will be used.

#### 2 Organising the forum

- 2.1 Unless circumstances do not allow, it will be part of the Official Representative (OR) role to organise an Athlete Forum at each event that Virtus hosts whether international or regional.
- 2.2 The date and venue of the forum will be announced at the Technical Meeting ahead of the start of the event and will be timed to ensure that it does not conflict with the competition schedule.
- 2.3 Team Managers should liaise with their representatives/athletes to ensure that they are able to attend and are briefed about the purpose of the meeting.

#### 3 Representation

- 3.1 Each participating nation will be entitled to send up to three representatives. They must be competing athletes who have been identified through democratic means within the team (teams may choose how to manage this).
- 3.2 Representatives should, by means determined by each nation, ensure that they discuss issues with their wider team members in advance of the meeting in order that they represent the views and opinions of the whole team.
- 3.3 Representatives may be accompanied by an advocate/supporter or translator however this person must remain impartial at all times and may not play an active role or influence discussion within the meeting other than to support the athlete.
- 3.4 If, in the opinion of the Official Representative, the accompanying person is attempting to influence the discussion in any way then they have the right to ask the person to leave the meeting.

## SECTION 5: STANDING ORDERS



### 5.6 ATHLETE FORUM PROCEDURES

---

- 3.5 There will be no observers permitted from Virtus, participating teams or host organisation except for those officers identified within the Virtus governance as having the right to attend meetings of Virtus 'ex-officio' (usually the President or Executive Director or their representative), however guests may be invited by the meeting to provide advice or guidance on a particular topic.
- 4 Hosting the meeting
  - 4.1 The Official Representative will open the meeting by introducing him/herself and explaining the purpose of the forum.
  - 4.2 It should be explained that athletes can speak freely about any aspect of Virtus activities and that although notes will be taken, these will be anonymous and treated confidentially.
  - 4.3 Although the discussion should be led by the athletes and the topics should be chosen by them, the OR may wish to have some open questions prepared to stimulate the discussion such as:
    - a) The athletes thoughts on the event
    - b) The athletes thoughts on how Virtus is developing their sport
    - c) Whether they feel included in Virtus
    - d) How Virtus can improve its support to athletes
    - e) How athletes feel about partner organisation activities (IPC etc)
  - 4.4 The OR should not play an active part in the meeting other than to chair the discussion however it may be necessary at times to be more involved, for example, to correct a point of accuracy, to provide supporting information or answer a direct question. Such involvement should be made with discretion and should not unduly influence the opinion of athletes.
  - 4.5 The OR should take notes of the meeting. This should be a summary of the discussion and key points rather than a word for word transcript. It is important that these are presented neutrally and are a fair reflection of the athletes views and opinions. Only where an athlete (s) request specific feedback should names be taken.
- 5 Follow-up to the meeting
  - 5.1 Following the meeting, the OR should submit the notes to the Secretariat where they will be issued to the Governing Board as part of meeting papers.
- 6 IPC Athlete Council

## SECTION 5: STANDING ORDERS



### 5.6 ATHLETE FORUM PROCEDURES

---

- 6.1 One Virtus athlete will represent the organization within the IPC Athlete Council. The representative will actively seek the views of Virtus athletes ahead of Council meetings, and also feedback any important questions or discussion.
- 6.2 Virtus will ensure a summary of Athlete Forum meetings are provided to the Council Representative.