



# VYSA SafeSport Compliance Report

May 7, 2021

## **BACKGROUND AND REPORT PURPOSE**

As a member of the Virginia Youth Soccer Association (VYSA) Southwest Virginia Rush Soccer Club (SWVA Rush) is required to comply with Federal Law S.534 Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017. SWVA Rush is committed to fostering an environment where participants can work and learn together free of emotional, physical, and sexual misconduct.

In March 2021 SWVA Rush hired Eric L. Bucey (the consultant) to provide club registration services, including an objective evaluation of compliance to VYSA SafeSport Policy based on the [U.S. Center for SafeSport Code](#) and the [Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies](#) (MAAPP). The report examines compliance to both Education and Training Policy and the Required Prevention Policies. Areas of improvement and recommendations have been provided to guide subsequent corrective action.

## **REPORT SCOPE**

The scope of this report is based on VYSA SafeSport Policy released August 2019. The requirements for each report section are explained in the [VYSA Policy](#) available at [vysa.com](http://vysa.com).

The report covers the following areas:

- Prohibited Conduct
- Appropriate Background Screening
- Education and Training
- Limiting One-On-One Interactions
- Reporting and Enforcement
- Background Check Policy (Appendix A)

## **REPORT METHODOLOGY**

The consultant reviewed registration policies and procedures, Affinity dash boards, and other information relative to VYSA SafeSport Policy. The consultant sought and received information and clarifications through email and phone calls with VYSA state staff. Upon completion, each area was rated in accordance with the rating guidelines provided in Appendix A.

## **CLUB PARTICIPANTS**

The following is a listing of executive committee members who received ongoing updates, communications, and invitation to respond regarding the review and assessment process:

Will Walsh, President  
Maria Greco, Vice President  
David Hope, Secretary  
Mike Weightman, Treasurer



**SUMMARY**

Based on the report methodology, the consultant made findings as to whether the club is compliant with requirements identified in the VYSA SafeSport Policy across all six areas. Each of the six areas were rated as follows: Compliant, Partially Compliant, Possibly Noncompliant, and Noncompliant. A summary of the report scores can be found below.

Policy	Report Rating
Prohibited Conduct	Partially Compliant
Appropriate Background Screening	Noncompliant
Education and Training	Noncompliant
Limiting One-On-One Interactions	Noncompliant
Reporting and Enforcement	Possibly Noncompliant
Background Check Policy (Appendix A)	Noncompliant



## **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Prohibited Conduct**

#### **FINDINGS**

1. No information reviewed to suggest violations of prohibited conduct by participants. It is noted that the absence of such reports does not rule out possible violations, only that no official reports were made.
2. Prohibited conduct policy not posted to the website.
3. Did not communicate policy directly to all adult participants on at least one occasion by email, newsletter, webinar, or social media.
4. Did not consistently require all coaches and volunteers to read and consent to prohibited conduct policy during SportsConnect registration.
5. Did not communicate policy directly to parents and youth participants on at least one occasion by email, newsletter, webinar, or social media.
6. Did not establish a reporting policy by which violations of this policy can be communicated to the Risk Management Coordinator or President.
7. Did not communicate the reporting policy for violations directly to all participants, youth participants, or parents on at least one occasion by email, newsletter, webinar, or social media.

#### **RATING**

Partially Compliant

#### **JUSTIFICATION**

In some limited cases program registration pages, mainly VYSA sanctioned "Travel," did include the required communication for participants (coaches and volunteers). However, it was not applied in a standard, uniform manner.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Post Prohibited Conduct Policy to [www.swvarush.com](http://www.swvarush.com).
2. Include policy acknowledgement and consent on all Sports Connect volunteer registrations (coach, assistants, team managers, etc.).
3. Create a written conduct policy violation reporting procedure.



4. Create a conduct policy violation reporting form.
5. Create a SafeSport violation reporting email address monitored by an independent (non-sporting staff) Risk Assessment Coordinator.
6. Communicate policy directly to adult participants, youth participants, and parents/guardians at least once per season by email, newsletter, webinar, in-person meeting, or social media.
7. With parental consent require all youth participants 13 years or older to complete SafeSport age-appropriate training.

**RESPONSE (Optional)**

No response provided.



## Appropriate Background Screening

### FINDINGS

1. Did not uniformly identify and track all adult participants requiring background checks in Affinity database or spreadsheet.
2. Did not complete required background screening for all board members and officers prior to April 2021.
3. 2019-20 Travel Season: Did not complete required checks on at least two team officials.
4. 2019-20 Rec Season: Did not complete required checks on all volunteer team officials registered in SportsConnect (only 14 of 61 checks completed).
5. 2020-21 Travel Season: Did not complete required checks on one team manager, two assistant coaches, and one head coach. Did not renew a required check on one additional team manager.
6. 2020-21 Fall Rec Season: Did not complete checks on at least 34 volunteer team officials.
7. 2020-21 Spring Rec Season: Did not complete checks on 5 adult participants. Did not complete discretionary review and approval of two participants with results.
8. Did not establish a written club policy for implementing background screening.

### RATING

**Noncompliant**

### JUSTIFICATION

Non-compliance has been identified as chronic and systemic, spanning multiple seasons, geographies, and programs.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Identify and track all participants requiring background checks using VYSA Affinity upload process and compliance tracking dashboards.
2. Identify and track all participants requiring background checks using Sports Connect verification screens.
3. Establish written club policies regarding background screening implementation.



4. Distribute board approved policy document organization wide.
5. Assign a single non-sporting club administrator responsibility for implementing the risk management program, including appropriate background screening.
6. Implement background check procedures uniformly and confidentially by prohibiting directors of coaching and program directors from background check completion duties and access to results.
7. Communicate the background check policy, requirements, and completion instructions to all board members, directors of coaching, club administrators, and other club officials at least once per season by email, newsletter, webinar, in-person meeting, or social media.
8. Post the background check requirements and completion instructions for all coach and team official applicants to [swvarush.com](http://swvarush.com).

**RESPONSE (Optional)**

No response provided.



## Education and Training

### FINDINGS

1. Did not uniformly identify and track all participants requiring SafeSport training in Affinity database or spreadsheet.
2. SafeSport Training requirements not posted to the website.
3. Did not communicate SafeSport Training requirements directly to all adult participants on at least one occasion by email, newsletter, webinar, or social media.
4. Did not complete required SafeSport training for all board members and officers prior to April 2021.
5. 2019-20 Travel Season: Did not document training completion for 16 of 20 adults.
6. 2019-20 Rec Season: Did not document training completion for 15 of 15 volunteers. One record has two spouses improperly listed as one person. Did not document training completion for 46 additional adults listed in SportsConnect.
7. 2020-21 Travel Season: Did not document training completion for 3 adults.
8. 2020-21 Fall Rec Season: Did not upload rec club official data. Did not document training completion for 34 volunteers listed in Sports Connect.
9. 2020-21 Spring Rec Season: Did not complete training for 21 adult volunteers.
10. 2020-21 Spring Rec Season: Did not complete youth training for at least three volunteer coaches.
11. Multiple youth participants episodically assisted with recreational sessions beginning 3/30/21 without completing training.

### RATING

**Noncompliant**

### JUSTIFICATION

Non-compliance has been identified as chronic and systemic, spanning multiple seasons, geographies, and programs.

### RECOMMENDATIONS



1. Identify and track all participants requiring SafeSport Training using VYSA Affinity upload process and compliance tracking dashboards.
2. Identify and track all participants requiring SafeSport Training using Sports Connect verification screens.
3. Establish written club policies regarding education and training implementation.
4. Distribute board approved policy document organization wide.
5. Assign a single non-sporting club administrator responsibility for implementing the risk management program, including education and training requirements.
6. Implement SafeSport education and training uniformly by providing directors of coaching and program directors with oversight and administrative assistance.
7. Communicate the SafeSport training requirements and completion instructions to all board members, directors of coaching, club administrators, and other club officials at least once per season by email, newsletter, webinar, in-person meeting, or social media.
8. Post the SafeSport training requirements and completion instructions for all coach and team official applicants to [swvarush.com](http://swvarush.com).

**RESPONSE (Optional)**

No response provided.





## Limiting One-On-One Interactions

### FINDINGS

1. Did not identify and track in the Affinity database all adult participants required to follow and consent to the One-on-One Interactions Policy.
2. One-on-One Interactions policy not posted to the website.
3. Did not communicate policy directly to all adult participants on at least one occasion by email, newsletter, webinar, or social media.
4. Did not consistently require all coaches and volunteers to read and consent to One-On-One Interactions policy during SportsConnect registration.
5. Did not communicate policy directly to parents and youth participants on at least one occasion by email, newsletter, webinar, or social media.
6. Did not establish a reporting policy by which violations of this policy can be communicated to the Risk Management Coordinator or President.
7. Did not communicate the reporting policy for violations directly to all participants, youth participants, or parents on at least one occasion by email, newsletter, webinar, or social media.
8. Did not limit one-on-one interactions through social media and electronic communications. Documented at least two instances after August 2019 of a club official communicating with minors by DM using the club Instagram account without copying a parent/guardian or another adult.

### RATING

**Noncompliant**

### JUSTIFICATION

In limited instances policy acknowledgements were included in adult participant registrations. However, in more instances than not the policy was not implemented. The policy for limiting one-on-one interactions through social media and electronic communications was violated on at least two occasions.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Post One-On-One Interactions Policy to [www.swvarush.com](http://www.swvarush.com).



2. Include policy acknowledgement and consent on all Sports Connect volunteer registrations (coach, assistants, team managers, etc.).
3. Create a written one-on-one interactions policy violation reporting procedure.
4. Create a one-on-one interactions policy violation reporting form.
5. Create a SafeSport violation reporting email address monitored by an independent (non-staff) monitored Risk Assessment Coordinator.
6. Communicate policy directly to participants, youth participants, and parents/guardians at least once per season by email, newsletter, webinar, in-person meeting, or social media.
7. Obtain parental consent for all youth participants 13 years or older to complete SafeSport age-appropriate training.

**RESPONSE (Optional)**

No response provided.



## Reporting and Enforcement

### FINDINGS

1. No information reviewed to suggest violations of mandatory reporting of abuse allegations by participants. It is noted that the absence of such reports does not rule out possible violations, only that no official reports were made.
2. Mandatory reporter requirements not posted to the website.
3. Did not communicate mandatory reporter requirements directly to all adult participants on at least one occasion by email, newsletter, webinar, or social media.
4. Preliminary compliance summary with reported policy violations not confirmed as sent to the VYSA Risk Management Committee within 5 days of notification.

### RATING

Possibly Noncompliant

### JUSTIFICATION

It is unclear if VYSA considers failure to complete background screening and training requirements as an "other policy violation." However, the consultant recommended this self-disclosure action to let VYSA evaluate the information and make a decision. It does not appear the recommendation was accepted.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Post mandatory report requirements to swvarush.com.
2. Communicate mandatory reporter requirements directly to adult participants, youth participants, and parents/guardians at least once per season by email, newsletter, webinar, in-person meeting, or social media.
3. Create a written policy violation reporting procedure.
4. Create a conduct violation reporting form.
5. Create a SafeSport violation reporting email address monitored by an independent (non-sporting staff) Risk Assessment Coordinator.
6. When in doubt, disclose and transmit all potential violation reports to VYSA within 5 days of receiving a report.



**RESPONSE (Optional)**

No response provided.



## Background Check Policy (Appendix A)

### FINDINGS

1. Did not ensure all adult participants submit a disclosure statement and release form or electronic equivalent.
2. Allowed adult participants to participate even though required information was not obtained.
3. Did not complete background checks within 30 days of the election or selection of an individual to a position in VYSA or a VYSA member.
4. Transmitted November 1, 2020 VYSA compliance certification as "compliant" despite obvious, systemic non-compliance over multiple seasons.
5. Did not suspend contact with players for five non-responsive adult participants who failed to submit background check applications as instructed in Spring 2021.
6. Did not document the sending of a Letter of Request for Explanation for two recreational coaches with results in Fall 2019.
7. Did not complete discretionary approval for two adult participants for whom screening was not conducted in Fall 2019 or Fall 2020 but returned results in Spring 2021.
8. Did not maintain minutes of discretionary review for 2019 rec seasons.
9. Did not complete discretionary review of two adult participants with results returned in April 2021.
10. Did not exercise discretionary approval in a uniform manner.

### RATING

**Noncompliant**

### JUSTIFICATION

Non-compliance has been identified as chronic and systemic, spanning multiple seasons, geographies, and programs.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Please see recommendations under "Appropriate Background Screening."
2. Select USYS and VYSA governing body fields for all registrations in Sports Connect Step 1 - Program Information.



3. Ensure VYSA policy acknowledgement fields are selected as "Required" in all Sports Connect Team Personnel registration pages.
4. Maintain minutes documenting review committee meeting for coach discretionary approvals
5. Keep an annual file of all discretionary reviews.
6. Hold a HR expert consult with Rush national Human Resources Director; gather and act on additional policy and implementation guidance.
7. Draft for board approval written policy for committee review.
8. Draft for board approval uniform guidelines of discretionary approvals.

**RESPONSE (Optional)**

No response provided.



## Appendix A

### RATING GUIDELINES

#### **NONCOMPLIANT**

A finding of this type may indicate little to no reduction in risk to minor athletes and can be the result of clear and obvious failures, including but not limited to the following:

- Complete absence of policies and/or relevant supporting documentation.
- Complete absence of communication to adult participants regarding policies.
- Complete absence of reporting and oversight for VYSA SafeSport policy violations.
- Less than 70% compliance on Appropriate Background Screening and Education and Training requirements.

#### **POSSIBLY NONCOMPLIANT**

A finding of this type may indicate that violations may exist but that the consultant is unable to make a rating. More information or guidance is required to make a rating.

#### **PARTIALLY COMPLIANT**

A finding of this type may indicate limited reduction in risk to minor athletes and can be the result of clear and obvious failures, including but not limited to the following:

- Presence of policies but missing relevant supporting documentation.
- Not adequately or consistently communicating policies to adult participants.
- Lack of adequate reporting and oversight for VYSA SafeSport policy violations.
- Between 70% and 90% compliance on Appropriate Background Screening and Education and Training requirements.

#### **COMPLIANT**

A finding of this type may indicate reduced risk to minor athletes and can be the result of but not limited to the following:

- Presence of policies and/or relevant supporting documentation.
- Adequate and consistent communication to adult participants regarding policies.
- Adequate reporting and oversight structure for VYSA SafeSport policy violations.
- More than 90% compliance on Appropriate Background Screening and Education and Training requirements.