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# USSA Club Development Program

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## Best Principles and Practices for USSA Club Excellence

The attached guide provides reference to and assessment of Best Principles and Practices for USSA Clubs.

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*Best principles and practices are the peer-reviewed and commonly accepted guidelines for the philosophic and big-picture perspectives (principles), as well as the more specific strategies, processes, structures and implementation methods (practices) used by organizations in particular sectors or industries.*

*The USSA has conducted a review of the best practices of the most successful athletic organizations in the world. This research has led to the USSA Club Development Program with a mission to enhance efforts of clubs to lead, envision, plan and implement a Best in the World organization.*

*Best practice research included:*

- *International Sports Federations: Norwegian Ski Federation, Swedish Ski Federation, Austrian Ski Federation, Australian Sports Federation, Swiss Ski Federation*
- *U.S. National Governing Bodies: USA Swimming, USA Hockey, U.S. Figure Skating, U.S. Tennis, U.S. Soccer, USA Volleyball*
- *Ski and Snowboard Industry: National Ski Areas Association, Professional Ski Instructors of America, Ski Industries of America, NASTAR, National Collegiate Athlete Association, United States Collegiate Ski Association*
- *USSA: Club leadership, sport leadership, alumni athletes*
- *Other: Professional non-profit resources, Westminster College, Best Principles and Practices for Nonprofit Excellence publications, McKinsey Study recommendations and survey feedback from USSA members*

USSA clubs can utilize this model of Best Principles and Practices as a guide to organizational assessment and improvement or to formally pursue USSA club certification. For more information on club development or club certification contact Brian Krill, USSA Club Development Manager, [bkrill@ussa.org](mailto:bkrill@ussa.org).

Resources to help your club meet Best Principles and Practices can be found at: <http://alpine.uskiteam.com/alpine-programs/clubs/resource-center>



USSA Club Development  
Best Principles and Practices for USSA Club Excellence

The Principles of USSA **Club Leadership**:

- ✓ The Mission, Vision, Values and Goals/Objectives of the organization are clearly understood by all both internally and externally.
- ✓ The culture of the organization is purposefully created and not left to chance.
- ✓ The staff leadership of the organization is carefully hired, supported and regularly evaluated.
- ✓ The organization has clear short and long-term strategic plans.
- ✓ The organization has appropriate financial and human resources to fulfill the mission.
- ✓ Leadership evaluates its own performance as well as the organization's performance.
- ✓ The organization operates according to clear policies and procedures.

<b><u>Leadership and Governance Practices</u></b>	Assessment 1 poor 2 below average 3 satisfactory 4 above average 5 excellent	Comments
1. We utilize a standing <a href="#">committee structure</a> (or equivalent strategy) to divide up and delegate board work. Each committee has good leadership and reports to the full board of directors.		
2. Our board regularly evaluates <a href="#">organizational performance</a> , board performance and individual accountability.		
3. We have an active and engaged board of directors that fulfills clear <a href="#">roles and responsibilities</a> .		
4. Each <a href="#">board member and officer regularly evaluates</a> his or her own performance.		
5. We have current and binding <a href="#">bylaws</a> that our board and organization follow.		
6. Our club values both <a href="#">character development</a> and <a href="#">athletic performance</a> .		
7. The board <a href="#">regularly evaluates the executive leadership</a> (executive director/director/head coach, etc.) and the executive leadership is responsible for evaluating all other staff.		
8. The executive leader of the organization (executive director, director, head coach, etc.) submits an <a href="#">annual self-evaluation</a> to the board of directors.		
9. We have an official <a href="#">mission statement</a> .		
10. We have active and accountable <a href="#">board officers</a> fulfilling the duties of board president/chair, board treasurer, and board secretary.		
11. We perform a <a href="#">SWOT analysis or other like exercise</a> annually that includes board members and key staff. This is reflected in a <a href="#">strategic plan</a> with short and long term goals and objectives.		

USSA Club Development  
Best Principles and Practices for USSA Club Excellence

The Principles of USSA Club **Finance and Funding**:

- ✓ The financial priorities and funding initiatives match the organization's stated mission and vision.
- ✓ All resources are properly managed and accounted for.
- ✓ Finances and funding are transparent to all appropriate constituents.
- ✓ A case for supporting the organization is developed and communicated.
- ✓ Resources are developed and available to adequately support the mission and vision.

<b>Finance and Funding Practices</b>	Assessment 1 poor 2 below average 3 satisfactory 4 above average 5 excellent	Comments
1. Our board of directors drafts an <a href="#">annual budget</a> with the staff leadership that is formally approved by the board.		
2. We draft an <a href="#">annual financial report</a> (even a simple one) for our organization, parents, and other constituents.		
3. Our board of directors actively gives or gets <a href="#">resources for the organization</a> , and provides leadership in all areas of resource development.		
4. Our <a href="#">budgets and financial plans</a> are a direct reflection of our mission, values, and goals.		
5. Our <a href="#">budget is structured</a> such that the following are easy to identify and track: earned revenue vs. development revenues; operating vs. capital expenses; In-kind resources; program expenses vs. general operating expenses; cash flow budgeting.		
6. We have drafted a " <a href="#">case statement</a> " for our club.		
7. We have made contact with our local <a href="#">community foundation(s)</a> .		
8. Our club has <a href="#">clear policies and procedures</a> for accepting and processing charitable gifts, sponsorships, in-kind donations, and other support; including appropriate recognition of the donor/sponsor.		
9. Our budgets and resource development plans account for appropriate <a href="#">financial aid</a> or scholarship funds.		
10. Major financial policies are current in our bylaws and we are aware of the <a href="#">Sarbanes-Oxley guidelines</a> as they relate to financial accounting practices.		
11. We are aware of and adhere to the best principles and practices of <a href="#">financial reporting</a> .		
12. Our club is aware of and adheres to the best principles and practices of <a href="#">ethical fundraising</a> .		

USSA Club Development  
Best Principles and Practices for USSA Club Excellence

13. Our club quantifies and tracks in-kind gifts, donations and support (including <a href="#">board/volunteer hours</a> , and support from the host resort/partner).		
14. Our board of directors and club leadership <a href="#">understands and reviews</a> a "profit and loss" report, a "YTD budget to actual" report, and a "balance sheet" report no less than quarterly.		
15. Our club has clear goals represented in our resource development or fundraising plan.		
16. We have an <a href="#">overall resource management plan</a> that includes human (staff, volunteers, etc.), physical (facilities and equipment), and financial resources.		
17. Our club has clearly defined <a href="#">roles and responsibilities regarding financial accounting and financial performance</a> .		

USSA Club Development  
Best Principles and Practices for USSA Club Excellence

**Club Culture:** Through Club Development and this guide, the USSA is committed to partnering with USSA clubs to provide the optimal athlete development experience and **Club Culture** guided by the following principles:

- ✓ Clear, consistent approaches to [long-term athlete development](#) at all phases.
- ✓ Providing optimal coaching at all levels.
- ✓ Measuring club performance against consistent standards.
- ✓ Fun, safe and satisfying development experience, with opportunity for athletes to reach their full potential.
- ✓ A balanced approach to [character development](#) and [athletic performance](#).
- ✓ Shared culture across all USSA clubs.

Fostering the appropriate culture in your club is what ties us all together: athletes, coaches, volunteers, parents, communities, regions, the USSA and individual clubs. It will help *define expectations* and success at all levels, and keep us all focused on what's important.

<b>Fostering Club Culture Practices</b>	Assessment 1 poor 2 below average 3 satisfactory 4 above average 5 excellent	Comments
1. We emphasize the importance of <a href="#">student-athlete academic responsibilities</a> . They are frequently discussed, monitored and consistently supported by the entire club community.		
2. We enforce high ethical standards with regards to our athlete recruiting practices, and we respect athlete and parent decisions with regards to what program is best for them.		
3. Our club <a href="#">awards and recognizes</a> individuals, behaviors, and performances that best represent all aspects of our desired culture with parents, athletes, volunteers and coaches.		
4. We regularly discuss the important balance between character development and athletic performance with our parents, athletes, coaches, and community.		
5. Our club actively strives to promote and encourage a "shared culture" with USSA.		
6. As a club, we strive to provide optimal and knowledgeable coaching at all levels.		
7. We have an athlete <a href="#">code of conduct</a> that we take seriously and enforce consistently.		

USSA Club Development  
Best Principles and Practices for USSA Club Excellence

8. We are proactive to confront members of the community who encourage breaches and allow breaches in the code of conduct. We expect athletes, parents and the club community to not only abide by and respect our codes of conduct for themselves, but also not tolerate the actions of others who may not support the codes		
9. We have a clearly stated and documented process for code of conduct violations, conflict resolution and other due processes.		
10. We consistently emphasize the importance of <a href="#">long-term athlete development</a> with our parents, athletes, coaches and community. Our club and coaches focus on an <a href="#">athlete-centered</a> approach that allows all athletes to pursue excellence within their own chosen goals - consistent with the mission and vision of the club.		
11. As a club, we are fostering a culture that measures club and athletic performance against consistent standards.		
12. We regularly use, discuss and display our mission, values, and goals with parents, athletes, coaches, staff and the community.		
13. Our club strongly supports a non-discriminatory environment, has a formal <a href="#">non-discrimination policy</a> that it enforces consistently, and discusses this both formally and informally with parents, athletes, coaches, board and community.		
14. We educate <a href="#">parents about their appropriate roles and responsibilities</a> - both formally and informally. We facilitate parent-to-parent education and mentoring.		
15. We always host a <a href="#">parent orientation</a> meeting in the fall or early winter.		
16. We encourage <a href="#">parent involvement</a> , and recognize parents' rights.		
17. Our codes of conduct and disciplinary processes allow for self-referral. ("Self-Referral" means that a student-athlete or other member of the club community may come forward to ask for assistance in dealing with a situation(s) that have to do with a breach of the club's codes, policies or values. This "self-referral" would then be dealt with through		

USSA Club Development  
Best Principles and Practices for USSA Club Excellence

educational, medical or other appropriate means, rather than through disciplinary measures. This process of "amnesty" is only available for those who "self-refer" and not after "getting caught." The club community should be aware of this policy and its limits with regards to confidentiality and reporting that may be required by law.)		
18. We utilize USSA resources to help us reinforce our own club culture as well as the culture of the USSA.		
19. We regularly discuss our <a href="#">philosophies on "winning" vs. "success"</a> (both formally and informally) with our parents, athletes and coaches. We are fostering these philosophies as consistently as possible.		

USSA Club Development  
Best Principles and Practices for USSA Club Excellence

Principles of **Public Relations and Communications**:

- ✓ All PR, communications and marketing efforts are guided by a consistent message reflective of the club's mission, vision, values and goals.
- ✓ [PR and communications](#) are guided by a strategic plan.
- ✓ All available communications outlets are properly utilized.
- ✓ Marketing does not replace development or fundraising.
- ✓ Marketing is targeted and employs social marketing techniques.
- ✓ Materials are driven by the principles above and are cost effective.

<b><u>PR, Communications and Marketing Practices</u></b>	Assessment 1 poor 2 below average 3 satisfactory 4 above average 5 excellent	Comments
1. We post or distribute training schedules, competition schedules, information on upcoming events and other up-to-date and easy to access information.		
2. All available communications outlets are properly utilized, and we frequently provide stories to the local media.		
3. We have dedicated personnel or volunteers who monitor and implement our communications plan.		
4. We have a <a href="#">coordinated plan</a> that guides all our PR, communications, and marketing efforts.		
5. Our communications plan includes strategies for community outreach.		
6. We look for ways and discuss strategies to co-market and co-brand our club with our host resort and/or other major partners.		
7. We <a href="#">advertise</a> throughout our local and regional market - especially through an established relationship with all local schools.		
8. The mission, vision, values and goals of the organization are <a href="#">communicated consistently</a> in all of our communications and marketing.		
9. We utilize some type of newsletter to communicate updates and club activities to all constituents.		
10. Our communications reflect our non-discrimination policy and are intended to reach all potential constituents. Further, we are always looking to include new demographics represented in our communities.		



USSA Club Development  
Best Principles and Practices for USSA Club Excellence

11. We capitalize on the use of appropriate USSA marketing campaigns and resources, as well as other opportunities such as: " <a href="#">USSA National Club Day</a> ", " <a href="#">NSAA's Learn to Ski and Snowboard Month</a> ", FIS's " <a href="#">World Snow Day</a> " and " <a href="#">Bring Children to the Snow</a> " projects and other opportunities at our local resort.		
12. We employ some social media strategies for club communications and marketing - Facebook, Twitter, etc.		
13. We utilize USSA's available marketing and communication resources.		
14. We use a regularly updated and user friendly website. It contains good information for all constituents.		

USSA Club Development  
Best Principles and Practices for USSA Club Excellence

Principles of [Human Resource](#) management:

- ✓ Good, strong clubs are a collection of good, strong people.
- ✓ Everyone involved understands their roles and responsibilities.
- ✓ Teams are built by identifying and coordinating individual strengths and weaknesses.
- ✓ Expectations are clear and performance is evaluated.
- ✓ All staff and volunteer policies are clearly defined and communicated.
- ✓ Professional development and certification is encouraged and rewarded at all levels.

<b><u>Human Resource Practices</u></b>	Assessment 1 poor 2 below average 3 satisfactory 4 above average 5 excellent	Comments
1. Our <a href="#">staff</a> is made up of individuals that are enthusiastic team players who maintain personal and professional integrity and are thereby motivated, reliable and accountable.		
2. Our staff is safety conscious, committed to goals, and they are positive influences and role models for children.		
3. Our staff members are available to parents, and communicate effectively and professionally with all constituents.		
4. Our club offers appropriate compensation and benefits.		
5. We comply with all USSA rules and procedures regarding coaching staff qualifications and our coaching leadership has adequate levels of USSA certification in line with <a href="#">USSA coaching certification standards</a> .		
6. We use written <a href="#">position descriptions</a> for all staff positions.		
7. We specifically allocate resources to staff and <a href="#">professional development</a> activities.		
8. Our staff and <a href="#">organization structure</a> is well defined and well communicated to all staff.		
9. We have specific guidelines with regards to staff or <a href="#">professional development</a> requirements and/or opportunities.		
10. We use a <a href="#">staff handbook</a> that contains information about the organization's history, mission and culture, compensation guidelines, professional development, performance reviews, benefits, and other major staff and organizational policies.		
11. Our club offers some incentives for coaches and staff receiving higher levels of certification or advanced degrees applicable to their position. Further, the club recognizes staff		

USSA Club Development  
Best Principles and Practices for USSA Club Excellence

for achieving established performance standards.		
12. We have clear guidelines regarding the grounds for <a href="#">termination</a> , and the process associated with termination. We always have good documentation regarding performance when a termination is necessary.		
13. We train staff regularly.		
14. We <a href="#">evaluate staff</a> regularly.		
15. Our club encourages and complies with USSA membership for all coaches and officials - which includes requirements for background checks, awareness of <a href="#">SafeSport</a> and <a href="#">concussion policies</a> .		
16. Our club leadership is involved in USSA Sport Education programs (i.e. Clinics, Conference, Teaching Clinics, etc.).		
17. Our club utilizes <a href="#">USSA education</a> programs and we encourage our families, athletes, coaches, and members to do the same.		
18. We recruit for and train <a href="#">volunteers</a> regularly. We give volunteers clear work descriptions.		

USSA Club Development  
Best Principles and Practices for USSA Club Excellence

**Athlete and Child Protection** Principle:

USSA clubs provide the highest level of protection and the healthiest environment possible for their athletes, families and members.

<b><u>Child-Athlete Protection Practices</u></b>	Assessment 1 poor 2 below average 3 satisfactory 4 above average 5 excellent	Comments
1. Our club is aware of and vigilant in dealing with any form of abuse: physical, emotional, neglect, sexual, or bullying. <a href="#">SafeSport webinar</a>		
2. Our club supports required <a href="#">background checks</a> for USSA coaches and officials, and we ensure that these individuals have current USSA membership. We do additional DMV checks for individuals driving athletes or club vehicles.		
3. We ensure that all individuals (i.e. volunteers) with influence and access to our children are screened in some way and <a href="#">background checked</a> by our club.		
4. Our club is aware of and has adopted <a href="#">USSA's concussion policy</a> .		
5. First Aid and CPR training and certification is current for all appropriate staff. We provide for or arrange relatively easy ways for our staff to renew these certifications.		
6. Our club, its leadership, coaches, parents and athletes are aware of the <a href="#">USSA SafeSport Guidelines</a> .		
7. Our club is aware of and monitors the use of <a href="#">supplements</a> used by its athletes. We have clearly defined guidelines for their acceptable use.		
8. We only allow trained and certified professionals manage our training and competitive arenas.		
9. We have safety protocols and <a href="#">guidelines for all club travel</a> - which include minimizing risks with regards to travel, supervision and abuse.		
10. Our club uses the <a href="#">SafeSport</a> guidelines as an educational tool for its leadership, athletes, parents and coaches. Further, we have policies and resources in place, including "emergency action plans", with regards to SafeSport claims and violations.		

Principles of USSA **Club Programming**:

- ✓ Programs incorporate long-term athlete development model – programming, training and competition are age/developmentally appropriate.
- ✓ Programs incorporate all domains of the sport: conditioning, technical and tactical skills, equipment, sport psychology and competition.
- ✓ Programs understand that all athletes are unique and the program is designed to help all athletes reach their personal goals.
- ✓ Programs vary their approach and balance fun with optimal performance.
- ✓ All aspects of athlete safety are a priority.
- ✓ Programs emphasize team, fair play, integrity and sportsmanship.
- ✓ USSA clubs establish a healthy separation between club leadership responsibilities, parent responsibilities, and the responsibilities of the coaching staff to implement the programming.

<b><u>USSA Club Programming Practices</u></b>	Assessment 1 poor 2 below average 3 satisfactory 4 above average 5 excellent	Comments
1. Our club uses the <a href="#">USSA Training Systems</a> model.		
2. We implement SkillsQuest (or alternative skill-based assessment in non-alpine sports) and use USSA accredited evaluators, or trained evaluators (or equivalent).		
3. We use ( <i>and explain and present to athletes and parents</i> ) a clear athlete progression that coincides with the principles of long-term athlete development and the USSA Training Systems.		
4. Our coaches have adopted and discuss a common teaching language and terminology.		
5. Our coaching staff frequently discusses the power, purpose and effectiveness of giving athletes <a href="#">feedback</a> and considers the appropriate timing and messaging.		
6. Our program uses video analysis to provide athletes with immediate visual feedback.		
7. Our club programs follow written curricula that are in line with USSA Training Systems, the athlete development pipeline and an assessment of benchmark skills.		
8. Our club groups athletes according to their developmental phase (athletically, physiologically, emotionally/psychologically) and not just chronological age. There is open and consistent communication among the coaching staff, parents and athletes regarding athlete grouping and optimal development.		

USSA Club Development  
Best Principles and Practices for USSA Club Excellence

9. Our club curriculum includes an emphasis on and implementation of physical conditioning.		
10. Our club curricula incorporate cross training and general motor skill development.		
11. Our club provides some year-round training/physical conditioning - or maintains contact with athletes and families year-round regarding the same.		
12. Our club conducts periodic strength and conditioning testing.		
13. Our club curriculum includes appropriate rest and recovery sessions or activities.		
14. Our club has a dedicated strength and conditioning staff to plan and deliver the conditioning program - or - our club utilizes outside professional resources to do the same.		
15. Our curriculum incorporates appropriate technical and tactical skill acquisition that is age-appropriate and sport and/or discipline specific.		
16. Our club curriculum includes guidance and oversight with equipment selection, preparation and maintenance.		
17. We educate our athletes and families about, and verify the use of, USSA, FIS and other governing bodies' equipment guidelines and regulations.		
18. We look for opportunities to help our athletes test and acquire different products.		
19. Our program focuses on fun and rewarding skill acquisition.		
20. Our program emphasizes sportsmanship and fair play.		
21. Our coaches communicate our core values and a philosophy of performance that are consistent with our club's values and philosophies.		
22. Our club curriculum teaches athletes how to set and monitor individual goals, and supports the achievement of these goals. We have a dedicated staff member or other resources that lead our mental skills training program.		
23. Our curriculum introduces and uses visualization and imagery techniques.		
24. Our curriculum develops athlete concentration and focus skills.		
25. Our curriculum teaches and uses relaxation and/or arousal techniques.		
26. Our coaches develop a season-long athlete management plan for each athlete that provides both formal and informal evaluations and feedback to athletes and parents.		

USSA Club Development  
Best Principles and Practices for USSA Club Excellence

27. We provide coaching at all competitive events attended by the team/club.		
28. Our program teaches and implements competition day plans that include behaviors, techniques and strategies.		
29. We develop course/venue inspection skills in training and at competitions.		
30. We have clearly established athlete-to-coach communication strategies and necessary equipment during competitions.		
31. We provide educated and professional coaching at all levels.		
32. We provide coaching (or help coordinate and arrange with regional, national or international partners) at every level of competition that any of our athletes reach.		
33. We require annual physical exams for all our athletes.		
34. We have clear "return from injury" policies and procedures.		
35. We have a clear anti-doping policy.		
36. We incorporate education about nutrition and performance in our programming for athletes and parents.		
37. Our club works to maximize the use of our available terrain preparing athletes for various, and less than ideal conditions.		
38. Our club is open and honest in discussing relative talent and the balance of talent, skill acquisition and effort.		
39. Our coaches get involved with appropriate local, regional and national camps, competitions and projects.		

USSA Club Development  
Best Principles and Practices for USSA Club Excellence

Principles of [USSA Club Logistics](#):

- ✓ USSA clubs establish strong relations with their local resort ownership and management.
- ✓ USSA clubs plan for worse case scenarios and have an emergency action plan.
- ✓ USSA clubs establish and maintain venues and equipment appropriate to support their mission and vision.
- ✓ USSA clubs are able to attract, retain and help manage high-quality snowsport competitions.

<u>Club Logistics Practices</u>	Assessment 1 poor 2 below average 3 satisfactory 4 above average 5 excellent	Comments
1. Our club, its leadership, coaches, athletes, parents and families are advocates and ambassadors for our local or host <a href="#">resort</a> .		
2. We offer and present our club as a resource to the resort.		
3. We have an adequate and trained volunteer base for the events as we host or help host.		
4. We implement course/venue control systems and communications systems during all training and competitions.		
5. We have a communication plan in place to inform parents, the club community, and key leadership about critical incidents (major happenings that everyone is likely to hear about anyway, i.e. injuries, discipline, etc.), such that we as a club can help "control the flow" of information.		
6. Our club has an <a href="#">emergency action plan</a> for all of our training and competition venues.		
7. Our club procures all the necessary tools and equipment to implement our programming and events. This includes age-appropriate equipment and compliance with USSA and/or FIS regulations. <a href="#">Alpine Freestyle/Freeskiing Nordic (CC) Snowboarding</a>		
8. Course inspection is mandatory in our club.		
9. We maintain our courses and venues up to industry standards and USSA guidelines. . <a href="#">Alpine Freestyle/Freeskiing Nordic (CC) Snowboarding</a>		
10. Our club board of directors has made and maintains direct contact with resort ownership about our on-going strategic alliance.		



USSA Club Development  
Best Principles and Practices for USSA Club Excellence

11. The appropriate person/people at our club deal directly with the appropriate resort management and personnel to execute written agreements that are backed by the strategic alliance discussed by the board and resort ownership.		
12. Knowledgeable club staff purchases all equipment or someone informed by knowledgeable club staff, and is stored, maintained and properly monitored by a dedicated and trained staff.		
13. Our club has fostered a good working relationship with our local/host resort.		
14. Our programs and club are organized such that we can give detailed information about our program activities to the resort and other allies well in advance.		
15. Our club uses the <a href="#">USSA Event Organizer Handbook</a> as a resource for mapping out roles and responsibilities for competitions.		
16. Our club has a <a href="#">venue safety</a> plan.		
17. We strive to have <a href="#">all agreements</a> with the resort and other strategic allies in writing and formally reviewed on an annual basis.		