

# 2024 CULTURE & CLIMATE SURVEY REPORT

Prepared by: Pacific Research and Evaluation, LLC



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# MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Since we opened our doors in March 2017, the U.S. Center for SafeSport has been working to shift sport culture so that every athlete—from the practice fields in our neighborhoods to the podium in Paris—can feel safe, supported, and strengthened. As the first organization of its kind dedicated to ending abuse within the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement (the Movement), the Center is forging a new and necessary path, and we are adapting along the way to best serve athletes and the entire sport community.

Crucial to this effort has been listening to stakeholders—especially athletes—to better understand the dynamics of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse in sport. Unfortunately, research in this area remains limited. With this in mind, the Center contracted with Pacific Research and Evaluation to launch our second Athlete Culture and Climate Survey to collect quantitative data on abuse and misconduct in sport. This survey builds on our 2020 research, and the results will guide our efforts to:

- Continue evaluating and improving our approach to investigations of abuse;
- Enhance our training, education, and engagement with athletes and survivors;
- Host information sessions for national governing bodies (NGBs) and athletes to further explore the data;
- Inform the broader abuse prevention landscape throughout the U.S. and abroad through our research, analysis, and evaluation of the athlete experience; and
- Prepare for a follow-up survey in 2027 to be released ahead of the 2028 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Although the Center's mandate is specific to the 11+ million individuals within the Movement, the 2024 survey went a step further to invite the participation of athletes from outside as well as within this community. We took this approach to better understand the experiences of athletes of all levels as well as the potential differences there might be between those participating within and outside of the Movement.

The social, emotional, and physical benefits of sport can and should last a lifetime. The 2024 Culture and Climate Survey found that a majority of those surveyed felt sport had a positive impact on their lives. That's what all athletes deserve, but it is not what many experience. The following outcomes highlight the need for culture change in sport and will guide our efforts to help athletes at every level thrive and fulfill their potential.

Sincerely,



**Ju'Riese Colón**

Chief Executive Officer

U.S. Center for SafeSport

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2024, the U.S. Center for SafeSport partnered with an independent research firm, Pacific Research and Evaluation, to conduct its second ever Athlete Culture and Climate Survey. The purpose of this survey is to gain a better understanding of the experiences of athletes, particularly when it comes to the scope and nature of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse in sports. This survey updates and expands on the previous survey (conducted in 2020) and provides insight into current trends in our nation's sport culture. The target audience for the survey was any person 18 years of age or older who had ever participated as an athlete in any sport at any level in the United States. This included both athletes who are affiliated with a National Governing Body (NGB) or the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC), as well those who are not.

4,980 individuals engaged with the survey and 3,762 athletes representing 67 different sports responded substantively to the survey between January 8 and February 4, 2024. More current athletes (71.8%) compared to former athletes (28.2%) took part in the survey. While shared broadly, participants were mostly white (79.5%), heterosexual (84.9%), female (57.6%) athletes, and athletes without disabilities (93.8%). Although some demographics are less represented than others, the methods and data presented in this report aim to shed light on the unique experiences that diverse athletes shared in this survey. Key findings from this report are summarized below.

## ATHLETE SATISFACTION & ATHLETE DISENGAGEMENT

- 72.1% of athletes expressed strong agreement that, overall, their athletic experience has had a positive impact on their life.
- In terms of frequency of equal treatment of athletes, 62.1% of athletes felt that equal treatment occurred either "Frequently" or "Very frequently" in their sport.
- However, nearly four out of five athletes (79.6%) shared that, at some point during their athletic involvement, they experienced feeling burned out by their sports participation.

## ANTI-INCLUSIVE EXPERIENCES

- 80.8% of athletes experienced anti-inclusive behaviors during their sports involvement.
- The most common anti-inclusive experience shared by athletes (54.5%) was feeling repeatedly excluded by other players from team or group activities.
- Black athletes were more likely to have experienced being hassled by security at an athletic event, compared to athletes with other racial identities.
- Former athletes were more likely than current athletes to have experienced anti-inclusive behaviors during their sports involvement including being called insulting names, having people assume that their injuries were less significant or painful than they actually were, and receiving inadequate support from athletic trainers or medical providers.

## DISCRIMINATORY EXPERIENCES

- One-third (33.0%) of athletes had experienced some form of discrimination during their sports involvement, with the most common form being ageism.
- Nearly half (48.0%) of athletes who identified as a gender other than man or woman experienced gender-based discrimination.
- More than one third (36.0%) of athletes who identified themselves as having a disability responded that they had experienced discrimination based on their disability.
- Black athletes were more likely to have experienced racial discrimination during their athletic involvement (36.9%), compared to athletes with other racial identities.
- More than one-third (36.0%) of athletes who identified themselves as having a disability experienced discrimination based on their disability. Athletes with disabilities were also more likely than athletes without disabilities to experience discrimination based on their gender and their sexual orientation.

## EMOTIONAL HARM & NEGLECT

- Nearly 4 in 5 athletes (78.4%) shared that they had experienced behaviors related to emotional harm and neglect during their sports involvement.
- Half (50.6%) of athletes had experienced being put down, embarrassed, or humiliated.
- Former athletes were more likely than current athletes to have experienced being put down, embarrassed, or humiliated, forced or expected to train or compete while injured, sick, or exhausted, and sworn/cursed at for not performing well.
- Athletes who identified as a gender other than man or woman were more likely to have felt that their athletic needs, or their mental or emotional health, were ignored.

## PHYSICAL HARM

- A little over one-third (35.3%) of athletes experienced behaviors related to physical harm/threat of harm during their sports involvement. The most commonly experienced behavior related to physical harm was being punished with excessive exercise.
- Black athletes were more likely than athletes in other racial groups to have experienced being hit or slapped (not including any hitting that occurs during combative sports).
- Athletes with disabilities were more likely than those without disabilities to have experienced being threatened with physical harm, as well as being forced or ordered by someone to get in or stay in a confined space (e.g., a locker or bathroom stall).
- Men and athletes who identified as a gender other than man or woman were more likely than women to have experienced being hit or kicked, punched, forced or knocked to the ground, as well as being threatened with physical harm.

## STALKING

- Approximately 17% of athletes (16.6%) experienced being spied on, watched, or followed by someone they didn't want to watch or follow them.
- Athletes with disabilities were more likely than those without disabilities to have experienced being spied on, watched, or followed.

## SEXUAL HARM WITHIN SPORTS

- Over one-third (36.3%) of athletes have received unwanted sexual comments or looks during their sports involvement.
- Athletes who identified as a gender other than man or woman were somewhat more likely than women, and much more likely than men, to have received unwanted sexual comments or looks.
- Nearly 11% (10.9%) of athletes indicated that they had experienced unwanted sexual contact or sexually explicit behaviors during their sports involvement. Coaches or assistant coaches were the most common perpetrators of non-consensual sexual touching, followed by athlete peers.
- More than 2 in 5 athletes (43.3%) who had unwanted sexual experiences reported at least one experience occurring when they were under 18.
- Athletes who identified themselves as a sexuality other than heterosexual/straight were more likely to have experienced being touched in sexual ways without their consent, compared to heterosexual/straight athletes.
- More than 3% (3.5%) of athletes indicated that, during their involvement in sports, someone had committed rape or attempted rape on them. Athlete peers were the most common perpetrators of rape and attempted rape experienced by athletes.
- Athletes with disabilities were more likely than athletes without disabilities to have been kissed against their will and had someone rape or attempt to rape them.
- Athletes who had ever participated on an NGB or a USOPC managed team were more likely to have been the subject of sexist comments or jokes, touched in non-consensual sexual ways, and asked to undress or assume a sexually explicit pose.

## ATHLETE MENTAL HEALTH

- Over half of surveyed athletes (53.1%) shared that during the time period of their sport participation they struggled with depression or anxiety.
- Between 2020 and 2024 there was an increase of nearly 8% of athletes surveyed engaging in an eating disorder, from 21.6% in 2020 compared to 30.2% in 2024.

## REPORTING MISCONDUCT

- Only 10.7% of athletes who experienced unwanted sexual behavior during their sports involvement submitted a formal complaint or report.
- Of athletes who did not report unwanted sexual behaviors that they experienced, over half shared that they had been concerned that if they reported the behaviors people would not take them seriously or were worried that nothing would be done.
- Nearly two-thirds (62.0%) of athletes who experienced unwanted sexual behaviors did not feel that they had a confidential, supportive place within their sport organization to talk about their experiences.

## ATHLETE TRUST & KNOWLEDGE

- Overall, only a little more than half (54.1%) of surveyed athletes had heard of the U.S. Center for SafeSport prior to taking the survey.
- Knowledge of the Center was somewhat better for athletes who had participated on NGB or USOPC managed teams: nearly 70% (69.3%) of athletes in that subgroup had heard of the Center previously.
- Approximately half (51.6%) of athletes who had heard of the Center previously believe that the Center is considered a trusted resource by athletes in their sport organization. A slightly lower proportion (44.8%) of athletes who have participated in NGBs believe that athletes trust the leadership at their NGB.
- Nearly one-third (31.5%) of athletes shared that they think that sexual, emotional, or physical abuse is a problem in their NGB.

# INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Center for SafeSport (the Center) is an independent nonprofit committed to building a sport community where athletes, coaches, and other community members can work and learn together free of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse and misconduct. The Center receives, investigates, and responds to reports of abuse and misconduct involving individuals who are affiliated with the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) and its National Governing Bodies (NGBs). The Center also provides education and training to athletes, parents, coaches, volunteers, and organizations at all levels on best practices and principles for preventing abuse in sport settings, both inside and outside of the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement. In doing so, the Center advances its mission of making athlete well-being the core of our nation's sports culture through abuse prevention, education, and accountability.

The Center contracted with Pacific Research and Evaluation (PRE) to update and administer the Athlete Culture and Climate survey in 2024. The purpose of this survey is to gain a better understanding of the experiences of athletes, particularly when it comes to the scope and nature of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse in sports. This is the second Athlete Culture and Climate survey launched by the Center; the first was administered in 2020 and remains one of the most in-depth studies to date exploring prevalence and factors related to abuse and misconduct among U.S. athletes. Results from the 2024 survey are shared in this report and serve to update and expand on the 2020 findings and provide insight into current trends in our nation's sport culture.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The data shared in this report goes beyond numbers and percentages, and represents individual athletes' personal experiences. This research would not be possible without athletes' willingness to share those personal experiences through their survey responses. We want to thank athletes for their participation. We also appreciate the guidance of the SafeSport Athlete Advisory Team (SAAT) for their constructive feedback that improved the survey instrument as well as our survey dissemination plan.

This report contains content related to physical, emotional, and sexual harm, as well as discrimination, mental health concerns, and other challenging topics. If you need crisis intervention, referrals, or emotional support at any time, contact [\*\*RAINN's 24-hour helpline\*\*](#).



# METHODS

## SURVEY POPULATION

The target audience for the survey was any person 18 years of age or older who had ever participated as an athlete in any sport at any level in the United States. This included both athletes who are affiliated with a National Governing Body (NGB) or the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC), as well those who are not.

## SURVEY DEVELOPMENT

In September 2023, the research team and Center staff began reviewing and revising the survey instrument based on lessons learned from the [2020 Athlete Culture and Climate project](#). The goal was to balance our redesign process by making improvements while retaining enough consistency to make comparisons in the data over time.

As relevant and applicable, comparisons between the 2020 and 2024 surveys have been included in the findings. While the 2024 survey population was expanded to include both athletes within and outside of the Movement, the findings related to topics that appeared on both the 2020 and 2024 surveys were generally consistent. There were three exceptions. First, athletes surveyed in 2024 reported higher rates of mental health concerns. This increase is consistent with findings from the American Psychological Association, which noted an increased demand for mental health services in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Second, the survey found that the belief that the Center is a trusted resource by people in sport organizations increased between 2020 and 2024. Finally, a slightly larger portion of athletes surveyed in 2024 believe that sexual, emotional, or physical abuse is a problem in their sport organization compared to 2020. As we continue to gather additional data moving forward, we anticipate that more detailed comparisons will be possible.

The research team engaged with the SafeSport Athlete Advisory Team (SAAT) to coordinate a review of the survey instrument by athletes and to gather feedback, suggestions, and recommendations for revision. After the English version of the instrument was finalized, it was translated to Spanish. Both the English and the Spanish versions of the survey were programmed into Qualtrics, a secure online survey platform. Finally, a second English version of the survey was created specifically to be accessible to anyone using a screen reader or other text-to-speech technology. The first and last page of the survey, as well as the beginning of the sexual harm section of the survey, included information and links to help athletes who may be in need of support resources or information about how to report abuse or misconduct.

## SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

The online, self-administered, anonymous survey was open from January 8 to February 12, 2024. An anonymous survey link and promotional tools to support consistency were shared by the Center with NGBs. The Center also conducted outreach to collegiate athletic partners, launched email campaigns to coaches and athletes, publicized the survey in its NGB Newsletter, and issued a press release. Additionally, social media posts were shared on Facebook/Instagram, TikTok and LinkedIn. To promote participation, athletes were offered a chance to win an Amazon gift card for filling out the survey. Two hundred \$20 Amazon gift cards and four \$100 Amazon gift cards were raffled off after the survey closed so that all athletes had an equal chance of receiving a gift card.

# FINDINGS

The findings sections that follow begin with descriptive information about the survey sample. Then, findings are organized into the key focus areas of the survey, listed below. This report concludes with a discussion of insights and next steps that are reflective of survey findings.

## **Athlete Satisfaction**

## **Athlete Disengagement**

## **Anti-Inclusive Experiences**

## **Discriminatory Experiences**

## **Emotional Harm and Neglect**

## **Physical Harm**

## **Stalking**

## **Sexual Harm Within Sport**

## **Sexual Harm Outside of Sport**

## **Athlete Mental Health**

## **Reporting Misconduct**

## **Trust and Knowledge**

## **Peer Norms**

## **Athlete Suggestions and Comments**

Several sections included findings related to group differences, when applicable. Analyses were considered statistically significant if their associated p-value was less than .05, and they were found to have at least a small effect size (an eta-squared of .02 or higher, or a Cramer's V of .10 or higher). Group differences are explored based on the factors listed below and are explained further in the survey sample description.

- **Gender Identity**
- **Race/Ethnicity**
- **Sexual Orientation**
- **Athletes with Disabilities vs. Athletes without Disabilities**
- **Current Athlete vs. Former Athlete status**
- **NGB/USOPC Athletes vs. non-NGB/USOPC Athletes**

The total number of athletes who substantively took part in this survey was 3,762 (including 3,724 in English and 38 in Spanish). Athletes were able to skip survey items at their discretion, and many athletes exited the survey before getting to the end. Therefore, the number of responses varies across survey items and are presented in parenthesis throughout the report's narrative.

# SURVEY SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

Demographic and descriptive characteristics of surveyed athletes.

Athletes were asked to select the one sport that they had been most involved in. This was the only required question on the survey (all others could be skipped). Throughout the survey, when asked to share their experiences during their sport involvement, athletes were asked to think about the sport that they selected on this first survey item. The category “Another sport” contains all sports that were selected by fewer than ten athletes. In all, surveyed athletes represent 67 different sports. As shown in Table 1, the largest proportion of responses came from Tennis athletes (31.8%).

Table 1. Sport representation among surveyed athletes (N = 3,762)

SPORT	N (%)	SPORT	N (%)
Tennis	1,196 (31.8%)	Wrestling	29 (0.8%)
Soccer	396 (10.5%)	Skiing (Alpine, Nordic, etc.)	27 (0.7%)
Equestrian	348 (9.3%)	Rugby	23 (0.6%)
Archery	222 (5.9%)	Bowling	22 (0.6%)
Climbing	130 (3.5%)	Golf	22 (0.6%)
Volleyball	127 (3.4%)	Fencing	20 (0.5%)
Track & Field	96 (2.6%)	Curling	20 (0.5%)
Basketball	94 (2.5%)	Cheer	18 (0.5%)
Swimming	89 (2.4%)	Water Ski & Wake Sports	17 (0.5%)
Softball	83 (2.2%)	Diving	17 (0.5%)
Hockey	70 (1.9%)	Roller Sports	16 (0.4%)
Baseball	64 (1.7%)	Badminton	15 (0.4%)
Gymnastics	59 (1.6%)	Field Hockey	15 (0.4%)
Football (American Football)	56 (1.5%)	Weightlifting	13 (0.3%)
Speedskating	47 (1.2%)	Dance	13 (0.3%)
Lacrosse	45 (1.2%)	Artistic Swimming	11 (0.3%)
Triathlon	38 (1.0%)	Shooting (rifle, pistol, or shotgun)	11 (0.3%)
Rowing	38 (1.0%)	Boxing	10 (0.3%)
Figure Skating	33 (0.9%)	Kayak	10 (0.3%)
Cycling	30 (0.8%)	Another sport	173 (4.6%)

Athletes had the option of indicating their racial identity using a ‘select all that apply’ approach. A large majority of athletes selected Caucasian/White (79.5%) to describe their race/ethnicity (see Table 2). Throughout the following findings sections of this report, analyses explore differences across racial groups. For the purposes of those comparisons, athletes who selected more than one of the options in Table 2 are combined into a multi-racial category. Also, for the purposes of analyses, athletes who identified as Hawaiian or Pacific Islander are combined with those who selected “Another race/ethnicity”; this is done to protect the anonymity of the small number of athletes who identified themselves as Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

Table 2. Athletes’ racial/ethnic identities

<b>RACE/ETHNICITY (2,443)</b>	<b>%</b>
Caucasian/White	<b>79.5%</b>
Hispanic or Latino/a/e	<b>6.4%</b>
Asian or Asian American	<b>6.2%</b>
Black or African American	<b>4.7%</b>
Prefer not to say	<b>4.0%</b>
Native American or Alaskan Native	<b>1.8%</b>
Another race/ethnicity not listed here	<b>1.8%</b>
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	<b>0.5%</b>

Athletes included a mix of men and women (39.3% and 57.6%, respectively), with some respondents preferring not to share their gender identity (2.0%). A small proportion of athletes identified as non-binary (0.4%), gender non-conforming (0.3%), prefer to self-describe (0.2%) or are genderqueer (0.1%; see Table 3). For the purposes of subgroup analyses in findings sections throughout this report, three broad gender categories are compared: athletes who identify as women; athletes who identify as men; and athletes who identify as a gender other than man or woman.

Table 3. Athletes' gender identities

<b>GENDER IDENTITY (2,415)</b>	<b>%</b>
Woman	<b>57.6%</b>
Man	<b>39.3%</b>
Prefer not to say	<b>2.0%</b>
Non-binary	<b>0.4%</b>
Gender non-conforming	<b>0.3%</b>
A gender not listed, or prefer to self-describe	<b>0.2%</b>
Genderqueer	<b>0.1%</b>

Athletes were asked if they consider themselves to be a member of the transgender community. Of the 2,347 athlete who responded to this item, less than 1% responded “Yes” (0.8%) or indicated that they were unsure or questioning (0.5%), while the large majority (97.3%) responded “No.”

Surveyed athletes were asked to select all sexual identities that applied to them, with a majority identifying as heterosexual (84.9%; Table 4). For the purposes of subgroup analyses in findings sections throughout this report, two broad sexuality categories are compared: athletes who identified as only heterosexual/straight; and those who selected one or more sexual identity other than heterosexual/straight.

Table 4. Athletes' sexual orientations

<b>SEXUAL ORIENTATION (2,343)</b>	<b>%</b>
Heterosexual/straight	84.9%
Prefer not to say	4.8%
Bisexual	4.4%
Asexual	3.4%
Lesbian	2.4%
Gay	1.7%
Queer	1.3%
Unsure or questioning	1.2%
Pansexual	0.9%
Another sexuality not listed here or prefer to self-describe	0.9%
Aromantic	0.5%

Around 5% (5.1%) of surveyed athletes identified themselves as an athlete with a disability (Table 5).

Table 5. Athletes with and without disabilities, and those who prefer not to say

<b>DISABILITY STATUS (3,737)</b>	<b>%</b>
Athletes without disabilities	93.8%
Athletes with disabilities	5.1%
Prefer not to say	1.1%

Most athletes who responded indicated that they are currently actively involved as athletes in their sport (see Table 6). The age range for athletes who responded to this survey was 18 to 89 years old, with a median age of 43 years old, suggesting that the survey reached an active demographic of middle-aged adults.

Table 6. Athletes' status as a current or former athletes

<b>ACTIVE ATHLETE STATUS (3,752)</b>	<b>%</b>
Former Athletes	28.2%
Current Athletes	71.8%

When asked if they had ever participated as an athlete on an NGB or USOPC managed team, approximately half of athletes responded no (49.2%), while a third responded yes (33.4%). Over 15% (16.4%) of athletes expressed that they were unsure whether or not they had, and a small percentage indicated that they preferred not to say (see Table 7). Several findings in this report discuss variations between athletes who have participated on an NGB or USOPC managed team versus those who have not. When those comparisons are made, athletes who are unsure or did not specify are excluded from analysis.

Table 7. Athlete responses regarding if they have ever participated on an NGB or USOPC

<b>NGB/USOPC ATHLETE STATUS (3,761)</b>	<b>%</b>
No	49.2%
Yes	33.4%
Unsure	16.4%
Prefer not to say	0.9%

Athletes varied in terms of how long they had been involved as an athlete in their sport. The largest segment of responses came from individuals who had been involved in their sport for more than 10 years (see Table 8).

Table 8. Range of years of athletes' involvement in their sport

<b>YEARS OF INVOLVEMENT (3,710)</b>	<b>%</b>
0 to 4 years	17.25%
5 to 9 years	18.41%
10 to 20 years	36.63%
21 or more years	27.71%

A little less than 45% (44.6%) of athletes have participated on a college or university sports team. Further, surveyed athletes have performed many roles in addition to being an athlete. Nearly half have been a team captain (47.6%) at some point, and many have also been coaches, parents or guardians of athletes, and officials (see Table 9; athletes could select multiple additional roles).

*Table 9. Percent of athletes who performed additional roles in their sport*

<b>ADDITIONAL ROLES IN SPORT (2,413)</b>	<b>%</b>
Team captain	47.6%
Coach	43.0%
Parent or guardian of athlete	29.6%
Official	21.2%
Other	8.5%
NGB Athlete representative	4.7%
USOPC Athlete council representative	2.4%

A small proportion (7.5%) of athletes (N=2,398) had participated on an Olympic or Paralympic team. Those who had included national team members, Paralympic and Olympic Medalists, and Paralympic and Olympic Junior team members (Table 10).

*Table 10. Olympic and Paralympic team athletes' highest level of competition achieved*

<b>OLYMPIC &amp; PARALYMPIC TEAM MEMBERS (179)</b>	<b>N</b>
Paralympic or Olympic National Team Member	87
Paralympic or Olympic Development or Junior Team Member	50
Other	22
Paralympic or Olympic Medalist	20

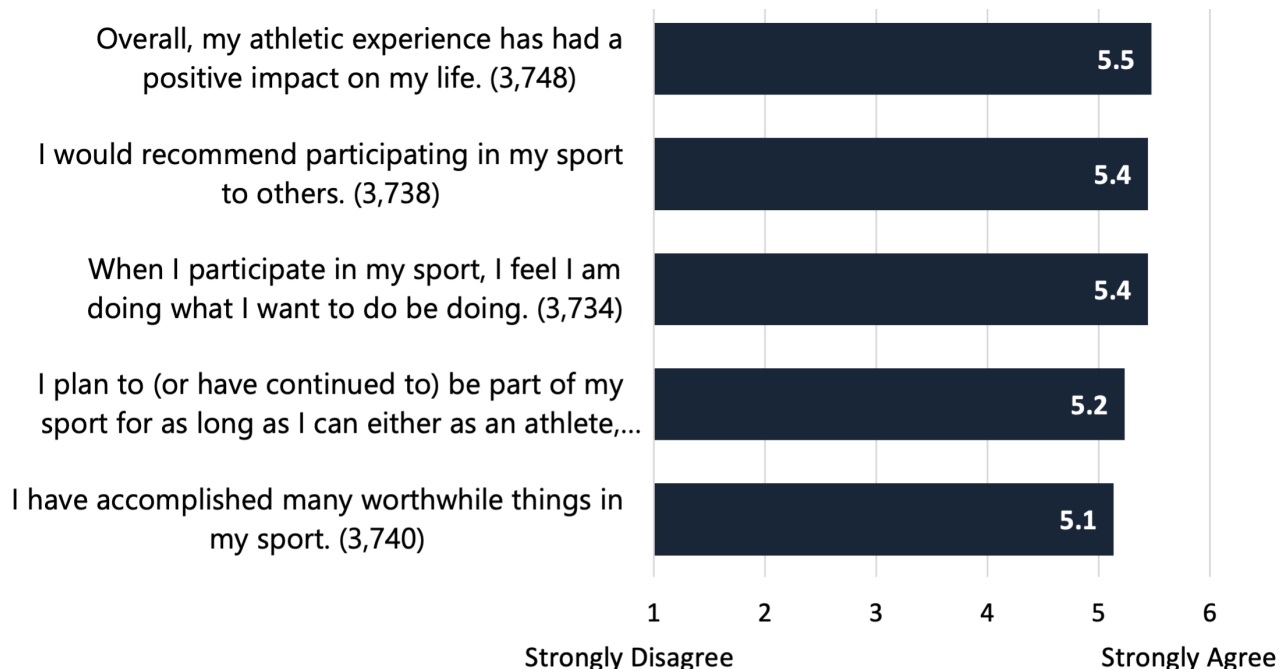


# ATHLETE SATISFACTION

Athletes shared their perceptions regarding aspects of their general sport experience.

Athletes shared a high level of satisfaction with their sport experience in general. As shown in Figure 1, average ratings fell between somewhat agree (represented by a 5) and strongly agree (represented by a 6) for all items in this section.

Figure 1. Athlete agreement with statements related to their satisfaction in sport



Subgroup analyses were conducted to explore differences in athletes' responses to items related to their satisfaction in sport. Analyses revealed no differences that reached our criteria for statistical significance.<sup>1</sup>

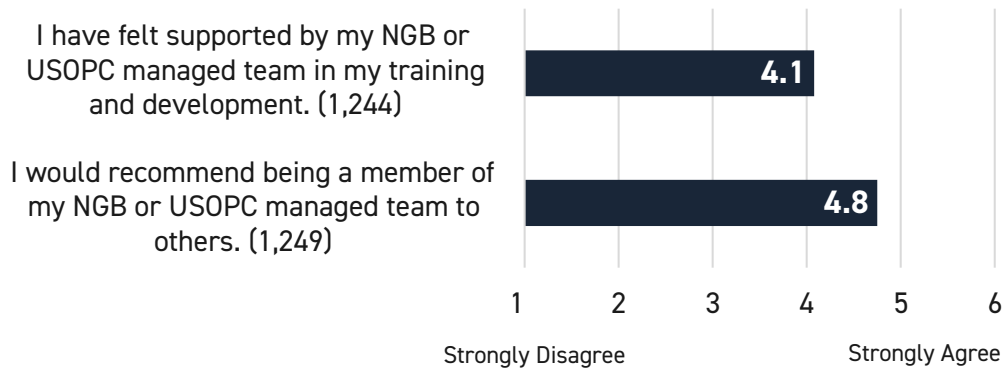
Specific to the question "overall, my athletic experience has had a positive impact on my life," of the 3,748 responses, an additional breakdown is as follows:

- Strongly agree-72.1%
- Agree somewhat-15.0%
- Agree slightly-4.8%
- Disagree slightly-1.8%
- Disagree slightly-1.2%
- Strongly disagree-3.7%

1. ANOVAs revealed no differences that reached our criteria for significance in athletes' overall responses to survey items related to their satisfaction in sport when looking at demographic factors including gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, or NGB/USOPC affiliation. Criteria for significance was a p-value of .05 or less, and an eta-squared effect size of .02 or larger.

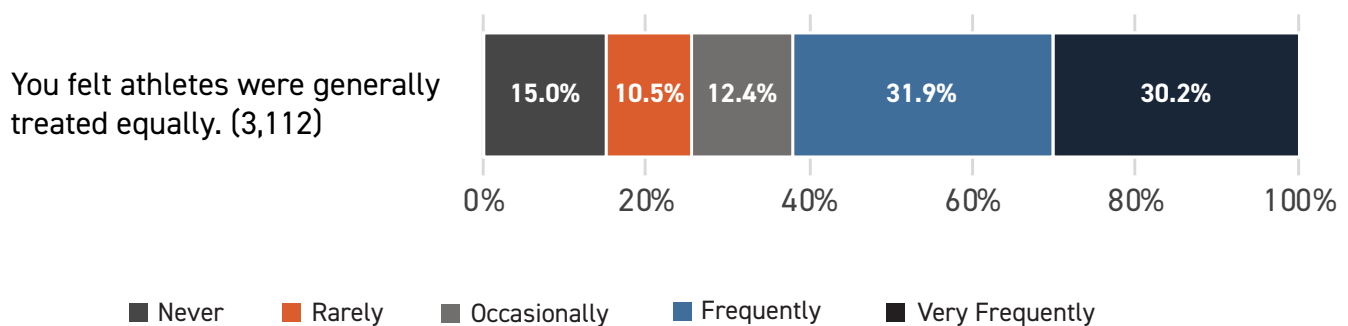
Surveyed athletes who identified themselves as having participated as athletes on an NGB or a USOPC managed team were asked whether they felt supported by those teams, and if they would recommend being a member of those teams to others. Overall, this subgroup of athletes agreed slightly (represented by a 4 on a 6-point agreement scale) that they felt supported by their NGB or USOPC managed team. These same athletes expressed stronger agreement that they would recommend being a member of their NGB or USOPC managed team to others, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Athletes' agreement with statements related to their NGB or USOPC managed teams



Most survey respondents expressed that they felt athletes are generally treated equally in their sport. Although 15% (15.0%) of athletes responded that they “Never” felt athletes were treated equally, the largest segment of athletes felt that equal treatment occurred either “Frequently” or “Very frequently” in their sport (62.1%) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Frequency of equal treatment of athletes



# ATHLETE DISENGAGEMENT

Athletes reflected on experiences of disengagement and burnout.

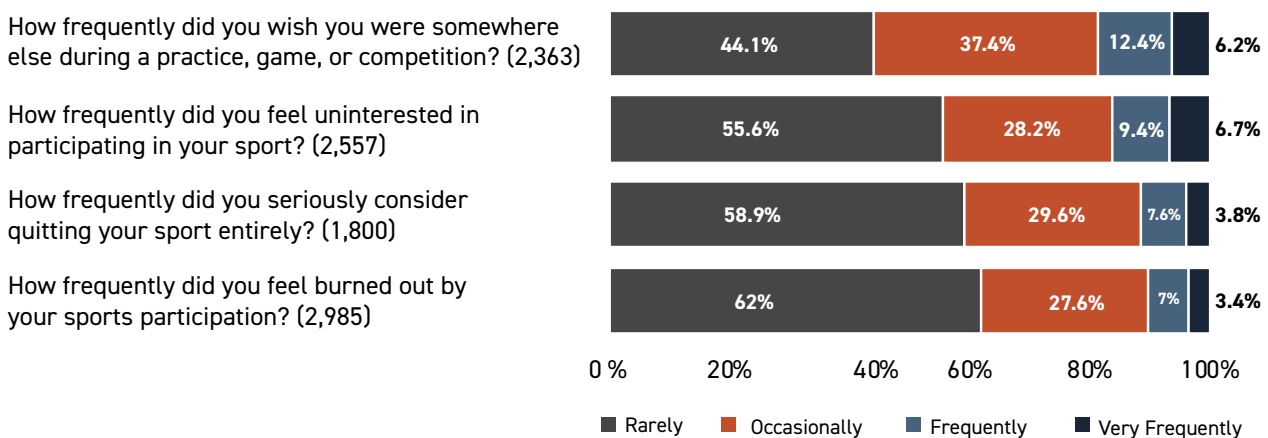
Most athletes indicated that, at some point during their athletic involvement, they felt burned out by their sports participation, uninterested in participating in their sport, and wished that they were somewhere else during a practice, game, or competition. Just under half of athletes had seriously considered quitting their sport entirely. Table 11 shows the percentage of athletes who had experiences related to athlete disengagement and burnout (either rarely, occasionally, frequently, or very frequently) compared to those who never had those experiences in the context of their sport.

Table 11: Percent of athletes who experienced vs. never experienced indicators of disengagement and burnout

During your sport involvement, how frequently...	Rarely to Very Frequently	Never
Did you feel burned out by your sports participation? (3,749)	79.6%	20.4%
Did you feel uninterested in participating in your sport? (3,746)	68.3%	31.7%
Did you wish you were somewhere else during a practice, game, or competition? (3,742)	63.1%	36.9%
Did you seriously consider quitting your sport entirely? (3,740)	48.1%	51.9%

For most athletes who had experienced disengagement or burnout during their athletic involvement, these were rare or occasional occurrences. Figure 4 displays the responses of athletes who had experienced disengagement or burnout in terms of how frequent those experiences were.

Figure 4. Frequency of disengagement or burnout (not including athletes who selected “Never”)



## GROUP DIFFERENCES

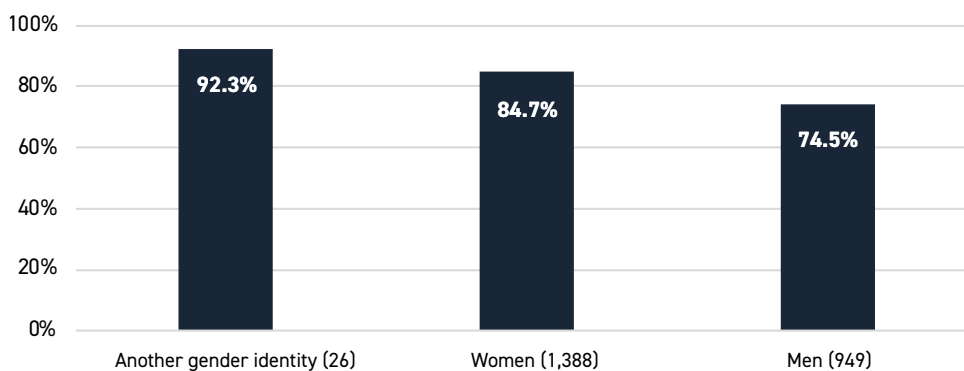
To further explore variation in athletes' experiences, a composite score was calculated for each athlete representing the total number of indicators of disengagement and burnout (i.e., the four items in this section) that they endorsed having experienced. Composite scores ranged from 0 to 4, with 0 meaning that an athlete had never experienced any of the four indicators of disengagement and burnout, and a 4 meaning that an athlete had experienced all four of the indicators of disengagement and burnout.

Subgroup analyses revealed that athletes' experiences with disengagement and burnout were significantly associated with their **gender identity**. Specifically:

- Athletes who are men experienced significantly fewer indicators of disengagement and burnout compared to all other athletes.<sup>2</sup>
- While women tended to experience between two and three (with an average of 2.2) out of the four indicators of disengagement and burnout, most men experienced less than two (averaging 1.9) out of the four indicators.
- Athletes who identified as a gender other than man or woman (including genderqueer, gender non-conforming, non-binary, and a gender other than listed here)<sup>3</sup> experienced rates of disengagement and burnout that were similar to, yet slightly higher, than those experienced by women athletes (on average, having experienced 2.4 indicators of disengagement and burnout).

Gender differences regarding disengagement and burnout were most pronounced in responses to the question: "How frequently did you feel burned out by your sports participation?" Figure 5 displays the percentage of men, women, and athletes who identified as other genders who indicated that during their athletic involvement they felt burned out by their sports participation (i.e., selected anything other than "Never" for this survey item).

Figure 5. Percent of athletes who felt burned out by their sport participation by gender



2. ANOVA revealed statistically significant differences between men and women. While differences were not found for other genders, the small number of athletes who identified as a gender other than man or woman may have limited our statistical power to detect differences for that group.

3. For the purposes of comparing athletes' experiences throughout this report, athletes who identified themselves as a gender other than man or woman are grouped together. This was done due to the small number of athletes who identified themselves as genders other than man and woman in order to protect the anonymity of athletes' survey responses.

# ANTI-INCLUSIVE EXPERIENCES

*Athletes' experiences of being treated in anti-inclusive ways.*

Athletes were asked to consider a variety of statements related to anti-inclusive experiences (listed below in Table 12), and to indicate if they had any of those experiences during their athletic involvement. The experience most commonly noted was being “repeatedly excluded from team or group activities” (experienced by just over 45% of athletes). This was followed closely by experiences of being hassled by their peers or opponents during events, and people assuming their injuries weren’t as significant or painful as they actually were. Of the athletes who responded to items in this section, over 80% (80.8%) endorsed at least one of the statements in Table 12. On average, athletes experienced between five and six (with a combined average of 5.2) out of the sixteen items in this section.

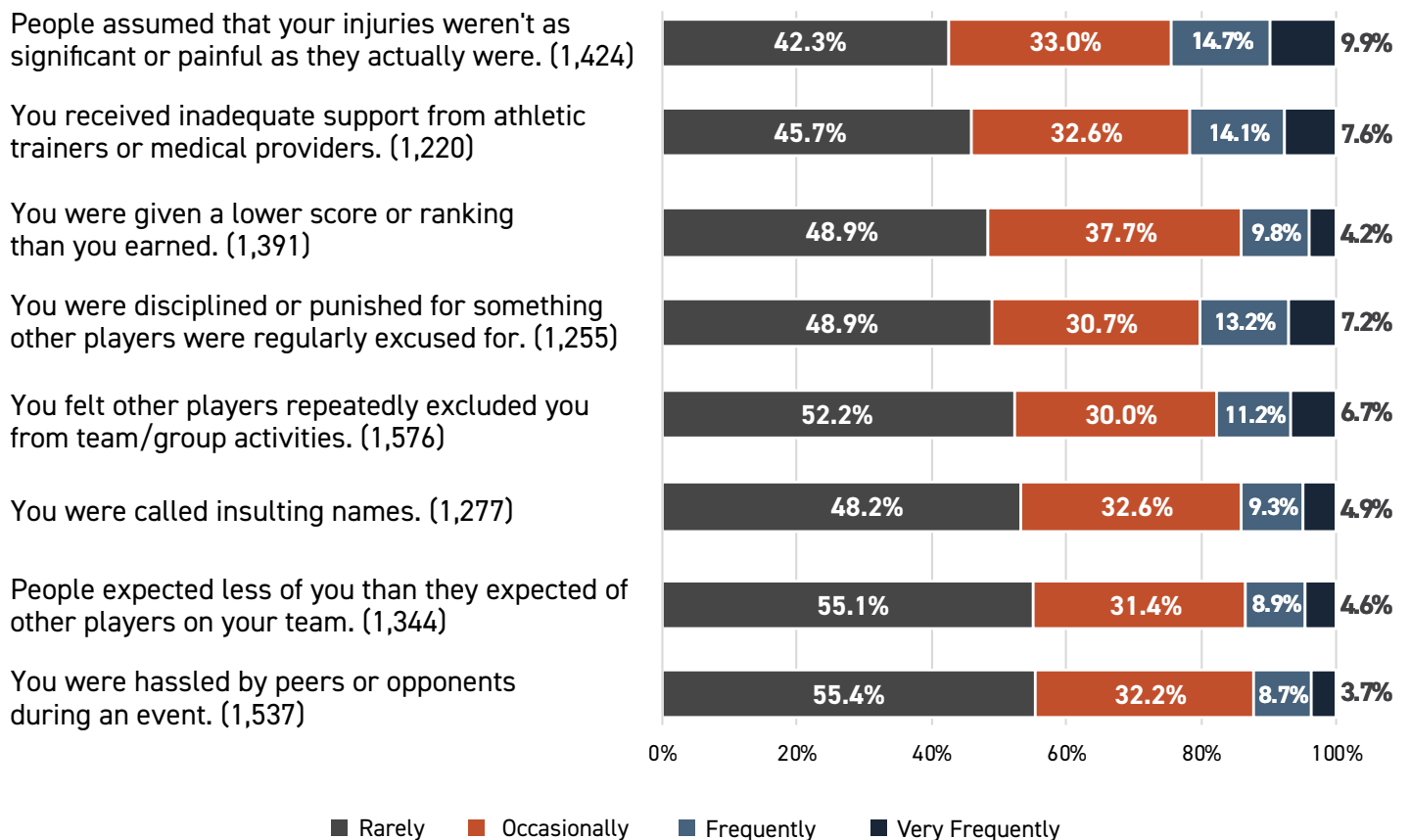
*Table 12. Percent of athletes who experienced vs. never experienced anti-inclusive behaviors*

<b>Frequency of experiences during sports involvement</b>	<b>Rarely to Very Frequently</b>	<b>Never</b>
You felt other players repeatedly excluded you from team/group activities. (3,460)	45.5%	54.5%
You were hassled by peers or opponents during an event. (3,453)	44.5%	55.5%
People assumed that your injuries weren't as significant or painful as they actually were. (3,448)	41.3%	58.7%
Were you given a lower score or ranking than you earned? (3,457)	40.2%	59.8%
People expected less of you than they expected of other players on your team. (3,457)	38.9%	61.1%
You were called insulting names. (3,452)	37.0%	63.0%
You were disciplined or punished for something other players were regularly excused for. (3,464)	36.2%	63.8%
You received inadequate support from athletic trainers or medical providers. (3,444)	35.4%	64.6%
You were treated unfairly by an official at an event. (3,455)	33.6%	66.4%
People assumed your ability to communicate was poor. (3,455)	33.3%	66.7%

Frequency of experiences during sports involvement	Rarely to Very Frequently	Never
People acted as if they thought you were not smart. (3,448)	31.3%	68.7%
You were discouraged from taking on a leadership role. (3,456)	29.7%	70.3%
People acted as if they were afraid of you. (3,446)	27.4%	72.6%
You felt unsafe as a member of your sport organization. (3,442)	22.9%	77.1%
You were hassled by security at an athletics event. (3,456)	15.3%	84.7%
You were drug tested more than your athlete peers. (3,456)	11.1%	88.9%

Athletes who had experienced anti-inclusive behaviors during their athletic involvement (i.e., those who selected anything other than “Never” as a response to items in this section) said this was a rare or occasional occurrence. Figure 6 displays the frequency at which athletes experienced the eight most common indicators of anti-inclusive behaviors.

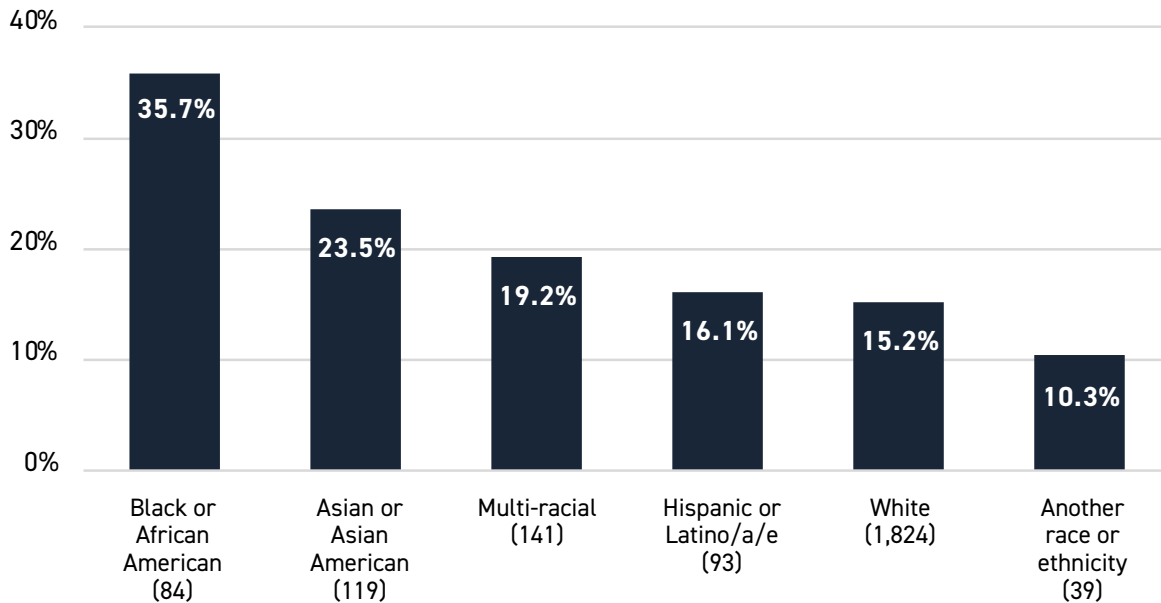
Figure 6. Frequency of anti-inclusive experiences (not including athletes who selected “Never”)



## GROUP DIFFERENCES

Generally, surveyed athletes experienced similar levels of anti-inclusive behaviors regardless of their demographic differences. One exception that stood out relates to the higher rate at which Black and African American athletes experienced being hassled by security at an athletic event, compared to athletes in other racial groups.<sup>4</sup> Further, Asian, multi-racial, and Hispanic athletes all had this anti-inclusive experience at higher rates than white athletes. Figure 7 displays the percentage of athletes across different racial groups who indicated that they have been hassled by security at an athletic event.

Figure 7. Percent of athletes who were hassled by security at an athletic event by race



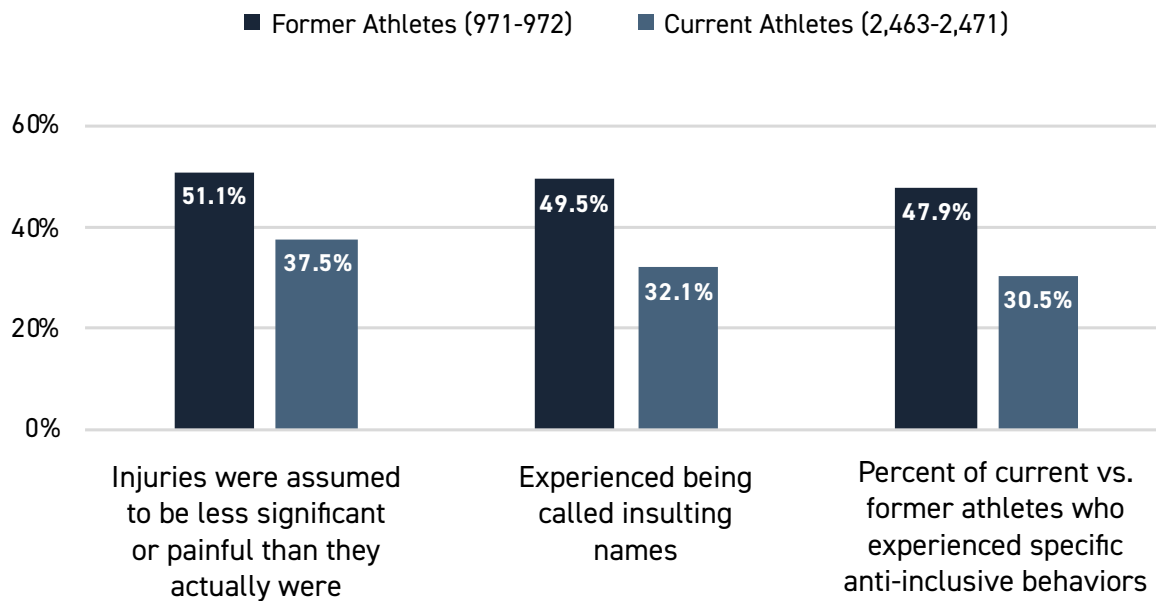
Composite scores were calculated for each athlete representing the total number of anti-inclusive behaviors asked about in this section that they endorsed having experienced. Composite scores ranged from 0 to 16, with 0 meaning that an athlete had never experienced any of the 16 anti-inclusive behaviors, and a 16 meaning that an athlete had experienced all of the anti-inclusive behaviors discussed in this section. Analyses revealed that:

- Current athletes were slightly less likely to have experienced anti-inclusive behaviors compared to former athletes (i.e., those who said they were not currently active as athletes in their sport).<sup>5</sup> While current athletes, on average, experienced approximately five (averaging 4.8) of the 16 anti-inclusive behaviors described in this section, former athletes tended to have experienced more than six (averaging 6.2) of those behaviors.
- Three anti-inclusive behaviors in particular were experienced more by former athletes, including being called insulting names, having people assume that their injuries were not as painful or significant as they actually were, and receiving inadequate support from athletic trainers or medical providers.

4. ANOVA revealed that this racial group comparison was statistically significant, reaching a p-value of  $< .05$ . While the effect size for this item was smaller than our criteria of  $.02$  eta-squared, it was approaching a small effect size ( $.014$ ) and was the item with the largest effect size in this section according to our racial group comparison.

Figure 8 shows the rate at which current athletes compared to former athletes experienced these three anti-inclusive behaviors (i.e., selected anything other than “Never” in response to the associated item).

Figure 8. Percent of current vs. former athletes who experienced specific anti-inclusive behaviors<sup>6</sup>



## COMPARISON TO 2020

The majority of athletes who responded to the current survey (80.8%) indicated that they had experienced at least one anti-inclusive behavior during their athletic involvement, which is similar to the proportion who indicated this in the 2020 survey (72.4%). These results suggest that anti-inclusive behaviors in sports are commonly experienced by the majority of athletes.

5. ANOVA revealed that this variation between current vs. former athletes was statistically significant ( $p$ -value  $< .05$ ), while the eta-squared effect size (measured at .019) was slightly smaller than our criteria of .02.

6. The number of current and former athletes who responded to the items displayed in this figure varies slightly due to athletes skipping survey items and/or exiting the survey before reaching the end. Similar variations in item response rates are noted in figures throughout this report.



# DISCRIMINATORY EXPERIENCES

*Athletes' experiences of being discriminated against during their athletic involvement.*

Athletes were asked whether, during their involvement in their sports, they were ever treated with disrespect or discriminated against because of aspects of their personal identities.<sup>7</sup> Overall, one-third (33.0%) of athletes who responded to items in this survey section (N=3,422) indicated that they had experienced some form of discrimination during their athletic involvement. According to survey results, ageism (toward both younger as well as older athletes) was the most pervasive form of discrimination experienced by the largest segment of athletes. Table 13 displays the percentage of athletes who had experienced different forms of discrimination during their athletic participation, compared to those who had not.

*Table 13. Percent of athletes who experienced vs. did not experience different types of discrimination*

<b>Experienced discrimination in sports due to...</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Age being younger (3,414)	13.2%	86.8%
Age being older (3,413)	13.1%	86.9%
Gender identity (3,409)	8.4%	91.6%
Race or ethnicity (3,415)	7.5%	92.5%
Religious beliefs (3,408)	6.1%	93.9%
Sexual orientation (3,398)	5.2%	94.8%
National origin (3,412)	5.2%	94.8%
Another aspect of identity (2,206)	5.4%	94.6%

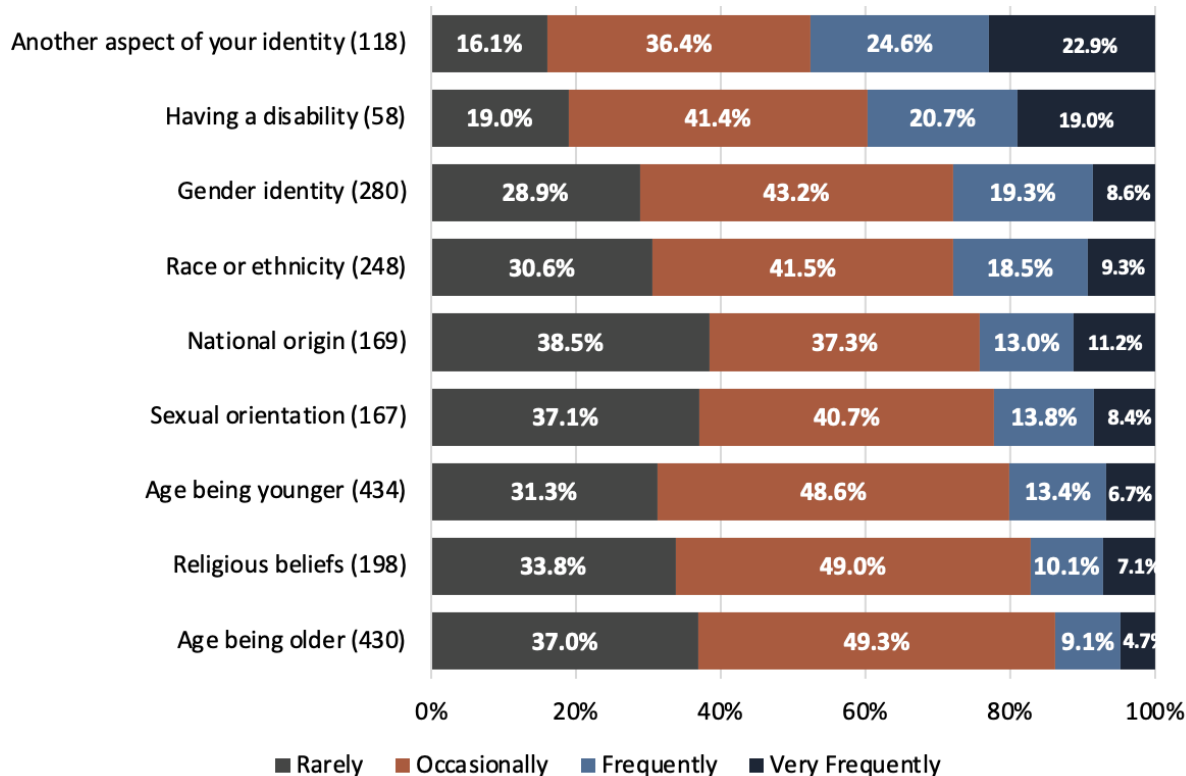
Athletes who had experienced discrimination due to another aspect of their identity had the option of sharing in their own words the type of discrimination they experienced. Of the 125 athletes who specified another type of discrimination that they experienced, the highest proportion (12.8%) indicated that they had experienced discrimination due to their body shape (e.g., height, weight, or physique). Other aspects of athletes' identities that were the target of discrimination included their financial situation, political beliefs, skin tone, hairstyle or hair type, skill level, diet, and cultural identity.

7. Please note: While this section deals with questions explicitly focused on discrimination, analyses in various other sections of the report also shed light on athlete experiences concerning disrespect and discrimination.

Only athletes who identified themselves as having a disability were asked if they had experienced discrimination based on their disability. Of those athletes (N=172), more than one third (36.0%) responded they had experienced this type of discrimination.

Most athletes who experienced discrimination during their sports involvement indicated that they had these experiences occasionally. Figure 9 displays the frequency at which different types of discrimination occurred. As shown in Figure 9, discriminatory experiences happened more frequently when they were related to athletes' disability (N=58), or another aspect of their identity (N=118), compared to other forms of discrimination.

Figure 9. Frequency of discrimination associated with various aspects of athletes' identities (only including athletes who experienced discrimination)



Athletes shared whether they experienced discrimination at various timepoints (athletes were able to select more than one timeframe). Key insights from Table 14 include:

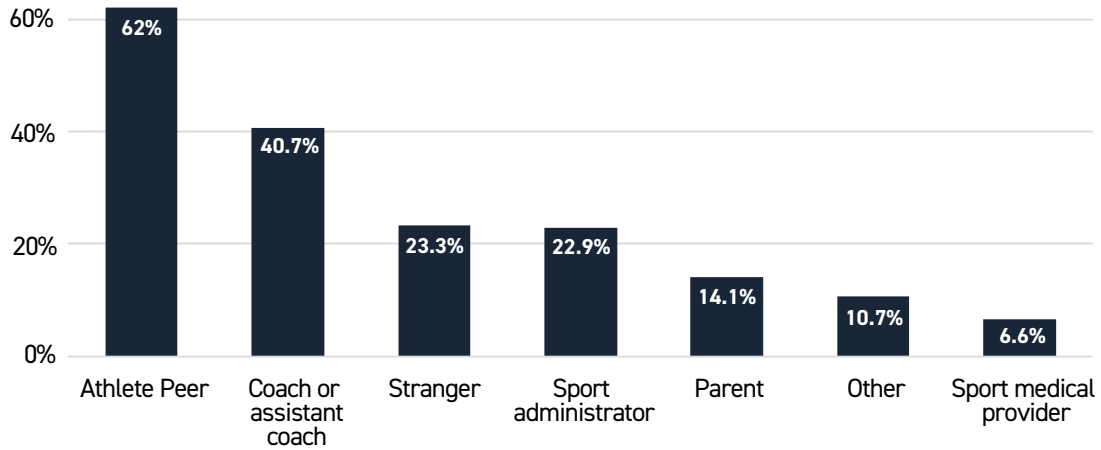
- Athletes most commonly report experiencing discrimination in sports more than four years ago.
- Athletes who experienced discrimination based on a disability were most likely to have experienced this within the past two years.
- Athletes who experienced discrimination based on their age being older or on their gender identity were most likely to have had these experiences within the past 12 months.
- Although many experiences of discriminatory behavior took place four or more years ago, all forms of discrimination were experienced by substantial segments of athletes more recently as well.

Table 14. Timeframe of athletes' experiences of discrimination (only including athletes who experienced discrimination)

Timeframe of discrimination in sports due to...	Within the past 12 months	1-2 years ago	2-4 years ago	More than 4 years ago
Having a disability (59)	47.5%	49.2%	33.9%	28.8%
Age being older (438)	35.6%	30.1%	21.2%	29.2%
Gender identity (281)	30.6%	27.4%	27.8%	30.6%
Another aspect of identity (119)	29.4%	23.5%	25.2%	52.9%
National origin (249)	28.5%	24.5%	20.5%	47.0%
Religious beliefs (200)	27.0%	28.0%	19.5%	33.5%
Race or ethnicity (169)	25.4%	23.7%	25.4%	45.0%
Sexual orientation (170)	25.3%	24.7%	25.9%	38.2%
Age being younger (447)	19.7%	18.1%	21.7%	57.0%

Athletes who experienced discrimination were asked to categorize the person or people who treated them in this way (using a 'select all that apply' approach). As shown in Figure 10, athletes were most likely to be discriminated against by their athlete peers, followed by their coaches or assistant coaches.

Figure 10. Source of discriminatory behavior indicated by athlete who experienced discrimination (N = 1,106)

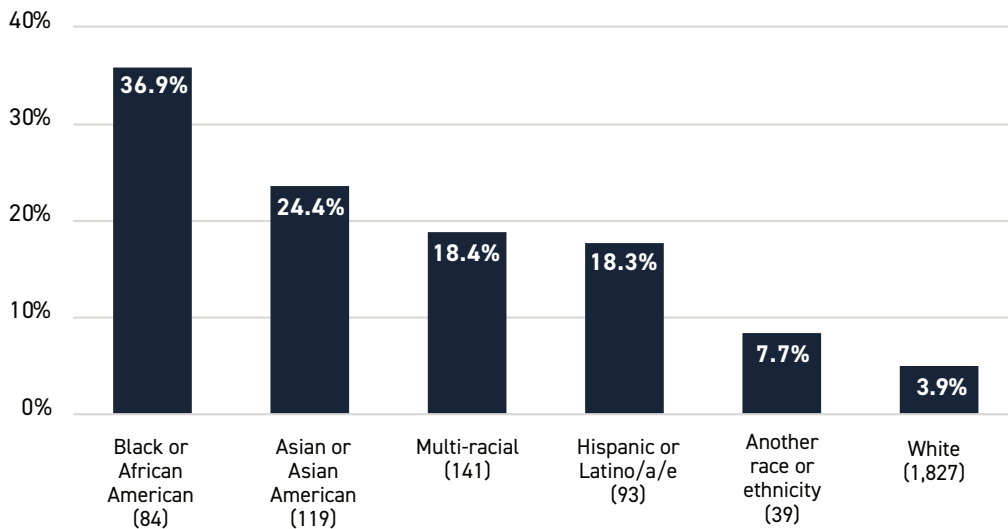


## GROUP DIFFERENCES

Further statistical analysis shed more light on how athletes' experiences with discrimination related to their personal identities. As discussed below, significant differences<sup>7</sup> in discriminatory experiences were revealed relating to athletes' racial identities, gender identities, sexual orientation, and whether or not athletes identified as having a disability.

Athletes' experiences of racial discrimination varied significantly based on their racial identities.<sup>8</sup> As shown in Figure 11, well over one-third (36.9%) of athletes who identified themselves as being Black or African American had experienced racial discrimination during their athletic involvement; a rate which exceeds all other racial groups by more than ten percentage points.

Figure 11. Percent of athletes with different racial identities who experienced racial discrimination

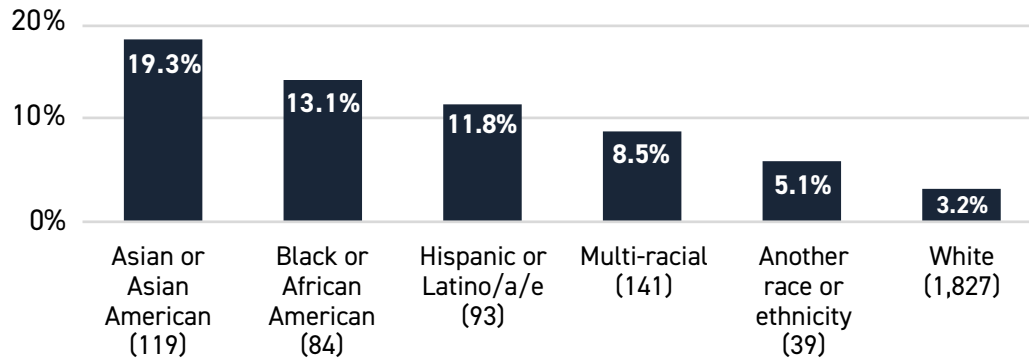


8. Throughout this section, group differences are noted when Pearson chi-square significance tests were below our threshold of p-value equal to or less than .05, and when a Cramer's V effect size was observed at or above our threshold of .10 (indicative of a small effect size).

9. The effect size for this finding was calculated at a Cramer's V of .31 (a medium effect size). All other significant findings in this section were associated with small effect sizes (between .10 and .27).

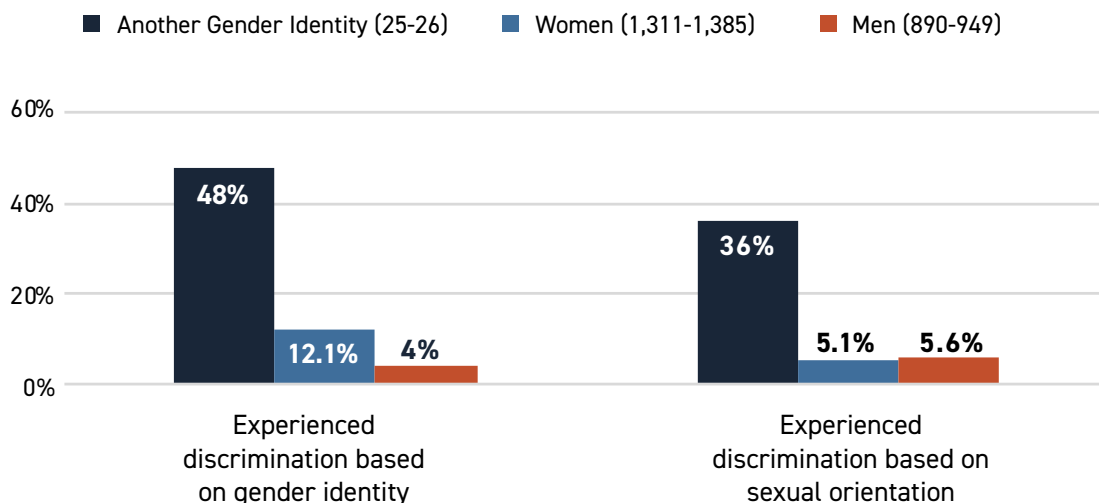
Discrimination based on national origin also varied significantly by athletes' racial identities. As Figure 12 displays, Asian or Asian American athletes disproportionately experienced this type of discrimination, at a rate of approximately one in five (19.3%).

Figure 12. Percent of athletes with different racial identities who experienced discrimination based on their national origin



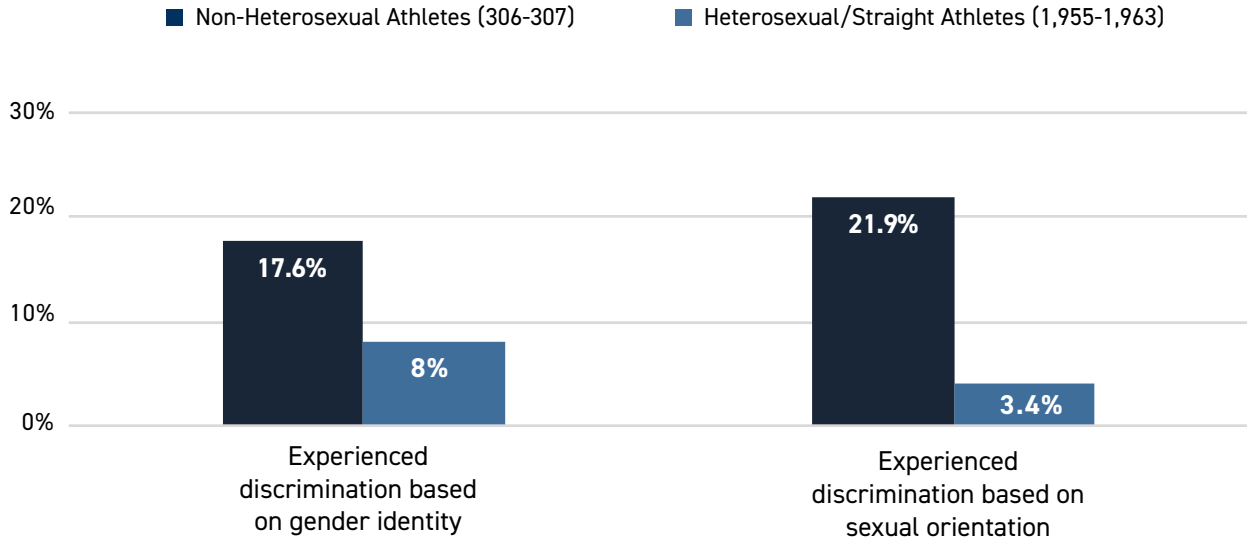
Athletes' gender identity was significantly associated with the rate at which they experienced both gender discrimination, and discrimination based on their sexual orientation (see Figure 13). Athletes who identified themselves as a gender other than man or woman (including genderqueer, gender non-conforming, non-binary, or another gender than listed here) experienced these types of discrimination at the highest rates. While women experienced more gender discrimination than men, both men and women experienced similar rates of discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Figure 13. Percent of athletes with different gender identities who experienced discrimination based on their gender and their sexual orientation



Athletes' sexual orientation was significantly associated with their experiences of discrimination related to both sexual orientation as well as gender. Athletes who identified themselves as having a sexual orientation other than heterosexual/straight (including asexual, aromantic, bisexual, gay, lesbian, queer, pansexual, unsure or questioning, or a sexual orientation not listed here)<sup>9</sup> were more likely to experience both of these types of discrimination, as shown in Figure 14.

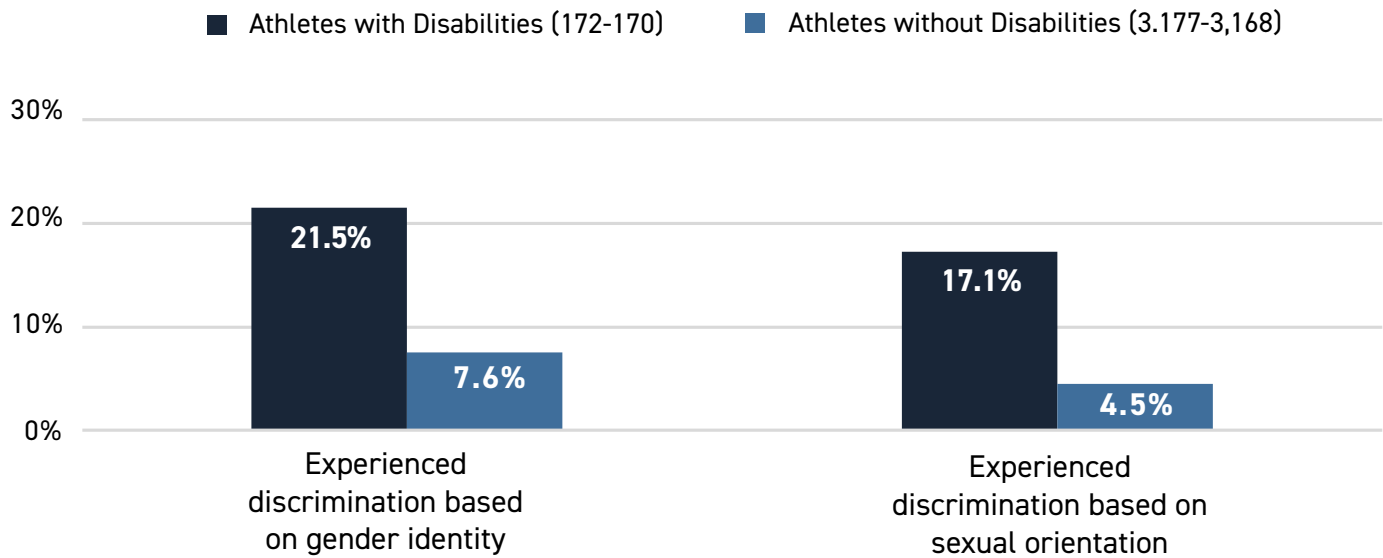
Figure 14. Percent of athletes with heterosexual vs. non-heterosexual identities who experienced discrimination based on their gender and their sexual orientation



Athletes who identified as having a disability experienced significantly higher rates of discrimination that extended beyond ableism, or discrimination based on their disability status. Specifically, as shown in Figure 15, athletes with disabilities were more likely than athletes without disabilities to experience gender-based discrimination as well as discrimination related to their sexual orientation.

10. For the purposes of comparing athletes' experiences throughout this report, athletes who identified themselves as being a sexuality other than heterosexual/straight are grouped together. This was done due to the limited number of athletes who identified themselves in some of the smaller sexual orientation subgroups in order to protect anonymity.

Figure 15. Percent of athletes with and without disabilities who experienced discrimination based on their gender and sexual orientation



## COMPARISON TO 2020

A smaller proportion of athletes who responded to the current survey (33.0%) indicated that they had experienced at least one form of discriminatory behavior during their athletic involvement, compared to the athletes who responded to the 2020 survey (48%). However, findings from the current survey converge with findings from 2020 when it comes to noting the disproportionately higher rates of discrimination experienced by some athletes, including athletes in racial minority and gender minority groups. The current results build on the 2020 findings by clarifying the specific types of discrimination most often experienced by these various subgroups of athletes.

# EMOTIONAL HARM & NEGLECT

*Athletes' experiences of emotionally harmful or neglectful behavior.*

A series of 22 survey items was used to assess the potentially emotionally harmful and neglectful experiences that athletes had during their sports participation. A large majority of athletes (78.4%) shared that they had, at some point in their athletic involvement, experienced at least one of the 22 indicators of emotional harm and neglect (i.e., the items listed in Table 15). The average number of indicators of emotional harm and neglect that athletes endorsed having experienced fell between 6 and 7 (6.48) out of 22.

Table 15 shows the proportion of athletes that responded they had experienced versus never experienced each indicator of emotional harm or neglect within the context their sport. Just over half of athletes experienced being put down, embarrassed, or humiliated, and nearly as many experienced having people gossip or tell lies about them.

*Table 15. Percent of athletes who experienced vs. never experienced indicators of emotional harm and neglect*

<b>Frequency of experiences during sports involvement</b>	<b>Rarely to Very Frequently</b>	<b>Never</b>
You were put down, embarrassed, or humiliated. (3,262)	50.6%	49.4%
People gossiped or told lies about you. (3,249)	47.0%	53.0%
You were shouted at in a frightening, threatening, or belittling manner. (3,261)	43.3%	56.7%
You were forced or expected to train or compete in unsafe conditions (e.g., extreme hot or cold weather, or other dangerous conditions). (3,116)	41.9%	58.1%
You were criticized as a person in response to your performance in training or competition. (3,256)	41.2%	58.8%
You felt your physical health was ignored. (3,119)	40.3%	59.7%
You felt your mental or emotional health was ignored. (3,116)	39.6%	60.4%
You felt your athletic needs were ignored. (3,116)	39.0%	61.0%
You were forced or expected to practice, train, or compete while you were injured, sick, or exhausted (3,105)	37.5%	62.5%

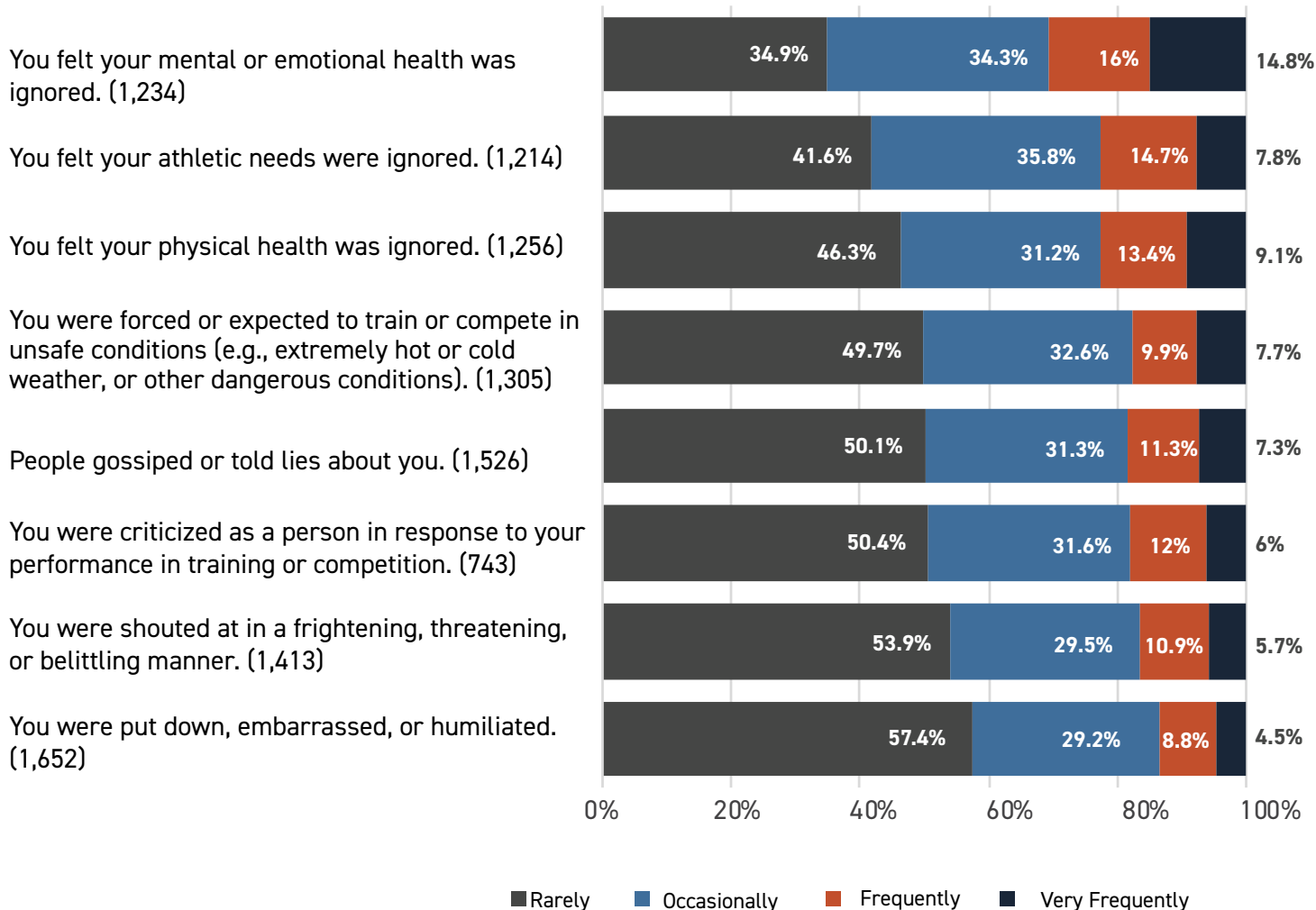


<b>Frequency of experiences during sports involvement</b>	<b>Rarely to Very Frequently</b>	<b>Never</b>
You were intentionally ignored in response to your performance in training or competition (3,252)	36.2%	63.8%
You were negatively criticized about your body weight, size, and/or shape. (3,261)	35.6%	64.4%
You were pressured to try new skills before you felt ready. (3,118)	32.0%	68.0%
Someone threatened to harm or take away an animal that you cared about. (464)*	30.6%	69.4%
You have felt like your future wellbeing (beyond your athletic experience) was not cared for. (3,103)	30.1%	69.9%
You were sworn/cursed at for not performing well. (3,235)	29.0%	71.0%
You were encouraged to sacrifice your education or career for sport. (3,124)	27.1%	72.9%
You were not provided with adequate support for basic needs (e.g., food, sleep, shelter, bathroom use, opportunities for bathing/showering). (3,107)	22.2%	77.8%
You were harassed or criticized on social media, text message, or another online format. (3,264)	20.4%	79.6%
You were threatened with being thrown out of practice or kicked off the team. (3,241)	17.9%	82.1%
You were inappropriately left alone with no care. (3,111)	14.5%	85.5%
You were pressured to put off starting a family because of your sports involvement. (3,116)	11.8%	88.2%
	<b>One or more times</b>	<b>Never</b>
Someone harmed an animal that you cared about. (440)*	30.2%	69.8%

*\*Only athletes who shared that they had a service or emotional support animal, or indicated being an equestrian athlete, were asked questions referencing animals.*

In terms of frequency, most athletes said they had experiences related to emotional harm and neglect rarely or occasionally. Figure 16 shows the frequency at which athletes experienced the eight most common forms of emotional harm and neglect.

Figure 16. Frequency of athletes' experiences related to emotional harm and neglect (not including athletes who selected "Never")

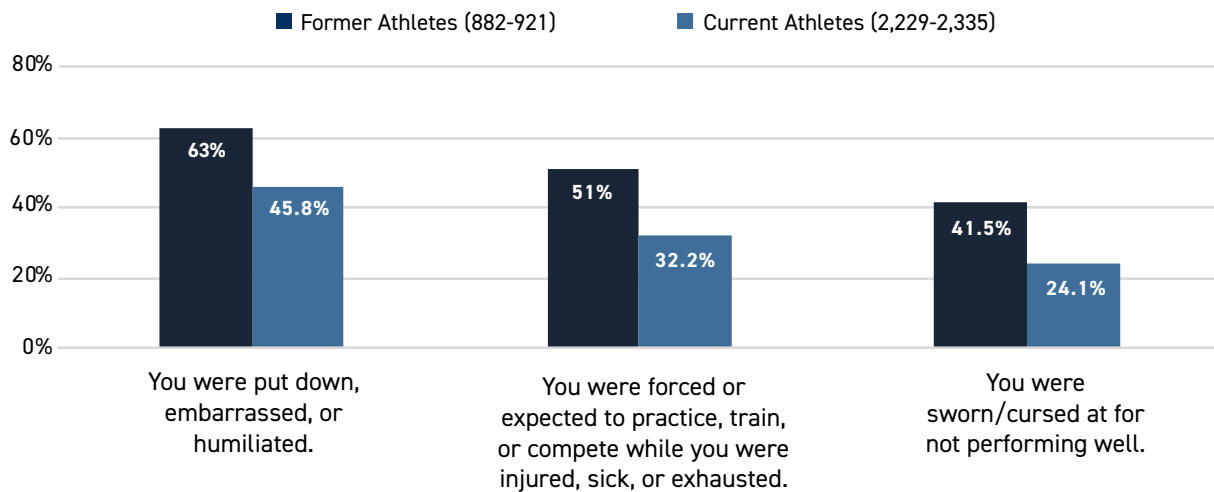


## GROUP DIFFERENCES

To explore group differences, composite scores related to emotional harm and neglect were calculated for each athlete based on the total number of items in this survey section that they indicated having experienced. Composite scores ranged from 0 to 22, with 0 meaning that an athlete had never experienced any of the behaviors asked about in this section, and a 22 meaning that an athlete had experienced all 22 indicators of emotional harm and neglect.

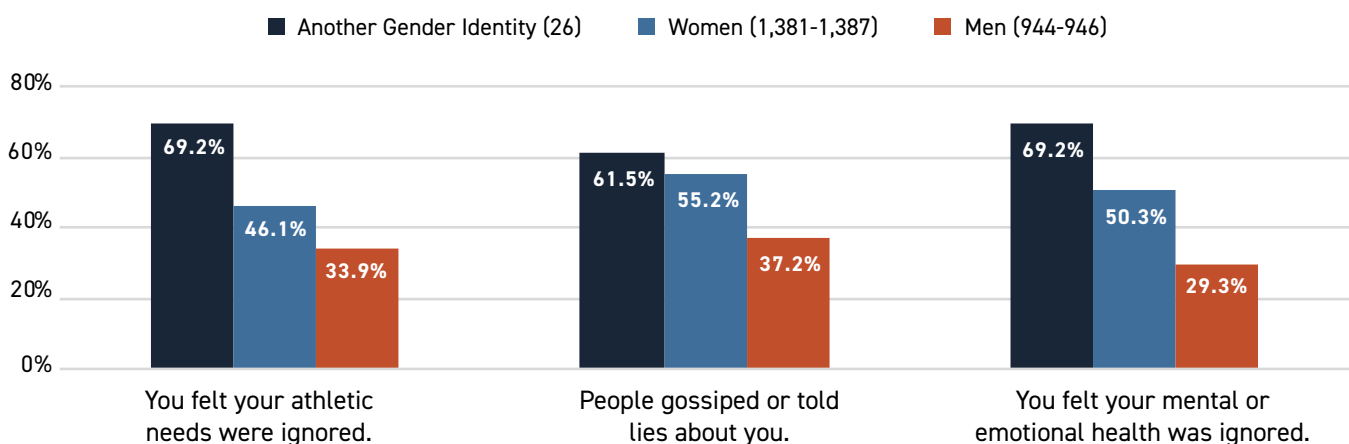
Analyses of variance in composite scores revealed that former athletes experienced a significantly higher number of emotional harm and neglect indicators when compared to current athletes.<sup>10</sup> The average number of emotional harm and neglect indicators experienced was eight (8.0) for former athletes and about six (5.9) for current athletes. The variation between current and former athletes' experiences with emotional harm and neglect was particularly pronounced for the three items displayed in Figure 17.

Figure 17. Percent of current vs. former athletes who experienced three behaviors related to emotional harm and neglect



Experiences with emotional harm and neglect also varied based on athletes' genders.<sup>11</sup> According to survey results, men experienced fewer indicators of emotional harm and neglect (averaging 5.9 out of 22 indicators), compared both to women (who averaged 7.7) and athletes who identified as a gender other than men and women (whose average was 10.5). Figure 18 shows the percent of men, women, and athletes who identify as another gender who experienced three types of emotional harm and neglect during their athletic involvement.

Figure 18. Percent of athletes who experienced three behaviors related to emotional harm and neglect by gender identity



11. ANOVA revealed that this variation between current vs. former athletes was statistically significant (p-value < .05), with an eta-squared effect size slightly higher than our criteria of .02 (measured at .023).

12. ANOVA revealed that this variation across gender groups was statistically significant (p-value < .05), with an eta-squared effect size slightly higher than our criteria of .02 (measured at .022). Post-hoc analysis revealed that all three gender comparison groups were significantly different from one another.

## COMPARISON TO 2020

Findings in the current survey converge with findings from 2020. Both suggest that approximately 80% of athletes have experienced some form of emotional harm or neglect (referred to as “Psychological harm” in the 2020 report) during their athletic involvement. Further, both sets of findings suggest that experiences of emotional harm and neglect are more common among women and other genders than they are among men.

# PHYSICAL HARM

*Athletes' experiences of physically harmful behavior, or threat of physical harm.*

Fourteen survey items asked athletes about the physically harmful or physically threatening experience they had during their sports participation. A little over one-third (35.3%) of athletes who responded to items in this section (N=3,023) experienced at least one of the 14 indicators of physical harm/threat of harm (i.e., the items listed in Table 16) during their athletic involvement. Table 16 shows the proportion of athletes who had experienced versus never experienced each indicator of physical harm (or threat of physical harm) in the context of their sport.

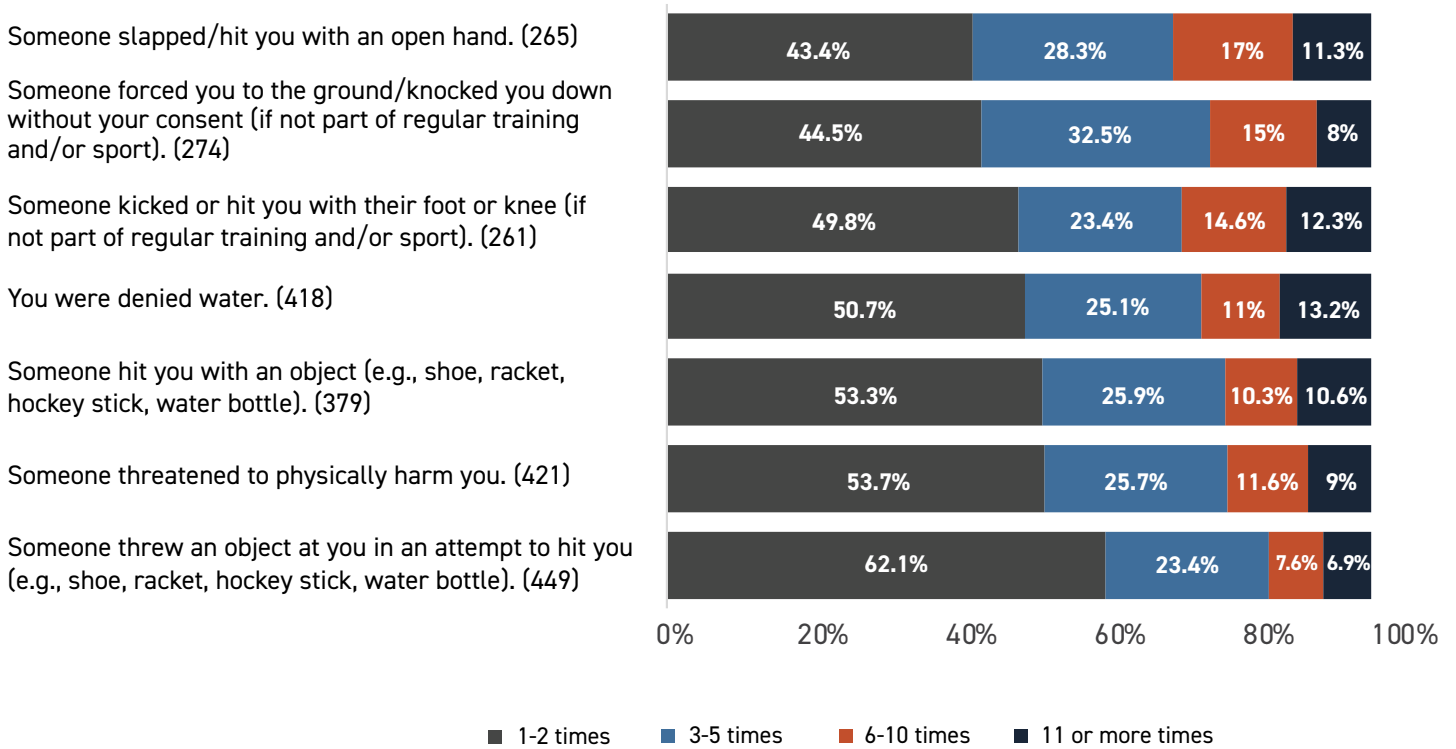
*Table 16. Percent of athletes who experienced vs. never experienced physical harm or threat of physical harm*

<b>Frequency of experiences during sports involvement</b>	<b>One or more Times</b>	<b>Never</b>
You were punished with excessive exercise. (3,005)	22.0%	78.0%
Someone threw an object at you in an attempt to hit you (e.g., shoe, racket, hockey stick, water bottle). (3,011)	14.9%	85.1%
Someone threatened to physically harm you. (3,010)	14.0%	86.0%
You were denied water. (2,998)	13.9%	86.1%
Someone hit you with an object (e.g., shoe, racket, hockey stick, water bottle). (3,015)	12.6%	87.4%
Someone forced you to the ground/knocked you down without your consent (if not part of regular training and/or sport). (3,011)	9.1%	90.9%
Someone slapped/hit you with an open hand. (3,021)	8.8%	91.2%
Someone kicked or hit you with their foot or knee (if not part of regular training and/or sport). (3,013)	8.7%	91.3%
Someone punched/hit you with a fist (if not part of regular training and/or sport). (3,012)	8.0%	92.0%
Someone pulled your hair. (3,009)	7.7%	92.3%
Someone put their hands or another object on your neck and restricted your breathing. (3,009)	5.5%	94.5%
You were forced or ordered to get into and/or stay in a confined space (such as a locker or bathroom stall). (3,000)	5.5%	94.5%
Someone held you under water against your will. (3,011)	5.1%	94.9%
Someone shaved or cut your hair as punishment. (309)	4.8%	95.2%

13. ANOVA revealed that this variation across gender groups was statistically significant (p-value < .05), with an eta-squared effect size slightly higher than our criteria of .02 (measured at .022). Post-hoc analysis revealed that all three gender comparison groups were significantly different from one another.

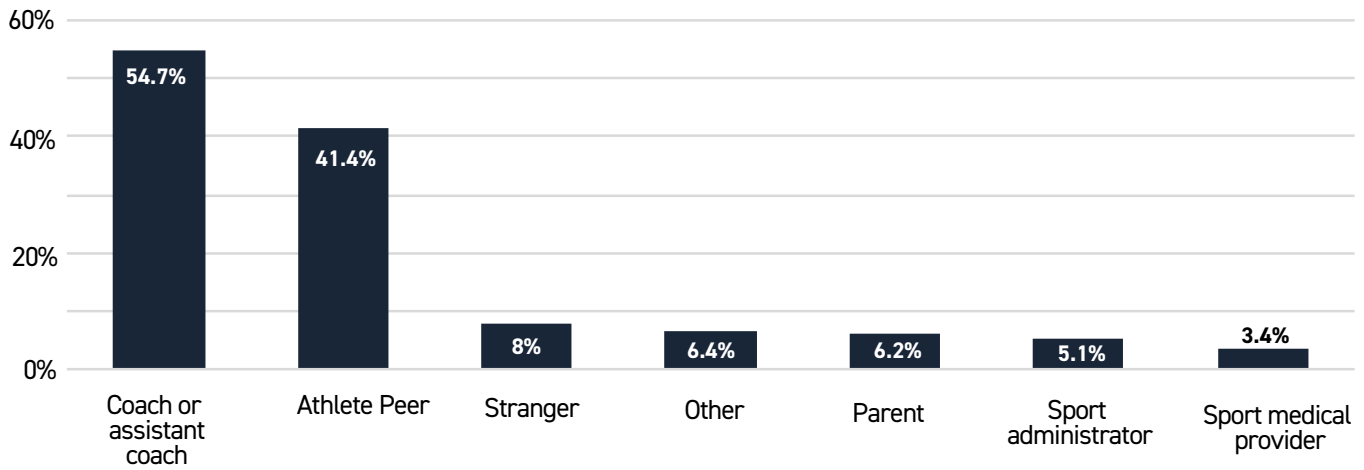
Figure 19 displays the frequency at which athletes experienced the eight most common indicators of physical harm or threat of physical harm.

Figure 19. Frequency of athletes' experiences related to physical harm (not including athletes who selected "Never")



Athletes who experienced indicators of physical harm or threat of physical harm were asked to categorize the person or people who treated them in harmful or threatening ways (using a 'select all that apply' approach). As shown in Figure 20, athletes were most likely to experience physical harm or physical threats from their coaches or assistant coaches, followed by their athlete peers.

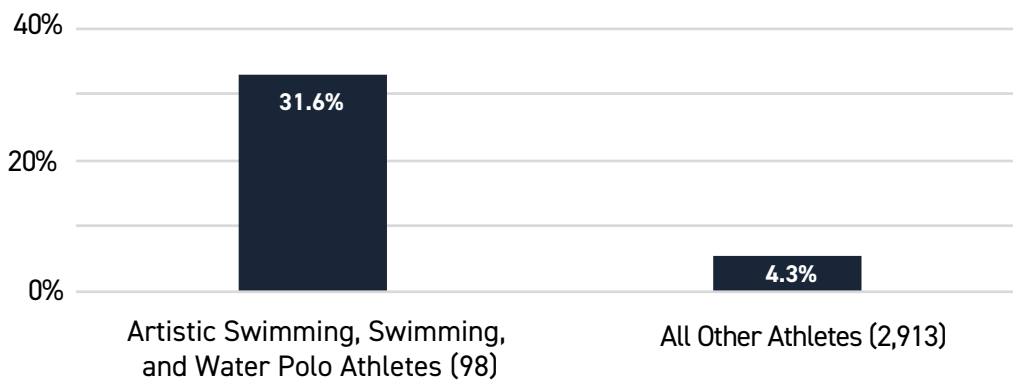
Figure 20. Source of physically harmful or physically threatening behavior according to athletes who experienced physical harm or threat (N = 1,059)



## GROUP DIFFERENCES

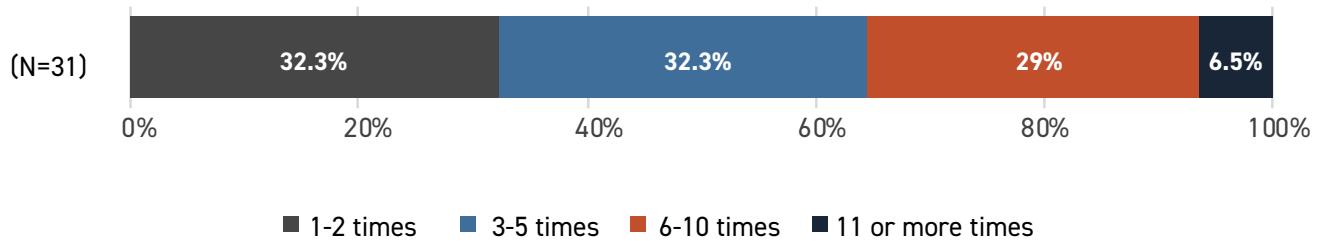
For athletes whose primary sport was swimming, the experience of having been held under water against their will was far more common than it was for other athletes, as displayed in Figure 21.

Figure 21. Percent of athletes in swim-focused sports vs. other sports who experienced being held under water against their will



For athletes in swim-focused sports (i.e., swimming, artistic swimming, and water polo) who had ever experienced being held under water against their will (N=31), this was generally not confined to one or two occurrences (see Figure 22).

Figure 22. Frequency of swim-focused athletes' experiences of being held under water (not including athletes who selected "Never")



Composite scores were calculated for each athlete based on the total number of items related to physical harm or threat of physical harm that they indicated having experienced. Composite scores ranged from 0 to 14 (from never having experienced any of the behaviors asked about in this section, to having experienced all 14).

Analyses of variance in composite scores revealed no statistically significant differences in the number of indicators of physical harm (or threat of harm) that athletes had experienced across key demographic comparison groups.<sup>12</sup> However, at the item-level, several experiences related to physical harm stood out as being more prevalent within certain athlete sub-groups, as follows:

- Athletes' experiences of being hit or slapped with an open hand varied significantly based on their racial identities (Figure 23).<sup>13</sup> Black or African American athletes were the most likely to experience this behavior.
- Athletes' experiences of being threatened with physical harm, and of being forced or ordered to get into or stay in a confined space varied significantly based on whether or not they have a disability (Figure 24).<sup>14</sup> Athletes with disabilities were more likely to experience these behaviors.
- Athletes' experiences of being punched or hit with a fist, forced or knocked to the ground, kicked or hit with a foot or knee, and threatened with physical harm varied significantly based on athletes' gender identity (Figure 25).<sup>15</sup> Athletes who identified as men, or a gender other than man or woman were more likely than women to experience these behaviors.

14. ANOVAs revealed no variation in composite scores that reached our threshold of a p-value at or below .05 and an eta-squared effect size equal to or greater than .02.

15. The effect size for this finding was calculated at a Cramer's V of .11 (a small effect size).

16. The effect sizes for these findings were calculated at a Cramer's V of .10 (a small effect size).

17. The effect size for these findings was calculated at a Cramer's V of .13 (a small effect size).



Figure 23. Variation across racial/ethnic groups in athletes' experiences of being hit or slapped

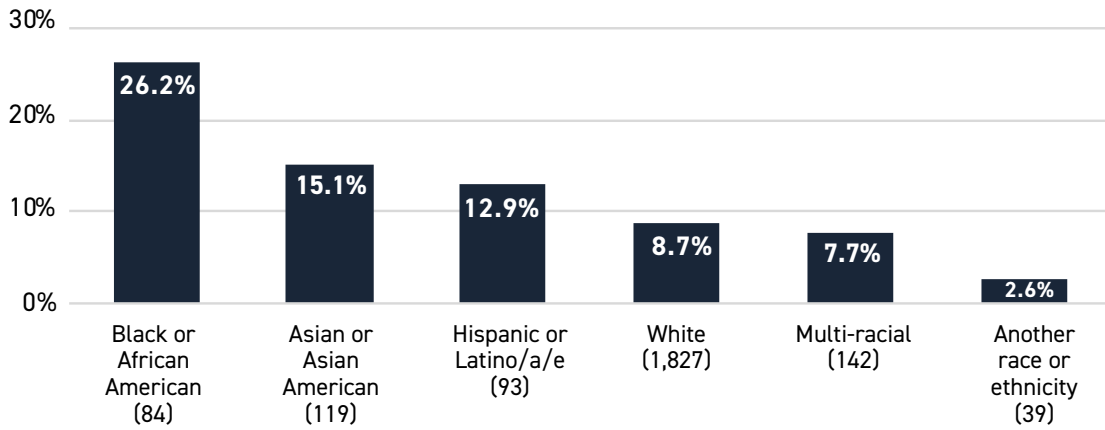


Figure 24. Variation in rate of experiences with two types of physical harm or threat or physical harm for athletes with and without disabilities

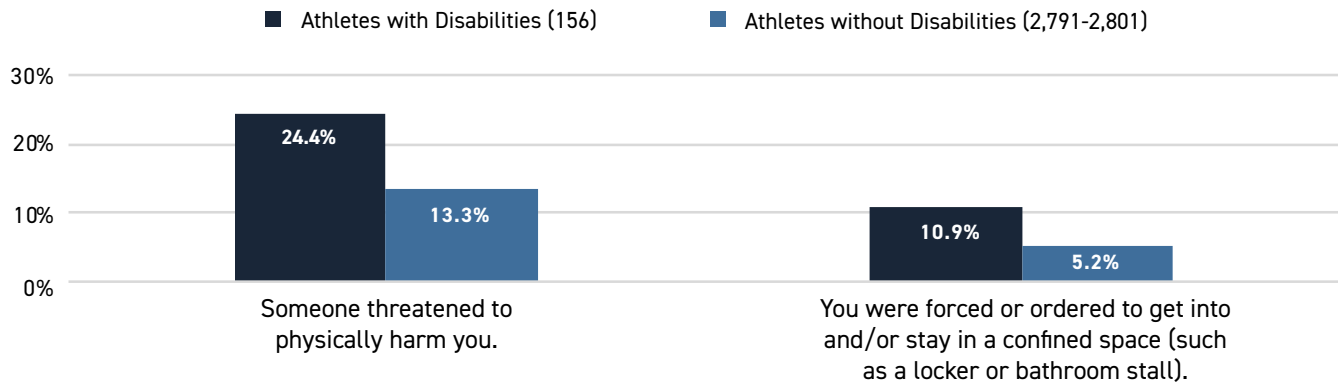
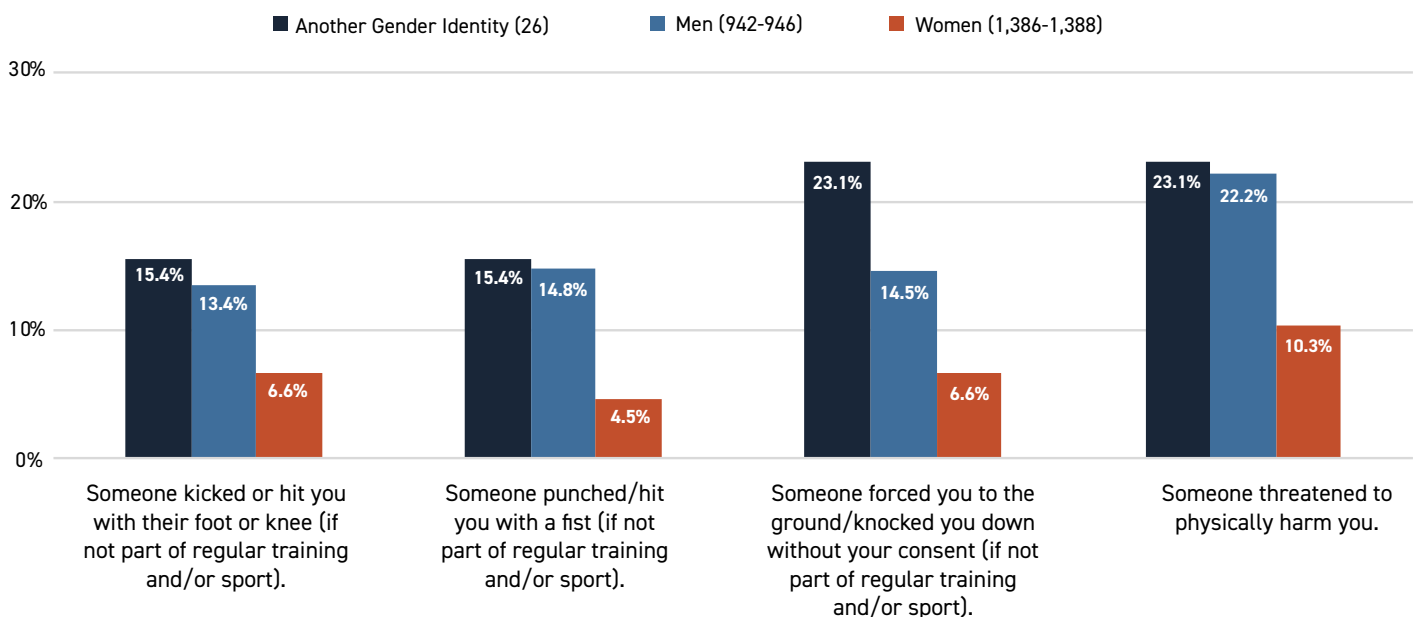


Figure 25. Variation across gender in athletes' rate of experiencing four forms of physical harm



## COMPARISON TO 2020

The percentage of athletes who experienced at least one indicator of physically harmful or physically threatening behavior was found to be higher in the current survey participants (35.3%) than it was in 2020 (21.7%). Both reports shed light on the disproportionate physically harmful experiences of athletes of color, particularly Black or African American athletes. The current report expands on the findings shared in 2020 by identifying specific types of physically harmful or threatening behaviors that are more common for athletes with disabilities, as well as athletes who identify as men or another gender, compared to women.

# STALKING

Athletes' experiences of being watched, tracked, or followed against their will.

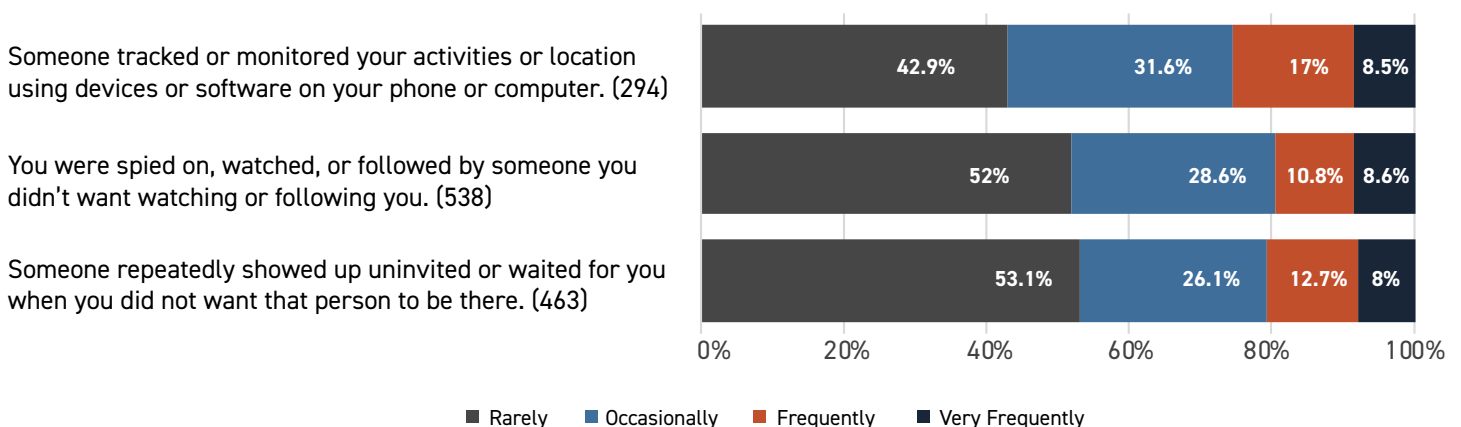
Athletes were asked how frequently they had experienced three types of behaviors related to stalking detailed in Table 17. As shown in the table, nearly seventeen percent of athletes (16.6%) had experienced being spied on, watched, or followed by someone they didn't want watching or following them, and 14.3% had experienced someone repeatedly showing up uninvited or waiting for them when they did not want them to.

Table 17. Percent of athletes who experienced vs. never experienced indirect physical harm

Frequency of experiences during sports involvement	Rarely to Very Frequently	Never
You were spied on, watched, or followed by someone you didn't want watching or following you. (3,243)	16.6%	83.4%
Someone repeatedly showed up uninvited or waited for you when you did not want that person to be there. (3,244)	14.3%	85.7%
Someone tracked or monitored your activities or location using devices or software on your phone or computer. (3,238)	9.1%	90.9%

Athletes who had experiences related to stalking (i.e., answering rarely, occasionally, frequently, or very frequently to the questions in this section) shared how frequent those experiences were for them. As shown in Figure 26, athletes' experiences of being tracked or monitored using devices or software tended to happen at higher frequencies, compared to experiences of in-person stalking behaviors.

Figure 26. Frequency of stalking (not including athletes who selected "Never")



## GROUP DIFFERENCES

Analyses revealed that most athletes' experiences related to the items in this section were relatively similar, regardless of athletes' demographic characteristics. Two exceptions relate to variation in athletes' experiences with being spied on, watched or followed by someone they didn't want to watch or follow them:

- Athletes with disabilities were more likely to experience this type of stalking behavior, compared to athletes without disabilities (Figure 27).<sup>16</sup>
- Athletes who had ever participated on an NGB or a USOPC managed team were more likely to experience this behavior, compared to athletes who had never participated on an NGB or USOPC managed team (Figure 28).<sup>17</sup>

Figure 27. Percent of athletes with and without disabilities who experienced being spied on, watched or followed

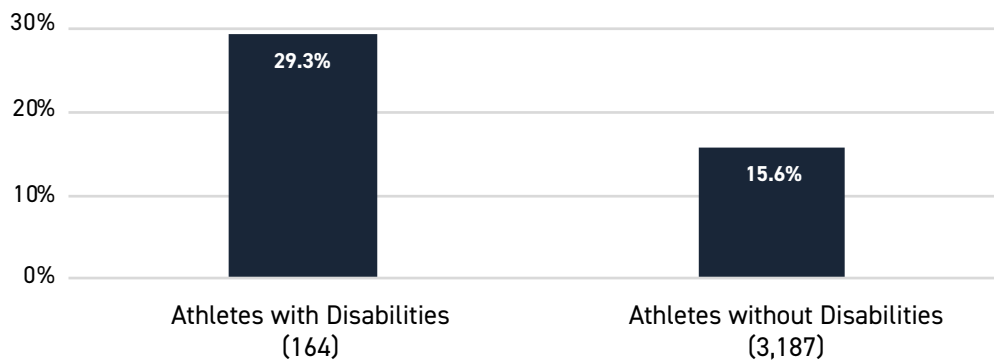
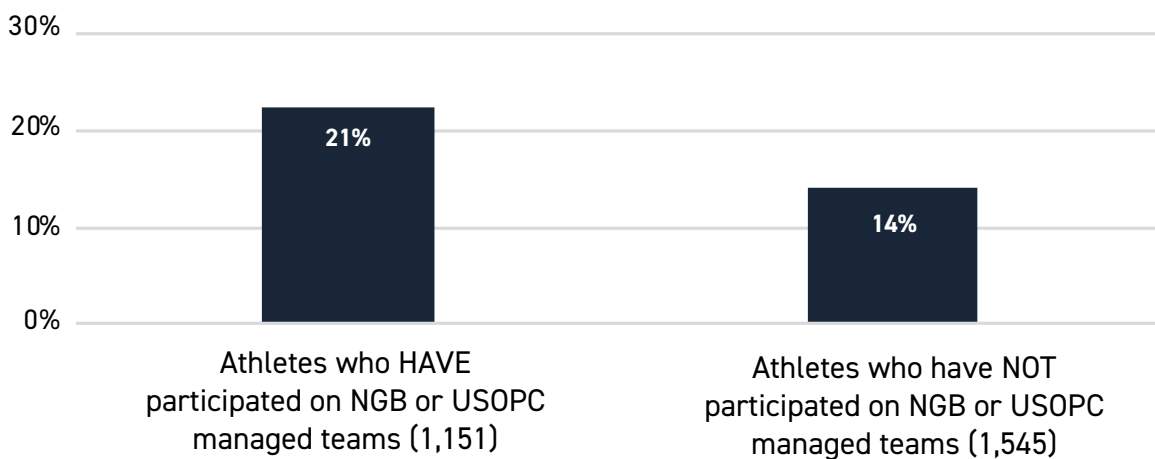


Figure 28. Percent of NGB/USOPC athletes vs. non-NGB/USOPC athletes who experienced being spied on, watched or followed



# SEXUAL HARM WITHIN SPORT

*Athletes' experiences of unwanted sexual behavior during their sports involvement.*

Athletes were asked questions regarding their experiences with different types of unwanted sexual behaviors that they may have been subjected to within the context of their sports involvement. These unwanted sexual behaviors are organized in this report in three general categories: (1) Unwanted sexual comments or looks; (2) Unwanted sexual contact or other sexually explicit behavior; and (3) Rape or attempted rape.

## UNWANTED SEXUAL COMMENTS OR LOOKS

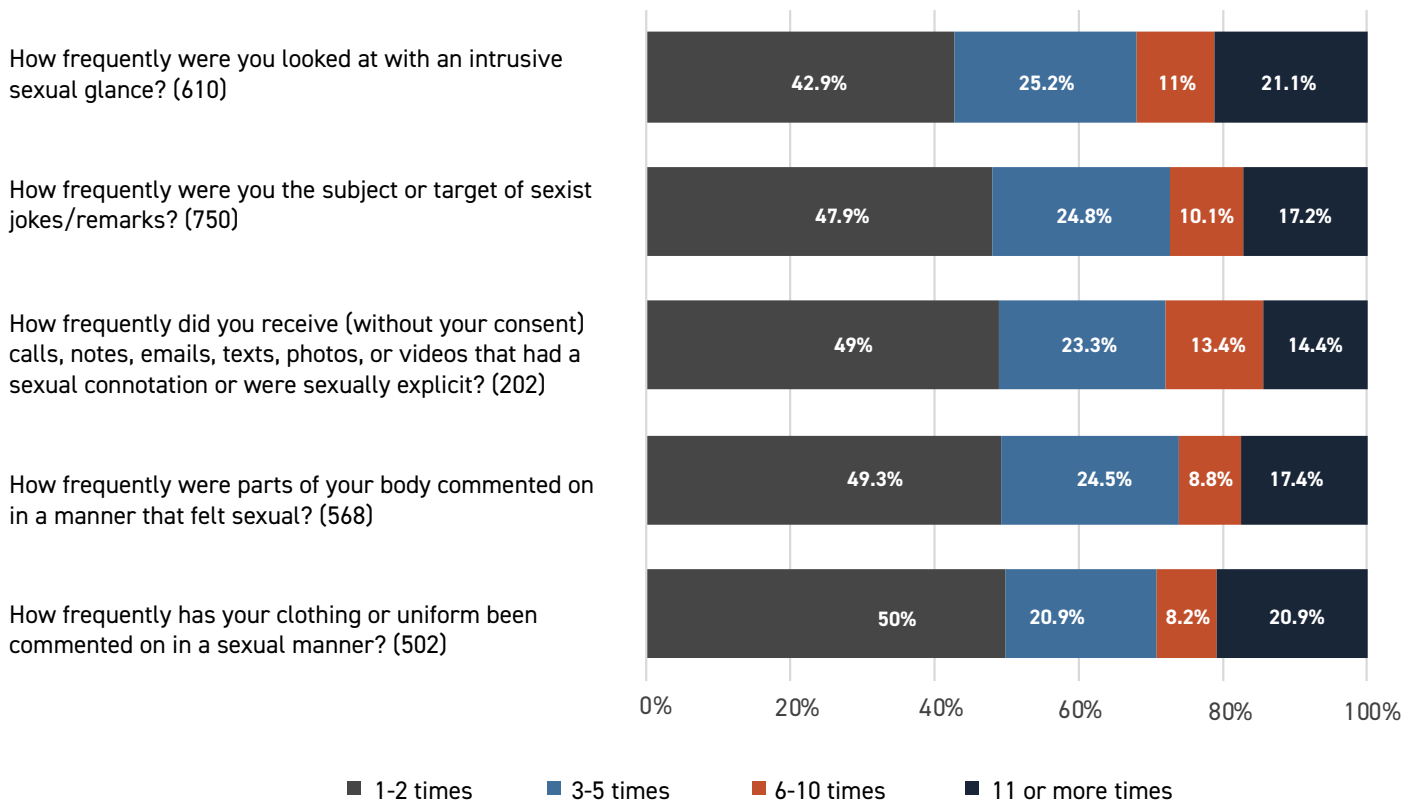
Athletes' experiences with unwanted sexual comments or looks were explored using five survey items (detailed in Table 18). Over one third (36.3%) of athletes who responded (N=2,976) indicated that they had had at least one of the experiences listed in the table. As shown in Table 18, the most common experience shared by over a quarter of athletes (25.3%) was being the subject or target of sexist jokes/remarks.

*Table 18. Percent of athletes who experienced vs. never experienced unwanted sexual comments or looks*

<b>During your sports involvement, how frequently...</b>	<b>One or more Times</b>	<b>Never</b>
Were you the subject or target of sexist jokes/remarks? (2,973)	25.3%	74.8%
Were you looked at with an intrusive sexual glance? (2,933)	20.9%	79.2%
Were parts of your body commented on in a manner that felt sexual? (2,925)	19.5%	80.6%
Has your clothing or uniform been commented on in a sexual manner? (2,926)	17.2%	82.8%
Did you receive (without your consent) calls, notes, emails, texts, photos, or videos that had a sexual connotation or were sexually explicit? (2,924)	6.9%	93.1%

For many athletes who received unwanted sexual comments or looks from others during their sports involvement, these were repeated experiences (Figure 29).

Figure 29. Frequency of athletes' experiences with unwanted sexual comments and looks (not including athletes who selected "Never")

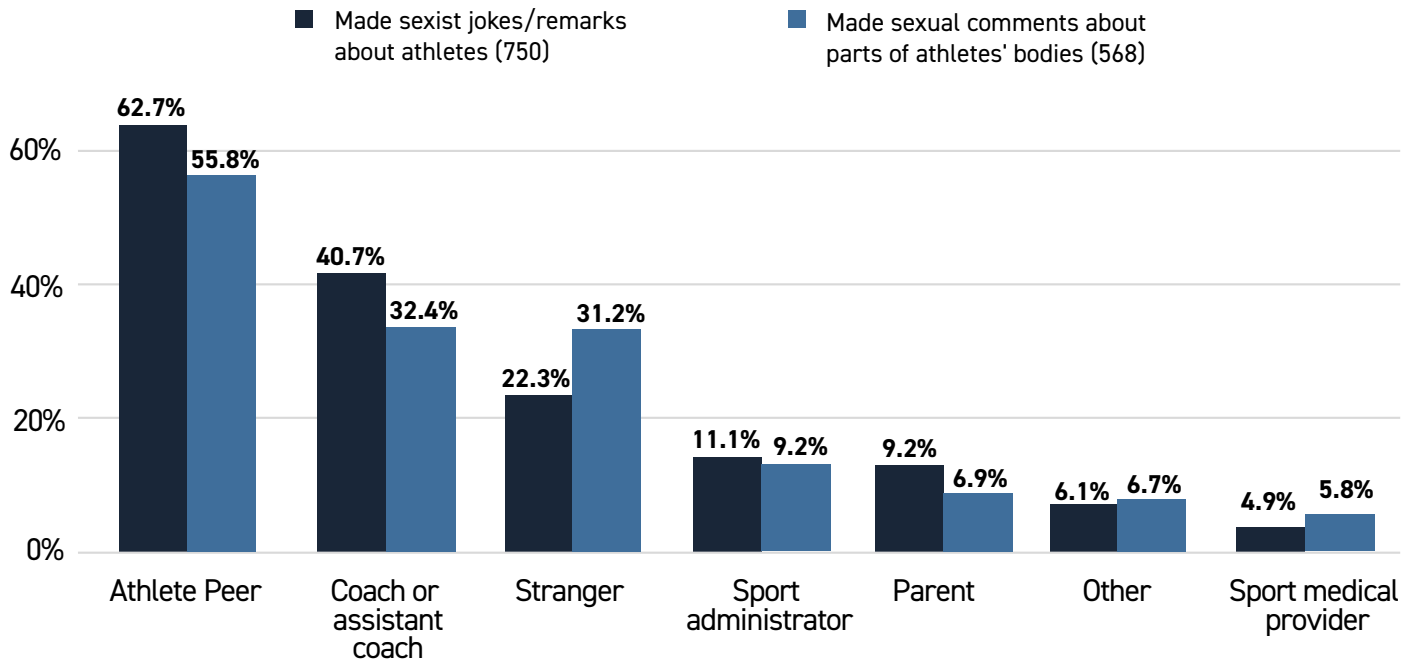


Athletes who experienced unwanted sexual comments or looks were asked to choose the category that best describes the person or people who were the source of those behaviors (using a 'select all that apply' approach). For all five items related to unwanted sexual comments or looks, "Athlete peer" was the most frequently selected category. Figure 30 displays sources of unwanted comments or looks for two of the items in this section.

18. The effect size for this finding was calculated at a Cramer's V of .12 (a small effect size).

19. The effect size for this finding was calculated at a Cramer's V of .10 (a small effect size).

Figure 30. Sources of the unwanted sexual comments directed toward athletes



## UNWANTED SEXUAL CONTACT OR SEXUALLY EXPLICIT BEHAVIORS

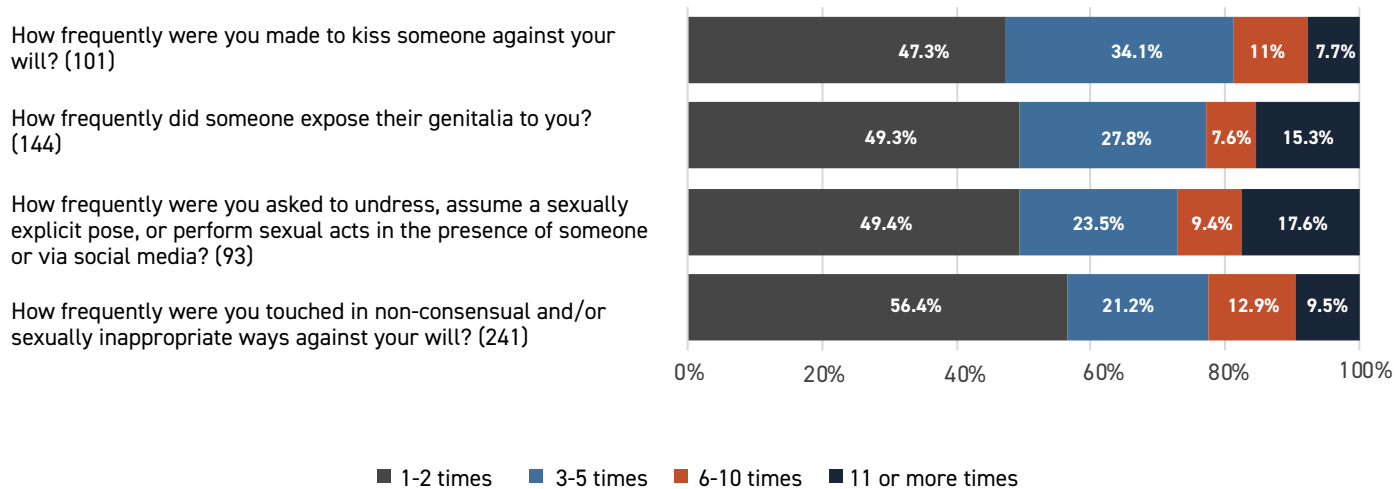
Four survey items (listed in Table 19) asked athletes about unwanted sexual contact or other unwanted sexually explicit behaviors that they may have experienced during their sport involvement. About 11% (10.9%) of athletes who responded (N=2,942) indicated that they had had at least one of these four unwanted experiences. As shown in Table 19, athletes' most commonly experienced behavior involved being touched in non-consensual and/or sexually inappropriate ways (against the athletes' will).

Table 19. Percent of athletes who experienced vs. never experienced unwanted sexual contact of other within their sport

During your sports involvement, how frequently...	One or more Times	Never
Were you touched in non-consensual and/or sexually inappropriate ways against your will? (2,919)	8.3%	91.7%
Did someone expose their genitalia to you? (2,889)	5.1%	95.0%
Were you made to kiss someone against your will? (2,914)	3.1%	96.9%
Were you asked to undress, assume a sexually explicit pose, or perform sexual acts in the presence of someone or via social media? (2,906)	2.9%	97.1%

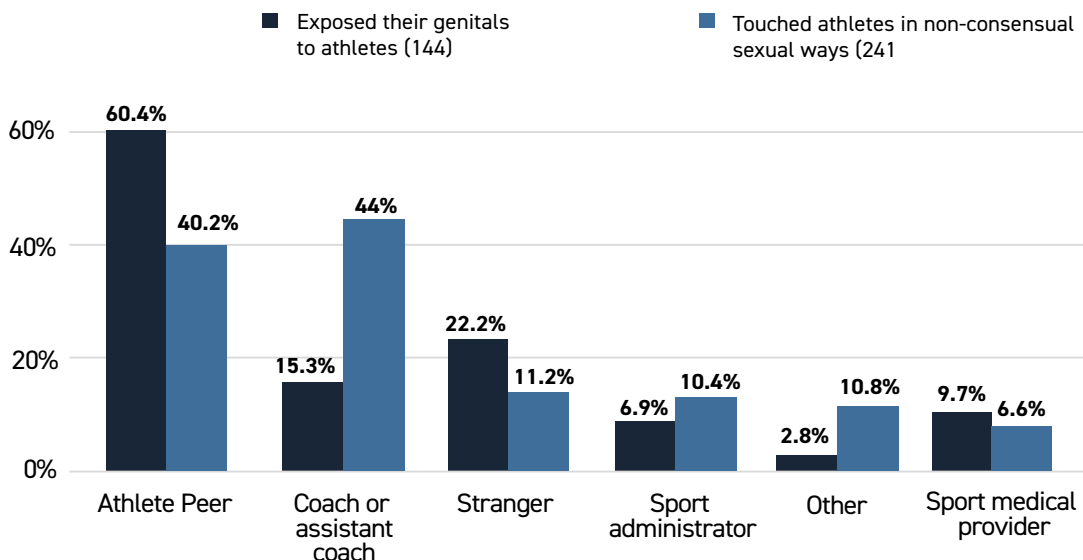
Figure 31 shows how many times athletes who have experienced unwanted sexual contact or other unwanted sexually explicit behaviors in the context of sports were subjected to these actions.

*Figure 31. Frequency of athletes' experiences of unwanted sexual contact or other unwanted sexually explicit behavior (not including athletes who selected "Never")*



Athletes who experienced unwanted sexual contact or other unwanted sexually explicit behaviors were asked to choose the category that best describes the people who perpetrated these behaviors (using a 'select all that apply' approach). Figure 32 displays the sources of unwanted sexual contact or other unwanted sexually explicit behaviors for two of the items in this section (those that were experienced by the highest number of surveyed athletes).

*Figure 32. Perpetrators of unwanted sexual contact or unwanted sexually explicit behavior experienced by athletes*





## RAPE OR ATTEMPTED RAPE

Two survey items (listed in Table 20) asked athletes if they had ever experienced, within the context of their sport involvement, behaviors that could be categorized as rape or attempted rape. Over 3% (3.5%) of athletes who responded (N=2,894) indicated that, during their involvement in their sport, someone had committed rape or attempted rape on them. Table 20 shows the percent of athletes who experienced versus never experienced sexual harm in the form of rape or attempted rape.

Table 20. Percent of athletes who experienced vs. never experienced rape or attempted rape within their sport

During your sports involvement, how frequently...	One or more Times	Never
Has someone tried to initiate genital-to-genital contact with you or tried to sexually penetrate you against your will? (2,878)	3.1%	96.9%
Has someone initiated genital-to-genital contact with you or sexually penetrated you against your will? (2,879)	2.2%	97.8%

Figure 33 shows how many times athletes who had an experience that could be categorized as rape or attempted rape were subjected to those behaviors.

Figure 33. Frequency of athletes' experiences of rape and attempted rape (not including athletes who selected "Never")

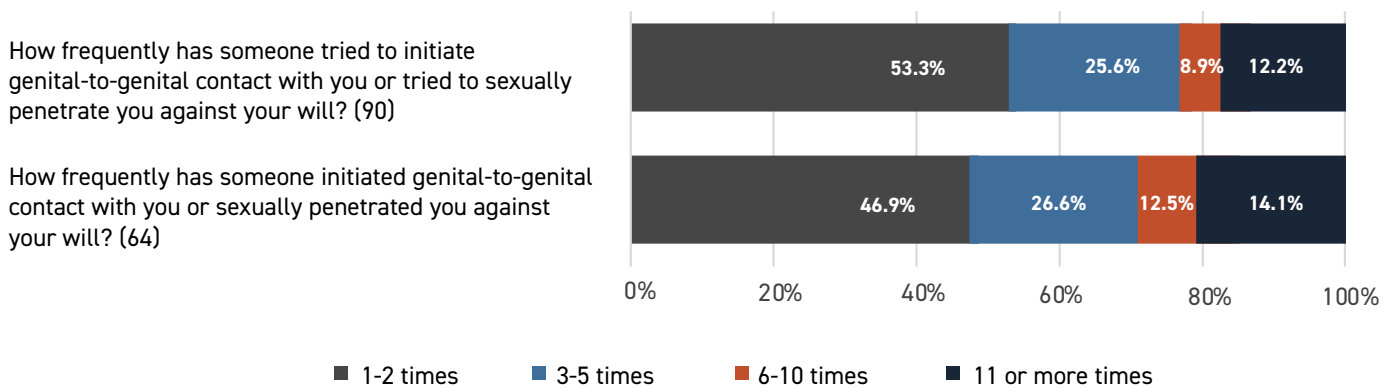
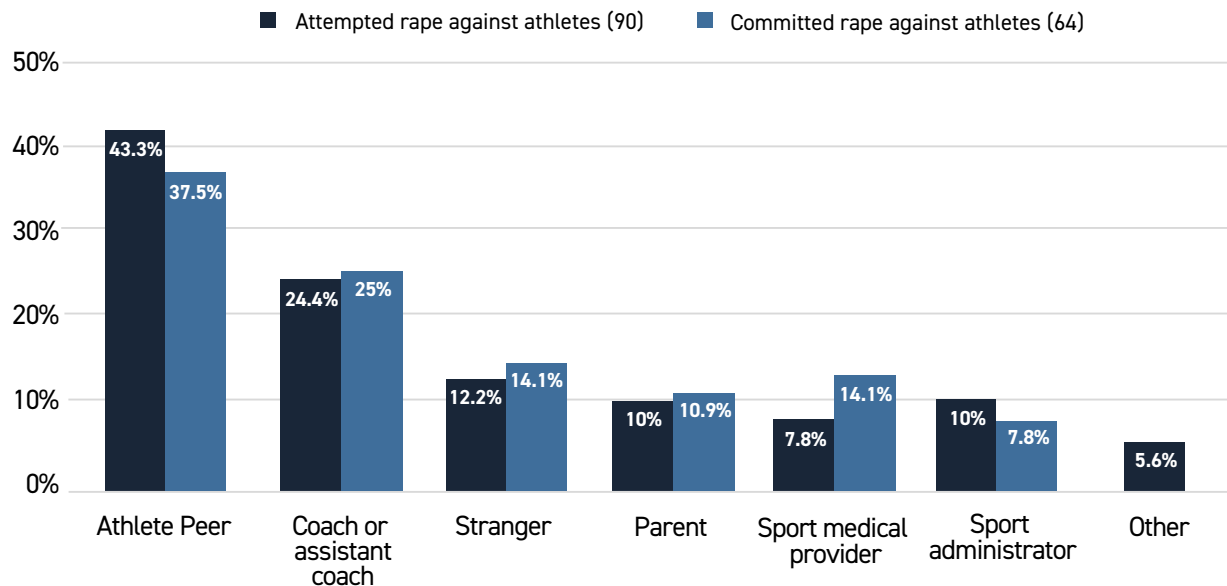


Figure 34 displays the perpetrators that athletes indicated had raped or attempted to rape them. Athlete peers were the most common perpetrator of both acts, followed by coaches or assistant coaches.

Figure 34. Perpetrators of rape and attempted rape against athletes



## TIMEFRAME OF SEXUAL HARM

Athletes were asked to indicate during what timeframe(s) their unwanted sexual experiences took place (using a 'select all that apply' approach). As shown in Table 21, most experiences related to sexual harm against athletes took place four or more years ago.

Table 21. Timeframe of athletes' experiences related to sexual harm (does not include athletes who responded "Never")<sup>18</sup>

Timeframe of...	Within the past 12 months	1-2 years ago	2-4 years ago	More than 4 years ago
You were the subject or target of sexist jokes/remarks. (750)	21.1%	24.8%	25.6%	58.9%
You were looked at with an intrusive sexual glance. (610)	20.0%	24.1%	26.6%	60.2%
Parts of your body were commented on in a manner that felt sexual. (568)	22.7%	23.4%	26.2%	58.3%

20. Wording of items has been adjusted slightly to improve table readability.

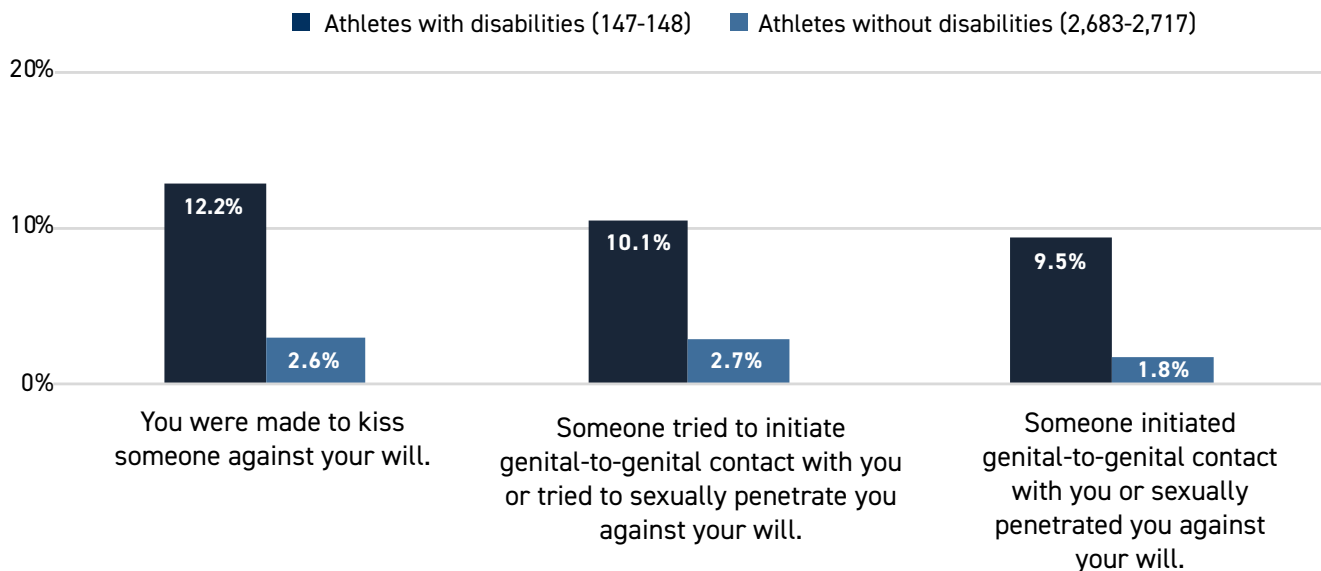
<b>Timeframe of...</b>	<b>Within the past 12 months</b>	<b>1-2 years ago</b>	<b>2-4 years ago</b>	<b>More than 4 years ago</b>
Your clothing or uniform was commented on in a sexual manner. (502)	20.7%	26.3%	28.9%	57.6%
You received calls, notes, emails, texts, photos, or videos that had a sexual connotation or were sexually explicit. (202)	16.3%	28.7%	29.2%	47.5%
You were touched in non-consensual and/or sexually inappropriate ways against your will. (241)	12.0%	16.6%	23.7%	56.4%
Did someone expose their genitalia to you? (144)	17.4%	23.6%	23.6%	54.9%
You were made to kiss someone against your will. (91)	11.0%	20.9%	22.0%	49.5%
You were asked to undress, assume a sexually explicit pose, or perform sexual acts in the presence of someone or via social media. (85)	20.0%	22.4%	28.2%	40.0%
Someone tried to initiate genital-to-genital contact with you or tried to sexually penetrate you against your will. (90)	14.4%	24.4%	28.9%	40.0%
Someone initiated genital-to-genital contact with you or sexually penetrated you against your will. (2,879)	10.9%	23.4%	32.8%	34.4%

## GROUP DIFFERENCES

Subgroup analyses revealed important differences in the experiences of athletes when it comes to sexual harm.<sup>19</sup> Specifically, the rate at which athletes experienced several types of sexual harm varied significantly based on athletes' demographic characteristics as follows:

- Athletes with disabilities were more likely than athletes without disabilities to have been kissed against their will and had someone rape or attempt to rape them (Figure 35).
- Athletes who identify as women or as a gender other than man or woman were more likely than men to have been looked at with sexually intrusive glance, had parts of their body commented on in a sexual manner, and had their clothing or uniform commented on in a sexual manner (Figure 36).
- Athletes who identify as a sexuality other than heterosexual were more likely than heterosexual athletes to have been the subject of sexist comments or jokes, looked at with a sexually intrusive glance, had parts of their body commented on in a sexual manner, and been touched in non-consensual ways (Figure 37).
- Athletes who had ever participated on an NGB or a USOPC managed team were more likely to have been the subject of sexist comments or jokes, touched in non-consensual sexual ways, and asked to undress or assume a sexually explicit pose (Figure 38).

Figure 35. Percent of athletes with and without disabilities who experienced unwanted sexual contact and rape



21. The effect sizes for finding listed here range from Cramer's V of .13 to .19 (small effect sizes).

Figure 36. Percent of athletes across different gender identities who experienced unwanted sexual comments or looks

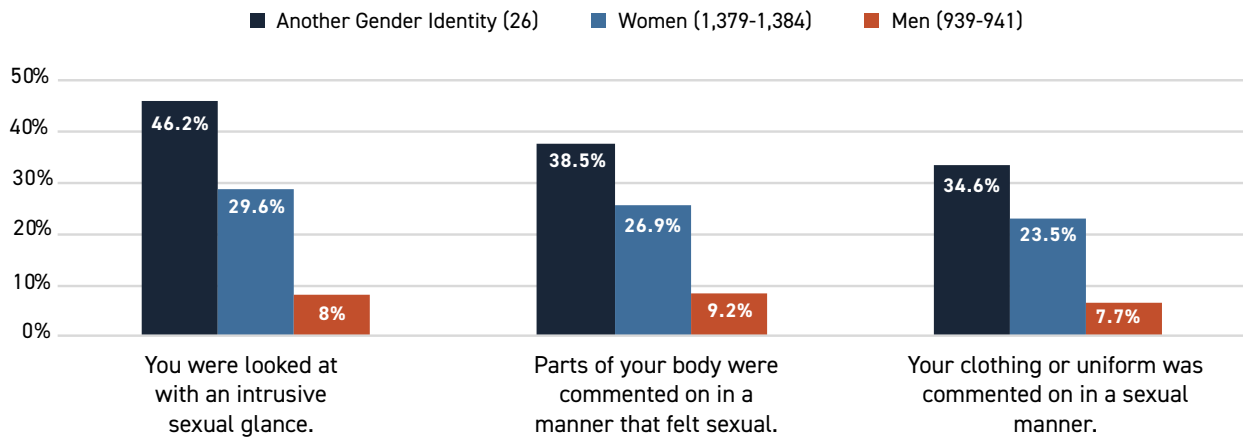


Figure 37. Percent of athletes who identify as heterosexual/straight vs. non-heterosexual athletes who have experienced unwanted sexual behaviors

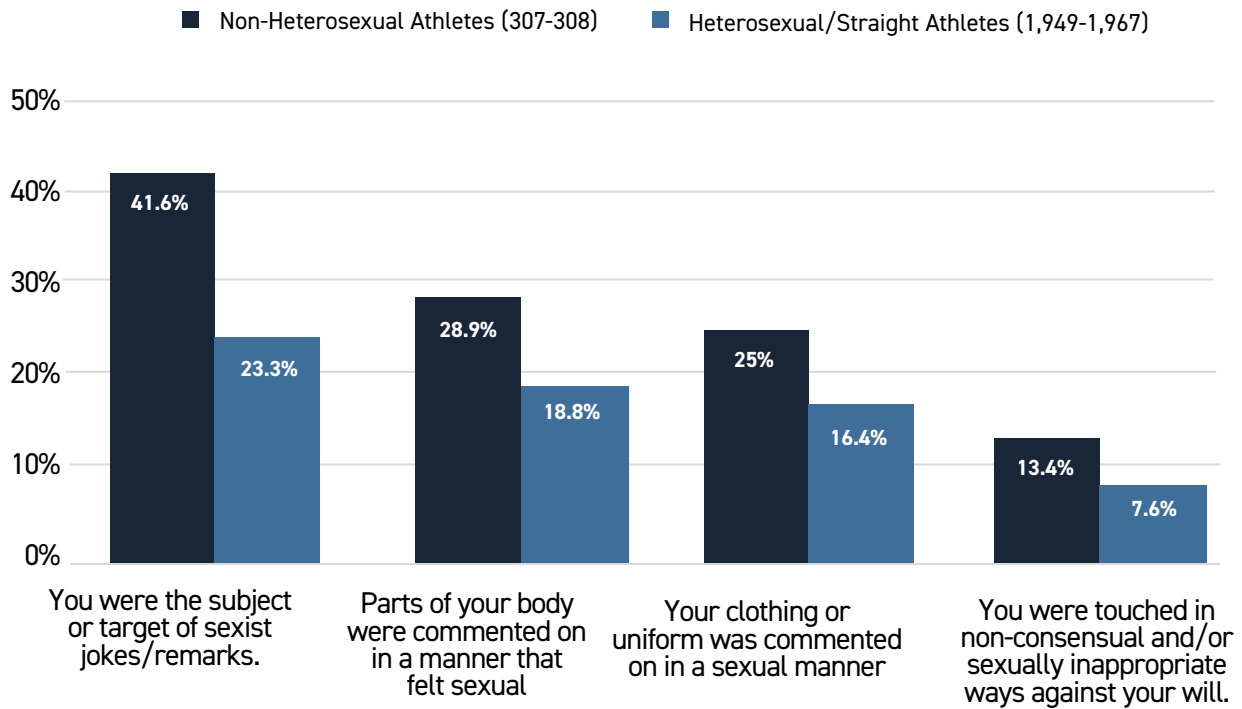
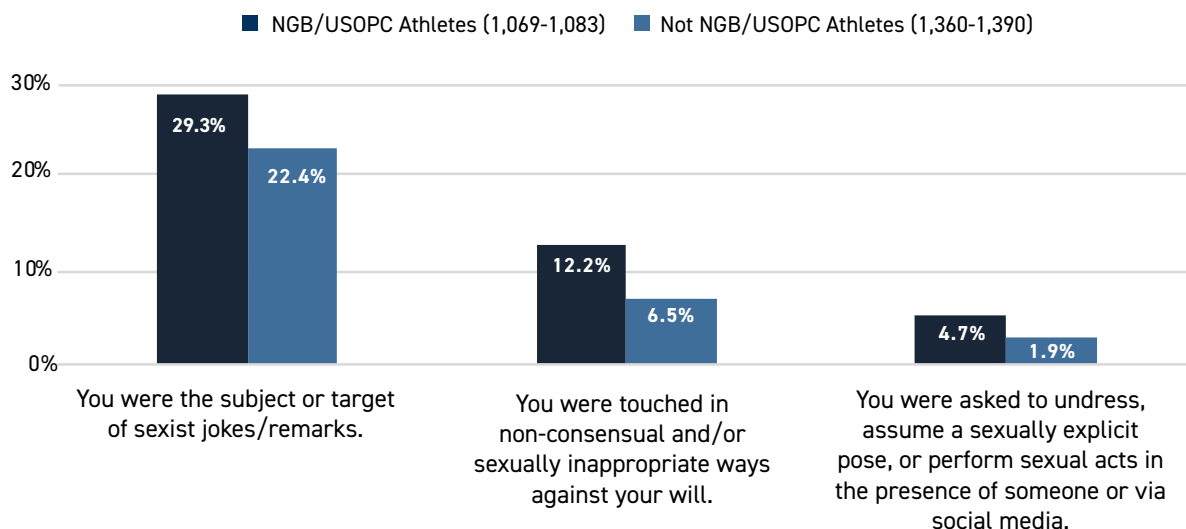


Figure 38. Percent of NGB/USOPC athletes vs. non-NGB/USOPC athletes who have experienced unwanted sexual behaviors

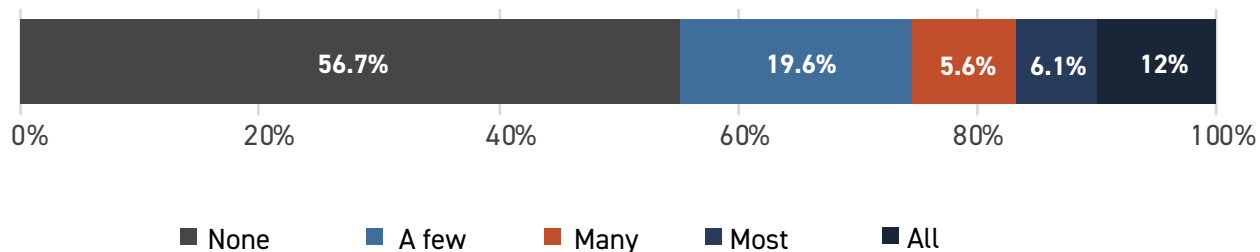


## CIRCUMSTANCES AROUND SEXUAL HARM

Athletes who had been the subject or target for any of the unwanted sexual behaviors asked about in this survey section (i.e., any of the 11 items discussed above) were asked several follow-up questions, including one relating to athletes' age at the time of those experiences, and another relating to the location where those experiences occurred.

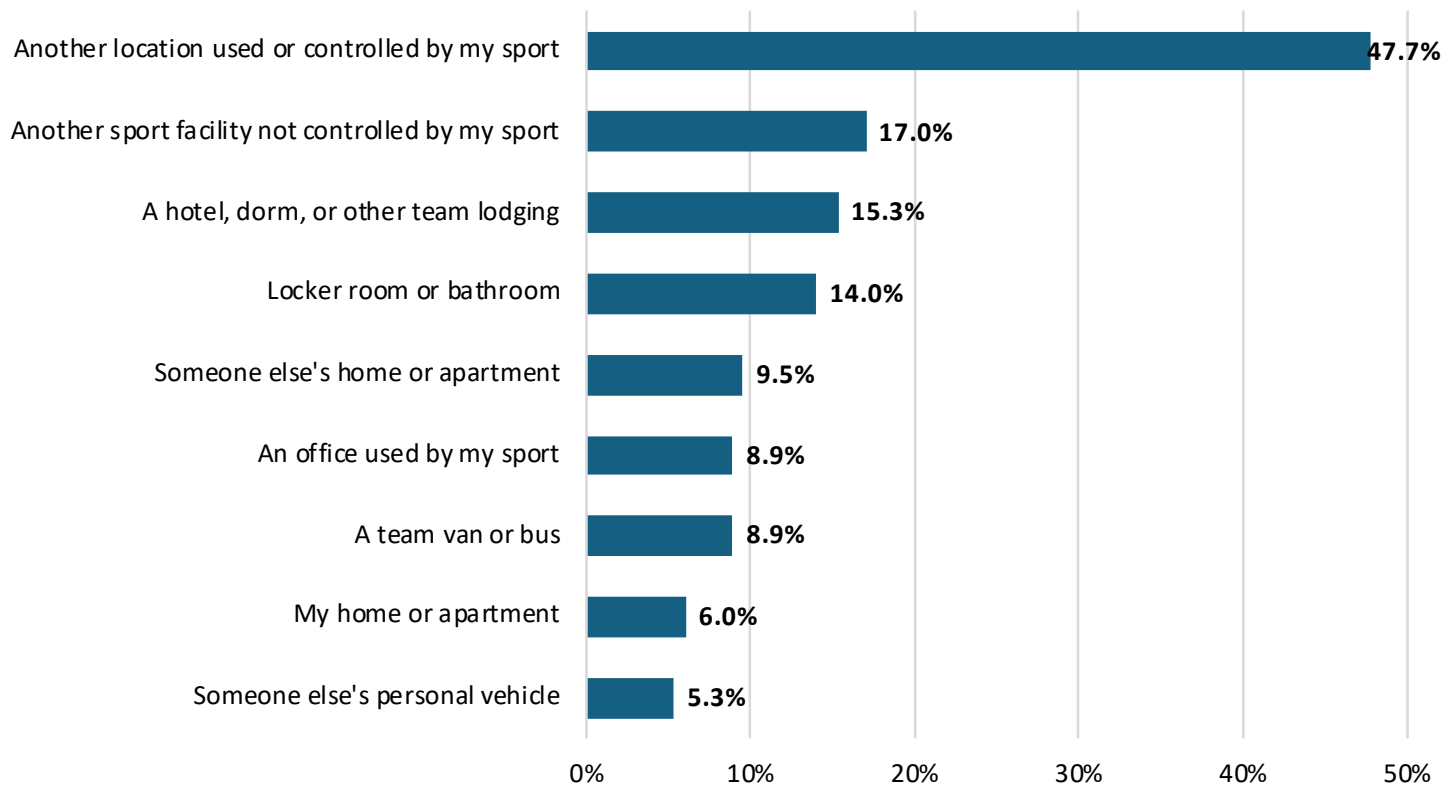
More than 40% of athletes who had unwanted sexual experiences in the context of their sport indicated that some or all of those experiences happened when they were less than 18 years old (Figure 39).

Figure 39. Percent of athletes' unwanted sexual experiences that occurred when they were under 18 (N=1,064)



Athletes were asked (using a 'select all that apply' approach) to select the types of location(s) where their unwanted sexual experiences had taken place (Figure 40). Athletes who selected "Another location used or controlled by my sport," or "Another sport facility not controlled by my sport" had the option of writing in a more specific type of location. The majority of athletes who used the write-in option specified locations used for training, practicing, and competing in specific sports.

Figure 40. Percent of athletes' unwanted sexual experiences that occurred in a variety of locations (N=1,064)<sup>20</sup>



Athletes were asked whether, following their unwanted sexual experience(s), they reached out to any of the types of people listed in Table 22 for support (athletes could select all that apply). More than 45% (46.0%) of athletes said that they did not reach out to anyone, but rather kept it to themselves. However, nearly one-third (31.8%) of athletes reached out to a teammate or friend within sports, while somewhat fewer indicated that they had reached out to a friend outside of sports for support. Many athletes selected more than one type of person who they went to for support (potentially, but not necessarily, in relation to more than one unwanted sexual experience).

22. Athletes were given the option to select "My personal vehicle" as a location where unwanted sexual experiences had occurred. This location is excluded from the figure because no athletes selected it.

Table 22. Type of support person athletes reached out to vs. did not reach out to following unwanted sexual experiences

Did you reach out to anyone for? If so, who?	% Selected	% Not Selected
No one (I kept it to myself)	46.0%	54.0%
A teammate or friend within sports	31.8%	68.2%
A friend outside of sports	20.3%	79.7%
A parent or guardian	17.3%	82.7%
A counselor or other mental health professional	12.4%	87.6%
A coach	8.6%	91.4%
Another person not listed here	5.0%	95.0%
A sport administrator	4.2%	95.8%
Police or law enforcement	3.4%	96.6%
A teacher	2.7%	97.3%
A sexual violence advocate	1.9%	98.1%

Athletes who had experienced sexual harm were asked how they prefer to describe themselves in the context of those harmful experiences (using a 'select all that apply' approach). Of athletes who responded to this item (N=556), the largest proportion indicated that they prefer not to use labels (51.6%), while fewer expressed that they describe themselves as survivors (33.8%), followed by victims (21.0%). Among athlete who indicated that they prefer another term not listed in Table 23, athletes shared that they describe themselves using terms including "thrivor," "resilient," "a statistic," "unlucky," "affected", and "fighter."

Table 23. How athletes who have experienced sexual harm prefer to describe themselves

Do you use any of the following terms to describe yourself?	% Selected	% Not Selected
I prefer to not use labels	51.6%	48.4%
Survivor	33.8%	66.2%
Victim	21.0%	79.0%
Another term not listed	3.2%	96.8%



## IMPACT OF SEXUAL HARM ON ATHLETES

Athletes who indicated that they had experienced any unwanted sexual behaviors in the context of their sports involvement were asked follow-up questions regarding the impact that those experiences had on them. Most commonly, unwanted sexual experiences resulted in athletes' perceptions of themselves being negatively impacted, followed by adverse mental health outcomes (see Table 24).

Table 24. Athletes who experienced vs. did not experience specific negative outcomes following unwanted sexual experiences

Did your experiences impact you in any of the following ways?	Yes, Experienced	No, Not Experienced
My perception of myself was negatively impacted. (984)	41.3%	58.7%
My mental health suffered. (980)	37.4%	62.6%
My eating habits were negatively impacted. (981)	28.0%	72.0%
My athletic performance was negatively impacted. (984)	27.9%	72.1%
My friendships or other important relationships were negatively impacted. (979)	27.7%	72.3%
My sleep habits were negatively impacted. (982)	26.4%	73.6%
I missed opportunities as a result (athletic, academic, personal, or work-related). (981)	23.1%	76.9%
My physical health suffered. (978)	22.9%	77.1%
I wished that I could participate in my sport without being a member of my NGB (or USOPC managed team). (397)*	22.2%	77.8%
I seriously considered quitting my sport. (986)	21.5%	78.5%
I wished that I could change clubs. (977)	21.4%	78.6%
My school or work suffered. (978)	20.1%	79.9%
I wanted to change coaches, but felt like I could not. (981)	19.5%	79.5%
I have lost time (in my athletic or non-athletic career) that I've needed to devote to healing. (974)	18.5%	81.5%
I changed coaches. (989)	18.4%	81.6%
I had to shorten my athletic career. (977)	18.4%	81.6%
I have incurred costs for paying for therapy. (985)	18.0%	82.0%
I experienced retaliation from others. (983)	16.9%	83.1%
I changed clubs. (982)	15.9%	84.1%
I began using drugs or alcohol more frequently. (983)	12.9%	87.1%
I have incurred costs in missed stipends/income. (980)	10.9%	89.1%
Other impact(s) not listed here. (503)	8.9%	91.1%

\*This item only presented to athletes who had participated on an NGB or USOPC managed team

## WITNESSING SEXUAL HARM

Athletes were asked whether they had ever witnessed or been informed about inappropriate or non-consensual sexual acts that were perpetrated against a teammate or another athlete within their sport. Nearly 15% (14.2%) of athletes who responded to this item (N=2,868) had witnessed or been informed of this occurring at least once. Those athletes (N=406) who witnessed or were informed about sexual harm against an athlete peer were asked follow-up questions regarding the perpetrator(s) of the behavior, the timeframe of the occurrence(s), and the age of the athlete who was harmed. Key findings from these follow-up questions are as follows:

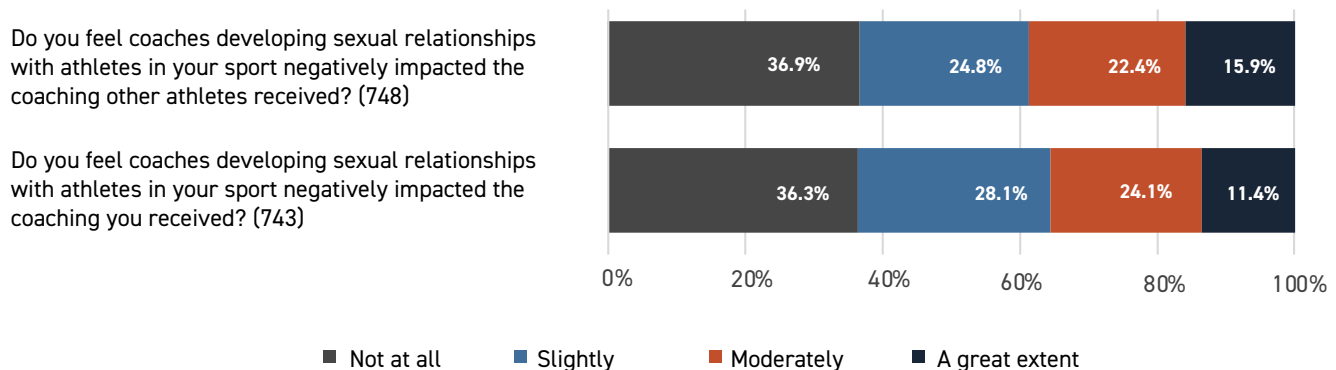
- Athletes most often indicated that the perpetrators of these behaviors were coaches or assistant coaches (52.7%) and athlete peers (52.0%).
- Most athletes who witnessed or heard about these occurrences indicated that they had occurred more than four years ago (60.3%).
- More than two-thirds of athletes who had witnessed or heard about these occurrences said that at least some of them had been perpetrated against athletes who were under the age of 18 at the time.

## COACH/ATHLETE SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

About a quarter (26.7%) of athletes (N=2,815) indicated that they have known coaches who developed sexual relationships with adult athletes (e.g., teammate or other athlete in your sport).

- Of athletes who did know of this happening, about half (51.8%) responded “Yes” when asked if those relationships were inappropriate.
- Most athletes felt that those relationships negatively impacted both the coaching that they themselves received, as well as the coaching that other athletes received, at least slightly and up to a great extent, as shown in Figure 41.

Figure 41. The impact of sexual coach/athlete relationships on the coaching that athletes received



## COMPARISON TO 2020

Findings shared in the current report, in many ways, lend support to findings shared in 2020. The rate at which athletes were found to have experienced different types of unwanted sexual behavior according to the current survey are strikingly similar to the rates reported in 2020, as the following results demonstrate.

- In 2020, 34.0% of surveyed athletes had experienced unwanted sexual comments or looks (compared to 36.3% of athletes surveyed in 2024).
- Non-consensual sexual contact and other sexually explicit behaviors had been experienced by 9.0% of athletes surveyed in 2020 (compared to 10.9% of athletes surveyed in 2024).
- In 2020, 3.2% of athletes indicated that someone had attempted to rape or committed rape on them (while 3.1% of athletes surveyed in 2024 had experience attempted rape, and 2.2% had been raped).

Both sets of findings also shed light on the disproportionate frequency of unwanted sexual experiences endured by athletes with disabilities, those in gender minorities, and those who identify as having a non-heterosexual sexual orientation. Additionally, converging results from 2020 and 2024 suggest that sexually harmful behaviors against athletes are perpetrated most often by athlete peers and coaches or assistant coaches.

# SEXUAL HARM OUTSIDE OF SPORT

*Athletes' experiences of unwanted sexual behavior outside of their sports involvement.*

This survey section asked athletes about their experiences outside of the sports context, including eleven items related to unwanted sexual experiences that they may have had, and one item related to learning about sexual harm perpetrated against someone else (e.g., a close friend or family member). Table 25 shows the percentage of athletes who had each of these experiences at least once, compared to those who never had these experiences. Looking at the frequencies in the table below compared to those shared in the previous section reveals that athletes are much more likely to have experienced sexual harm outside of the context of their sport, than within it.

*Table 25. Percent of athletes who experienced vs. never experienced sexual harm outside of their sport*

Frequency of experiences outside of sports involvement	One or more Times	Never
You were the subject or target of sexist jokes/remarks. (2,710)	42.3%	57.7%
You were you looked at with an intrusive sexual glance. (2,706)	42.1%	57.9%
Parts of your body commented on in a sexual manner. (2,702)	40.8%	59.3%
You learned that someone close to you (e.g., a friend, family member, etc.) has experienced sexual harm. (2,689)	40.3%	59.6%
Your clothing or what you were wearing was commented on in a sexual manner. (2,699)	36.9%	63.1%
You were touched in non-consensual and/or sexually inappropriate ways against your will. (2,702)	29.3%	70.8%
You received (without your consent) calls, notes, emails, texts, photos, or videos (possibly on your cell phone or the internet) that had a sexual connotation or were sexually explicit. (2,701)	22.0%	77.9%
Someone exposed their genitalia to you (in your presence, via social media, text, or private message). (2,697)	19.4%	80.6%
Someone tried to initiate genital-to-genital contact with you, or tried to sexually penetrate you (orally, vaginally, or anally) against your will. (2,698)	15.4%	84.6%
You were made to kiss someone against your will. (2,699)	12.4%	87.6%
Someone initiated genital-to-genital contact with you, or sexually penetrated you (orally, vaginally, or anally) against your will? (2,693)	12.0%	88.0%
You were asked to undress, assume a sexually explicit pose, or perform sexual acts in the presence of someone (with or without a camera) or via social media. (2,699)	9.9%	90.1%

Findings in the table above align with statistics reported by [RAINN](#) as well as the [Center for Disease Control](#), which suggest that over half of women and almost one in three men have experienced sexual violence involving physical contact, and approximately one in six women have experienced rape. The importance of abuse-free sport environments is even more apparent when considering that, for many athletes, they present a much-needed haven and a place to find support.

# ATHLETE MENTAL HEALTH

Athletes' experiences of adverse mental health during their sports involvement.

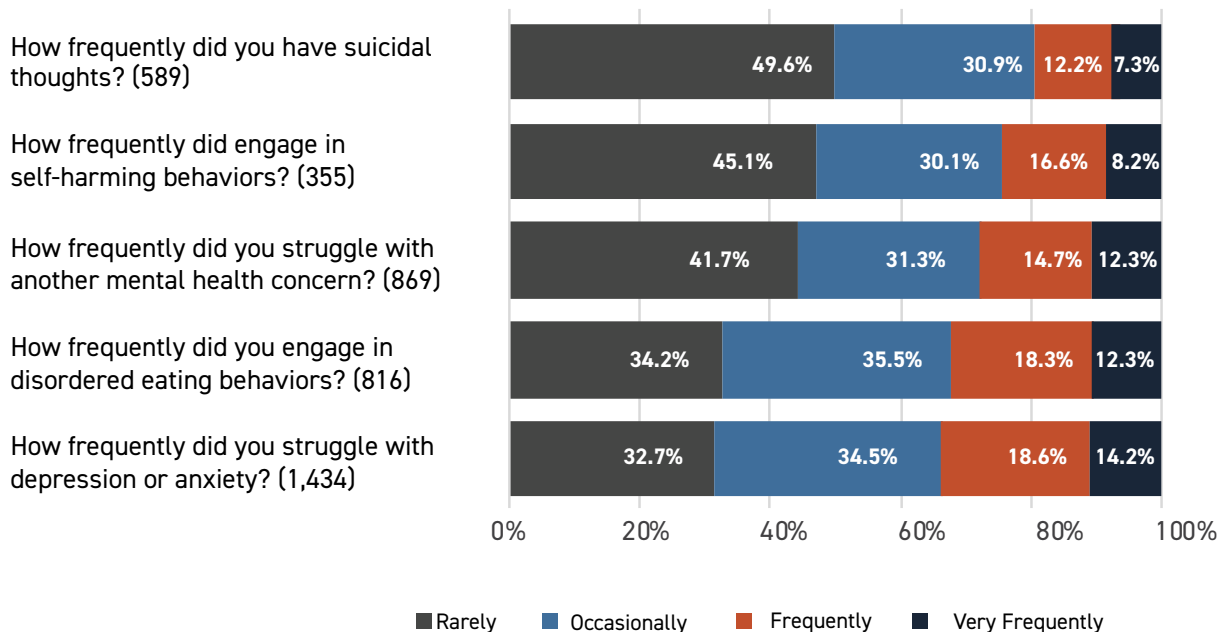
Athletes were asked questions pertaining to their mental health during their sports involvement, found in Table 26. Over half of surveyed athletes (53.1%) shared that during their time as an athlete they have struggled with depression or anxiety, and approximately 30% have engaged in disordered eating behaviors or struggled with another mental health concern not listed here.

Table 26. Percent of athletes who experienced vs. never experienced adverse mental health in their sports

How frequently did you...	Rarely to Very Frequently	Never
Struggle with depression or anxiety? (2,698)	53.1%	46.8%
Struggle with another mental health concern not listed here? (2,689)	32.4%	67.7%
Engage in disordered eating behaviors (e.g., restrain, binging, purging)? (2,699)	30.2%	69.8%
Have suicidal thoughts? (2,695)	21.9%	78.1%
Engage in self-harming behaviors (e.g., cutting, self-hitting, burning)? (2,697)	13.2%	86.8%

Among the group of athletes who experienced any of these mental health struggles, over half struggled with their challenges at least occasionally (see Figure 41).

Figure 42. Frequency of adverse mental health experiences (not including athletes who selected "Never")



## COMPARISON TO 2020

Athletes surveyed in 2024 appear to have experienced higher rates of mental health concerns during their athletic involvement compared to those who responded to the 2020 survey, as the findings below demonstrate.

- In 2020, 49.1% of athletes responded that they had struggled with depression or anxiety (compared to 53.1% of athletes surveyed in 2024).
- 21.6% of athletes surveyed in 2020 had engaged in disordered eating (compared to 30.2% of athletes surveyed in 2024).
- Of athletes surveyed in 2020, 16.0% had suicidal thoughts (compared to 21.9% of athletes surveyed in 2024).
- 5.9% of athletes surveyed in 2020 had engaged in self-harming behaviors (while 13.2% of those surveyed in 2024 had done so).

This increase in mental health concerns is consistent with findings from the [American Psychological Association](#), which noted an increased demand for mental health services in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

# REPORTING MISCONDUCT

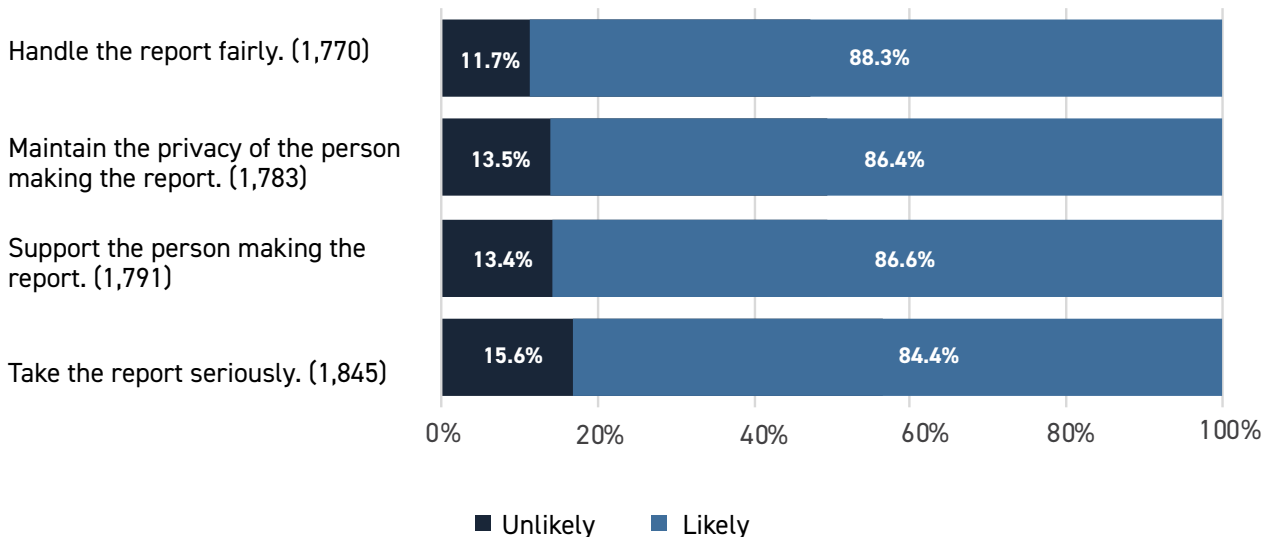
*Athletes' experiences and perceptions related to reporting abuse and misconduct in sports.*

Athletes were asked if they had heard of the U.S. Center for SafeSport prior to taking the survey. A little more than half (54.1%) of athletes (N=2,693) responded that they had, while nearly as many (45.9%) expressed that they had not. This finding suggests a substantial need for greater awareness of this important reporting and educational resource. Knowledge of the Center was somewhat better for athletes who had participated on NGB or USOPC managed teams: nearly 70% (69.3%) of athletes in that subgroup (1,016) had heard of the Center previously.

## PERCEPTIONS OF HOW SPORT ORGANIZATIONS WOULD RESPOND TO REPORTING

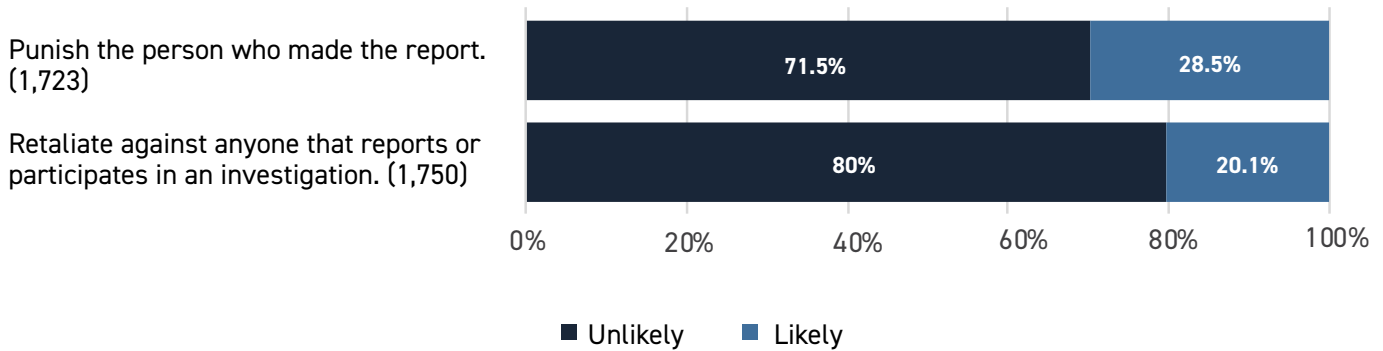
Current athletes, and athletes who indicated that they have participated in their sport within the past three years were asked a series of questions regarding how they thought their sport organization would react to someone reporting an instance of harm on a 6-point likelihood scale ranging from very unlikely to very likely. As shown in Figure 43, a large majority of athletes believe their organization would likely (slightly, moderately, or extremely) handle the report fairly, support and maintain the privacy of the person making the report, and take the report seriously.

*Figure 43. Athletes' perceptions of how their sport organization would likely respond to reported misconduct*



Nearly 30% of these same athletes expressed feeling that there was some likelihood that the person who made the report would be punished by their sport organization for doing so. (Figure 44).

Figure 44. Athletes' perceptions of how likely their sport organization would be to punish or retaliate against a person who made a report



## PERCEPTIONS OF HOW THE CENTER WOULD RESPOND TO REPORTING

Athletes who had participated in their sport in the past three years and who had heard of the Center prior to taking this survey were asked how they thought the Center would likely respond to a report of misconduct. Over 90% of athletes thought that the Center would take a report of misconduct seriously and maintain the privacy of the person making the report. (Figure 45).

Figure 45. Athletes' perceptions of how the Center would likely respond to reported misconduct

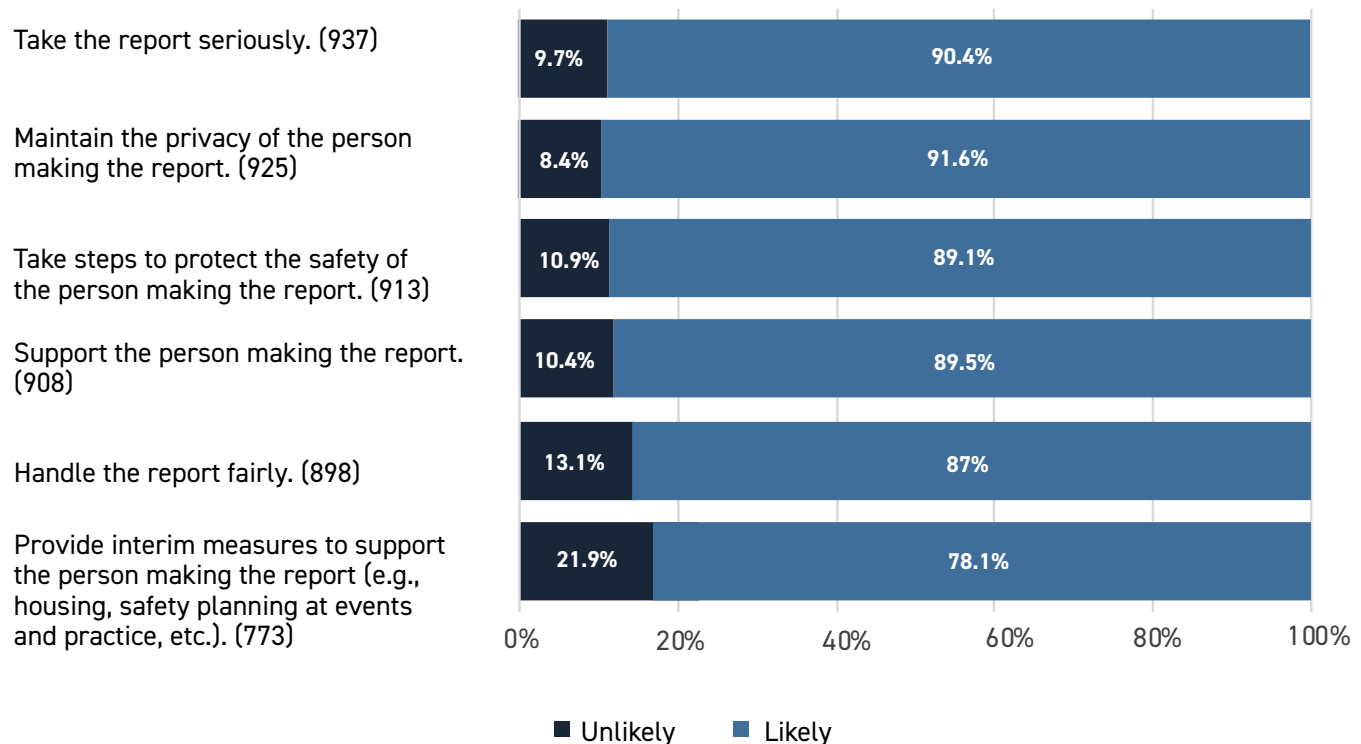
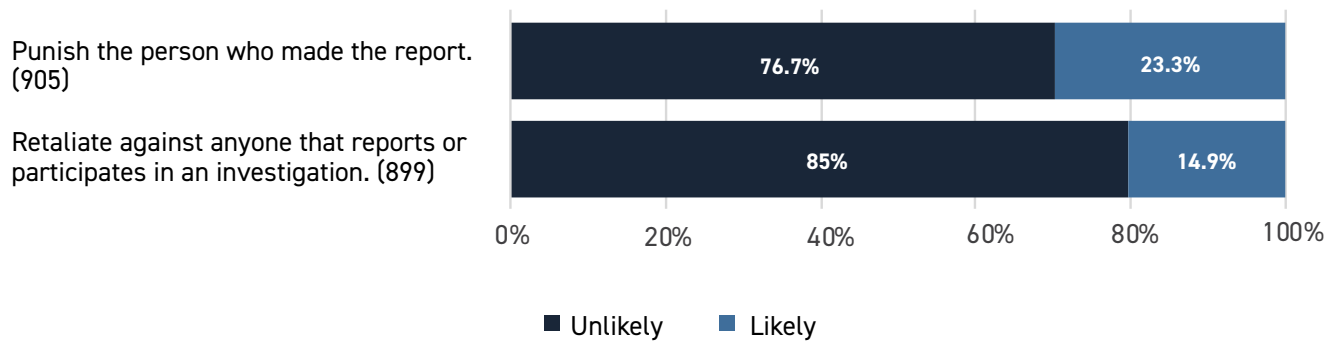




Figure 46 shows that over 20% of athletes thought it was likely that the Center would punish the person who made a report and nearly 15% thought it was likely that they would retaliate against anyone that reports or participates in an investigation.

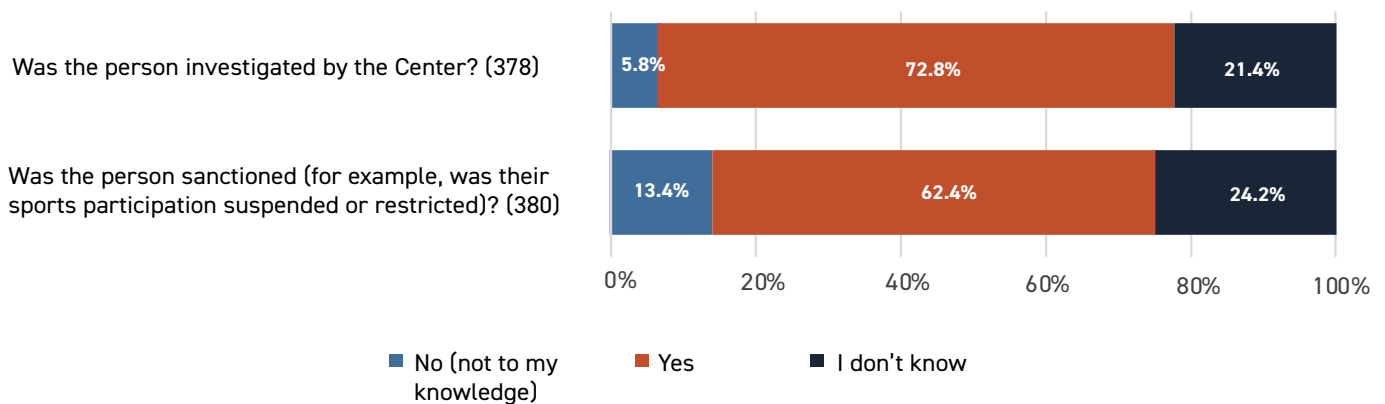
Figure 46. Athletes' perceptions of how likely the Center would be to punish or retaliate against a person who made a report



### PERCEPTIONS OF THE CENTER'S RESPONSE TO REPORTS IN THE PAST 3 YEARS

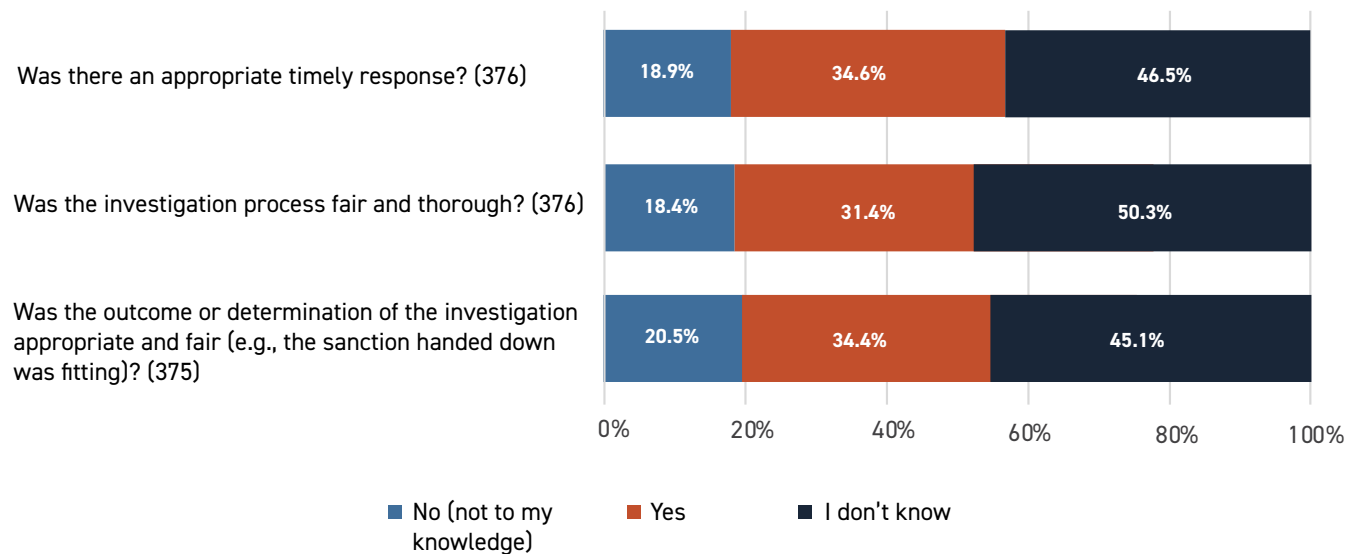
Athletes who had participated in their sport in the past three years and who had heard of the Center prior to taking this survey were asked if, to their knowledge, anyone in their sport had been reported to the Center for a code of conduct violation in the past three years (36 months). 19.4% of athletes (N=1,973) indicated that they knew of someone from their sport being reported to the Center in that timeframe, while 69.6% did not, and 11% expressed that they were unsure. Of athletes who did know of someone from their sport being reported to the Center, most indicated that (to their knowledge) the reported person was both investigated by the Center (72.8%) and sanctioned (62.4%; see Figure 47).

Figure 47. Athletes' awareness of others being investigated or sanctioned in their sport in the past 36 months

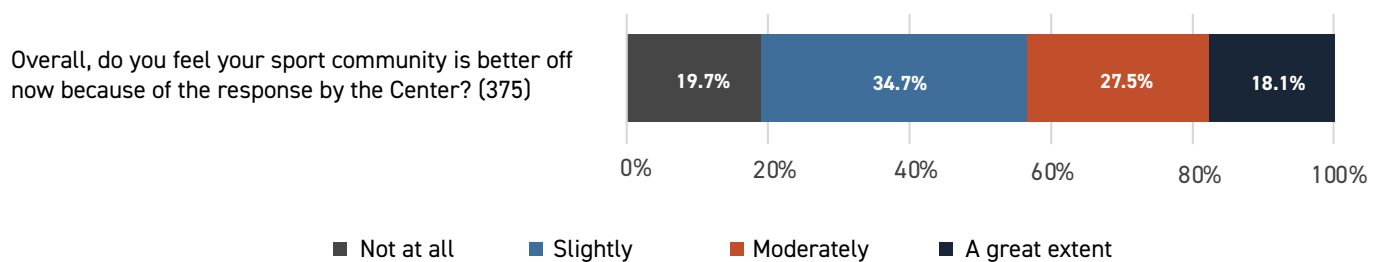


Those same athletes (i.e., those who were aware of someone from their sport being reported to the Center in the past 3 years) were asked to share their perceptions of the Center's response to those reports. As shown in Figure 48, athletes most commonly did not know whether the Center's response was appropriate and timely, whether the investigation process was fair and thorough, or whether the outcome or determination of the investigation was appropriate and fair. However, as displayed in Figure 49, a large majority of these same athletes (80.3%) expressed feeling that their sport community is better off (either "Slightly," "Moderately," or "To a great extent") now because of the Center's response to the reported misconduct.

*Figure 48. Athletes' perceptions of the Center's response to reports made in their sport in the past 36 months*



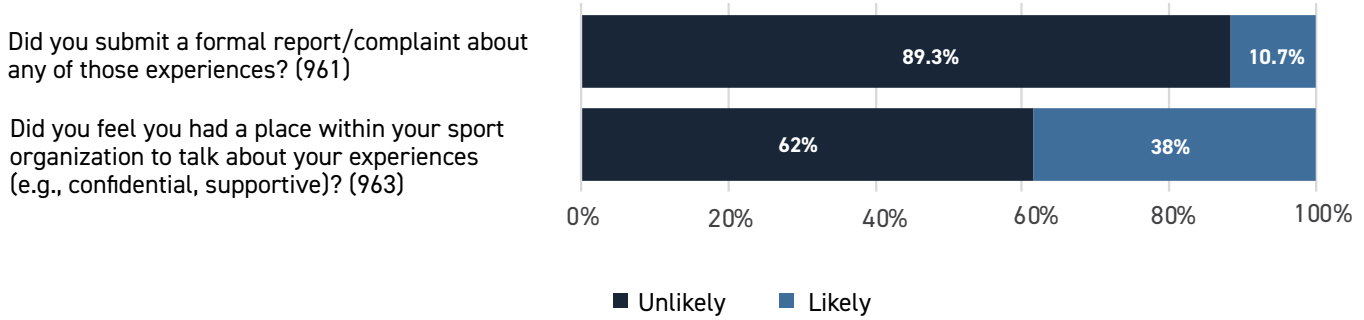
*Figure 49. Athletes' perceptions of how the Center's response to reported misconduct impacted their sport community*



## REPORTING BY ATHLETES WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED SEXUAL HARM

Figure 50 shows that only 10.7% of athletes who indicated that they had experienced unwanted sexual behavior during their athletic involvement submitted a formal complaint about the matter. Further, 62% felt that they did not have a place within their sport organization to talk about their experience.

Figure 50. Athletes' response to experiencing sexual harm



Among the athletes who experienced sexual harm while participating in their sport and did not submit a formal report/complaint, there were varied reasons that they shared for not doing so (see Figure 51). The most common reasons for not making a formal report or complaint of sexual harm included feelings that it was a private matter and wanting to deal with it on their own, followed by thinking it was not serious enough to talk about. Over 50% of athletes who responded to these items shared that they did not think people would take them seriously, or they worried that that nothing would be done.

Figure 51. Athletes' top 8 reasons for not reporting a formal complaint of sexual harm

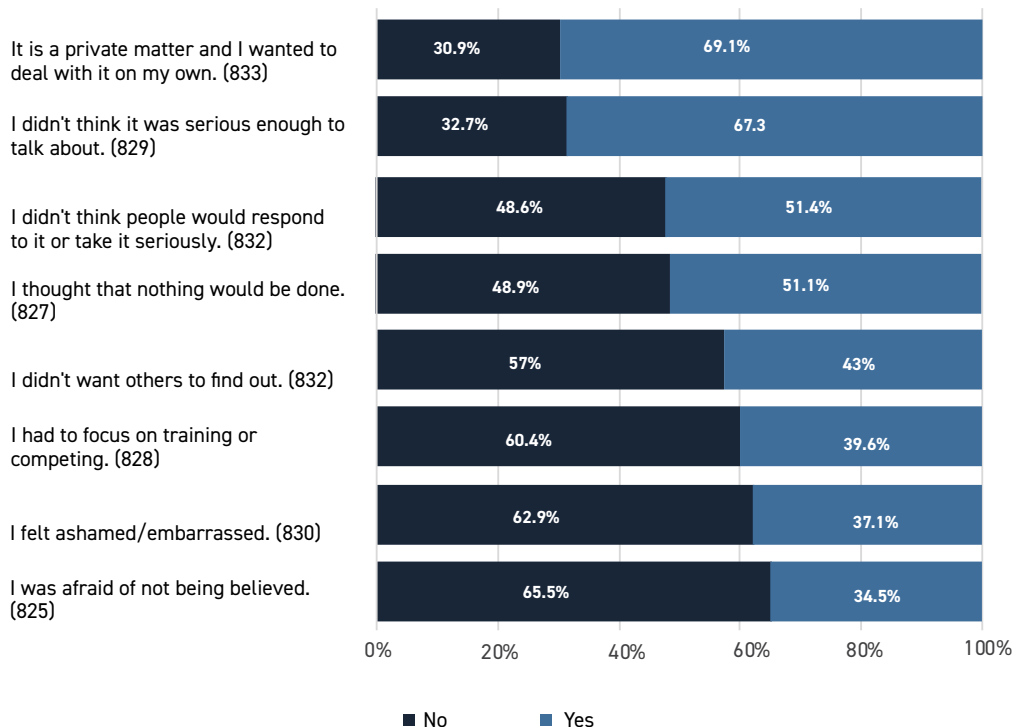


Figure 52 shows the types of entities where athletes who have participated on NGB/USOPC managed teams did make formal reports/complaints following an incident of sexual harm. Most of these surveyed athletes made their reports to the U.S. Center for SafeSport, and just under half reported to their NGB or the USOPC.

Figure 52. To whom NGB/USOPC athletes submitted a formal complaint of sexual harm

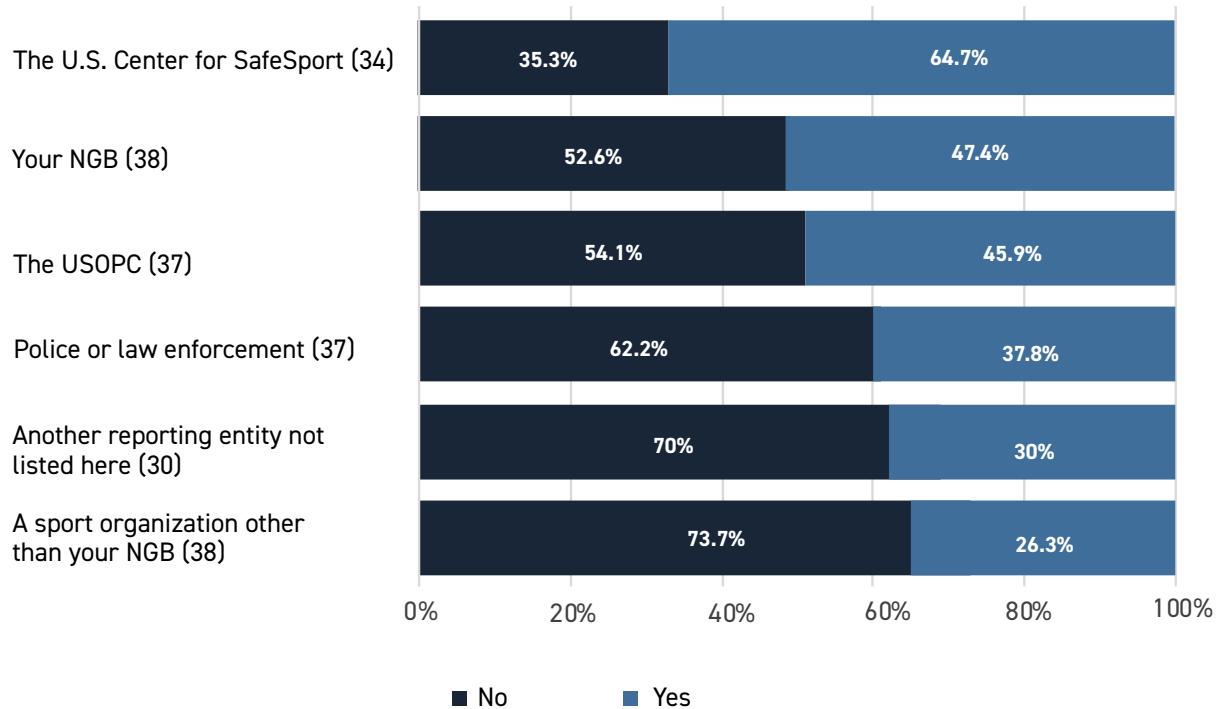
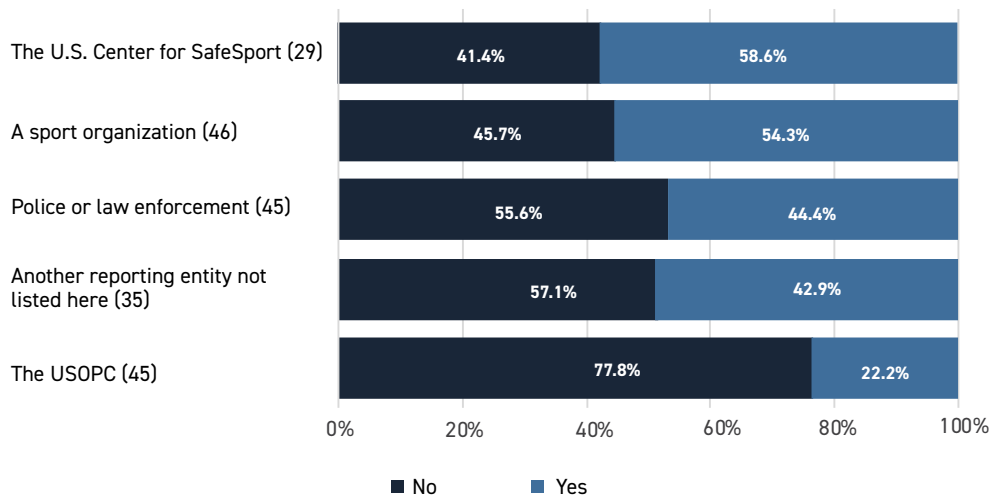


Figure 53 shows where athletes who have not participated on NGB/USOPC managed teams made formal reports/complaints following an incident of sexual harm. Athletes in this group also made most of their reports of sexual harm to the Center, followed by their sport organization (Figure 50).

Figure 53. To whom athletes not affiliated with the NGB/USOPC submitted a formal complaint of sexual harm

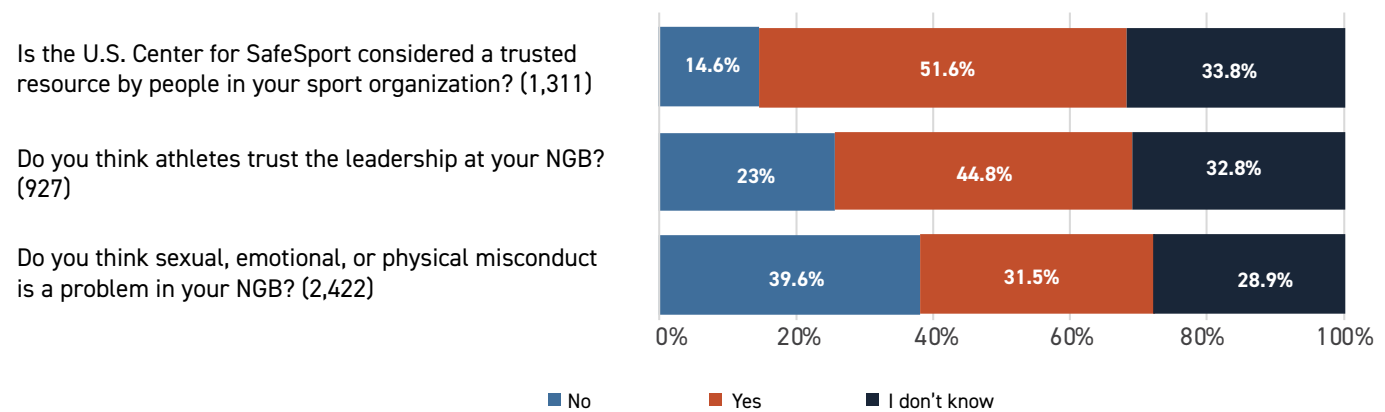


# TRUST & KNOWLEDGE

Athletes' trust in their sport organizations, and in the Center, and athletes' knowledge related to reporting misconduct and accessing support.

Athletes who had heard of the Center prior to taking this survey were asked whether they felt the Center was a trusted resource by athletes in their sport. Responses were mixed, with just over half of athletes (51.6%) seeing the Center as a trusted resource by people in their sport, about 15% expressing disagreement, and over one-third being unsure. Similarly, athletes who have participated in NGBs thought that about 45% (44.8%) of athletes trust in the leadership at their NGB. About one third of athletes (including both those affiliated with NGBs and those not affiliated with NGBs) think that sexual, emotional, or physical misconduct is a problem in their sport organization (Figure 50).

Figure 54. Athletes' trust in the Center and their NGB leadership, and their perception of the problem of misconduct in their sport organization<sup>21</sup>



## COMPARISON TO 2020

Findings in 2024 show that a higher percentage of athletes (51.6%) believe that the Center is considered a trusted resource by people in their sport organization, compared to athletes surveyed in 2020 (at which time 45.0% expressed this belief). Approximately the same percentage of athletes surveyed in 2020 and 2024 believed that athletes trust the leadership at their NGB. A slightly larger proportion of athletes surveyed in 2024 believe that sexual, emotional, or physical abuse is a problem in their sport organization (31.5%) compared to those who held this belief in 2020 (28.0%).

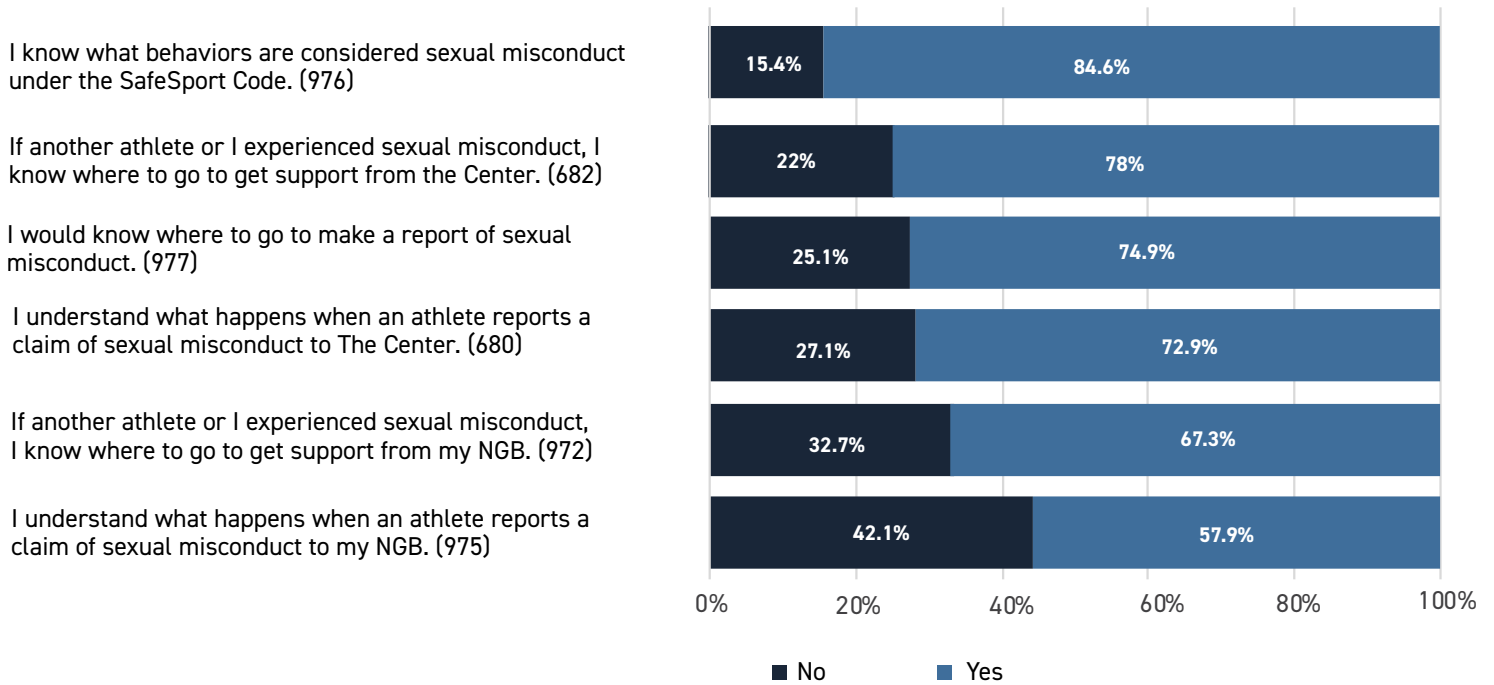
## REPORTING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Athletes responded to a series of questions regarding their general knowledge of reporting sexual misconduct and what they would do if they or another athlete experienced sexual misconduct. Figure 55 shows these responses for athletes that are (or have been) part of an NGB and Figure 56 shows responses for those that are not (and have not been) part of an NGB.

23. Only athletes who indicated that they had previously heard of the U.S. Center for SafeSport were asked questions referring directly to the Center. This applied to all figures in this section (Figures 50 to 56)

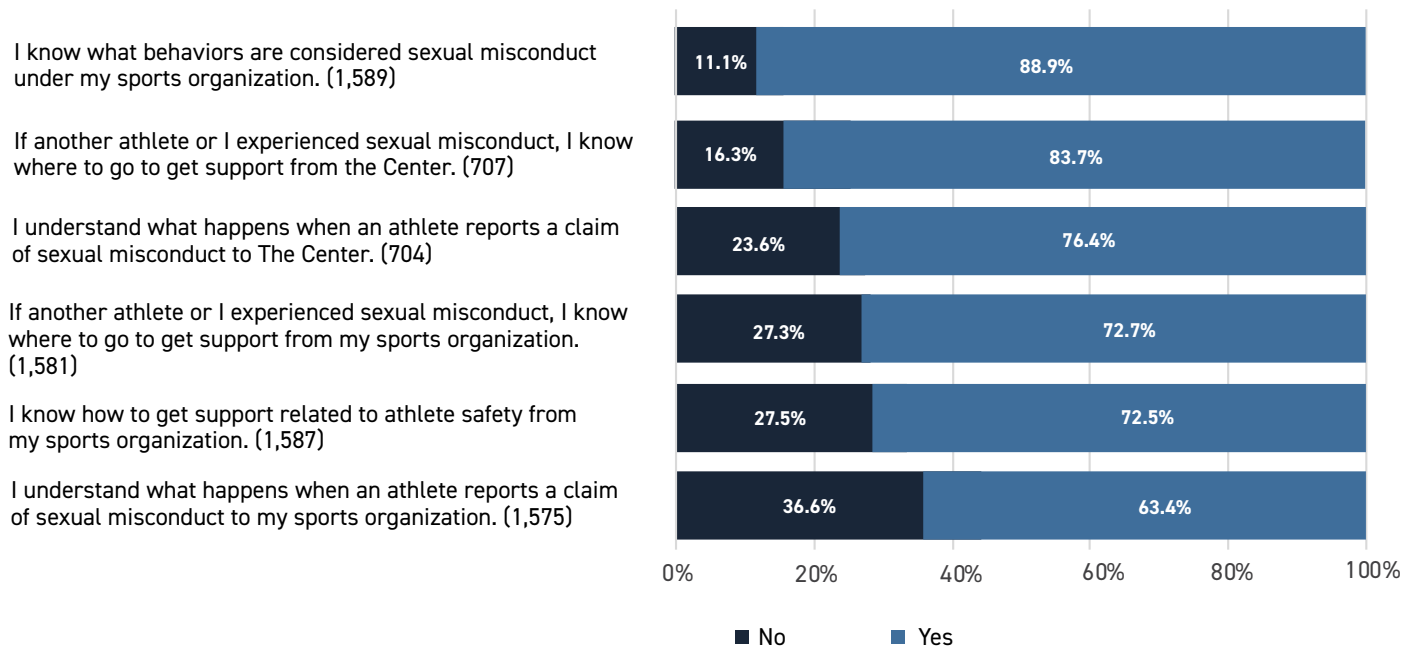
Among athletes who have participated in NGBs, the majority feel generally knowledgeable in relation to sexual misconduct with over 85% expressing that they know what behaviors are considered sexual misconduct under the SafeSport Code. Although nearly 73% of NGB athletes know what happens when an athlete reports a claim of sexual misconduct to the Center, less than 60% know what happens when they report that claim to their NGB.

Figure 55. Knowledge of sexual misconduct reporting for NGB athletes



For athletes not part of a NGB, Figure 56 shows that nearly 89% know what behaviors are considered sexual misconduct by their sports organization. While 63.4% of non-NGB athletes understand what happens when an athlete reports a claim of sexual misconduct to their sports organization, slightly higher than those athletes in an NGB.

Figure 56. Knowledge of sexual misconduct for non-NGB athletes

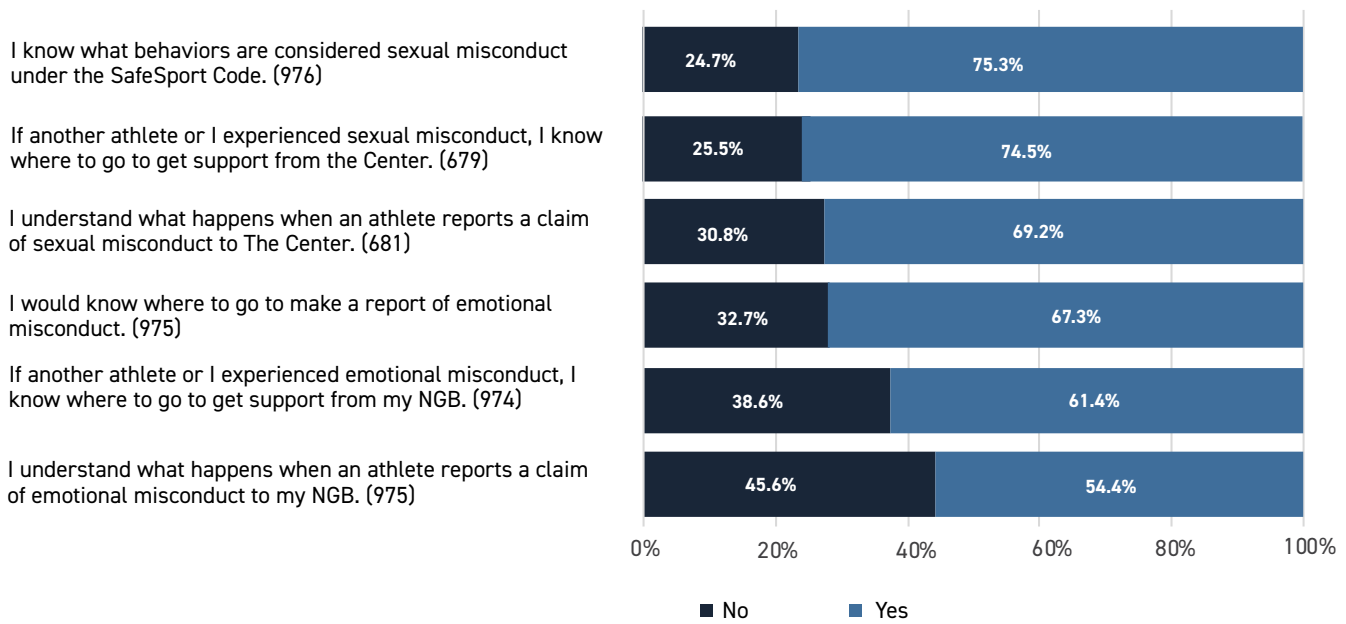


## REPORTING EMOTIONAL MISCONDUCT

Athletes responded to a series of questions regarding their general knowledge of reporting emotional misconduct and what they would do if they or another athlete experienced emotional misconduct. Figure 57 shows these responses for athletes that are part of an NGB and Figure 58 shows responses for those that are not part of an NGB.

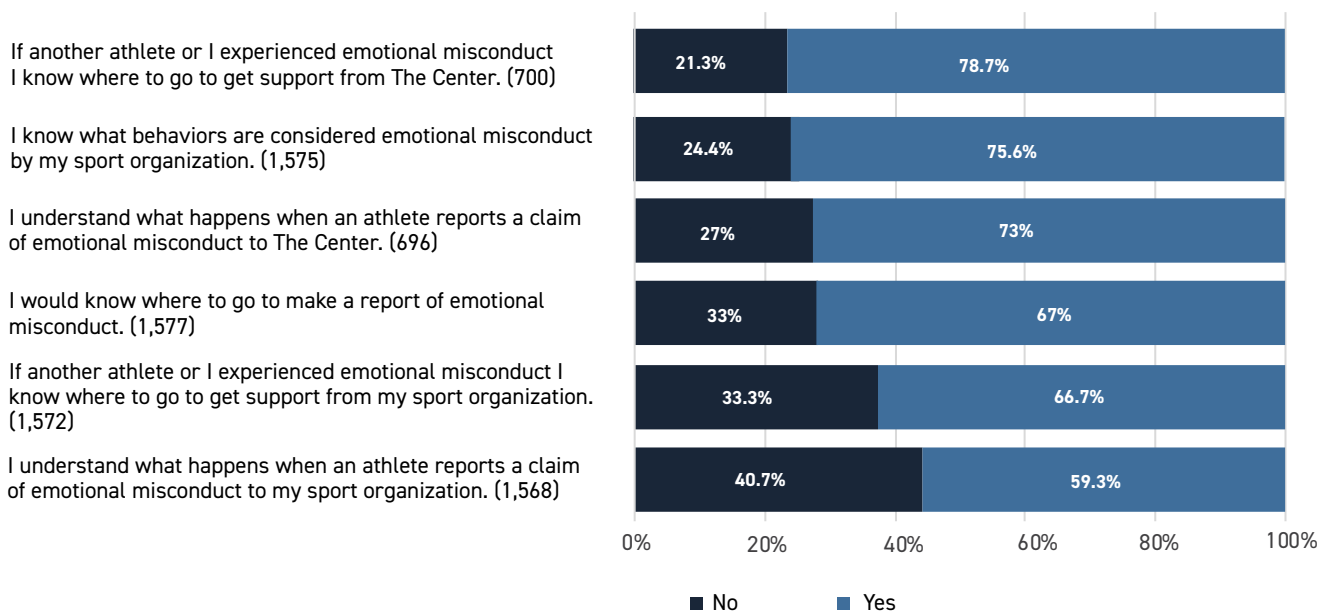
As illustrated by Figure 57, three quarters of athletes in a NGB know what behaviors are considered emotional misconduct under the SafeSport Code. Athletes were split on their understanding of what happens when an athlete reports a claim of emotional misconduct to their governing body of sport, but over 69% understand what happens when an athlete reports a claim of emotional misconduct to the Center.

Figure 57. Knowledge of emotional misconduct for NGB athletes



Among non-NGB athletes, 75.6% know what behaviors are considered emotional misconduct by their sport organization. Nearly 60% of non-NGB athletes understand what happens when an athlete reports emotional misconduct to their sports organization.

Figure 58. Knowledge of emotional misconduct for non-NGB athletes



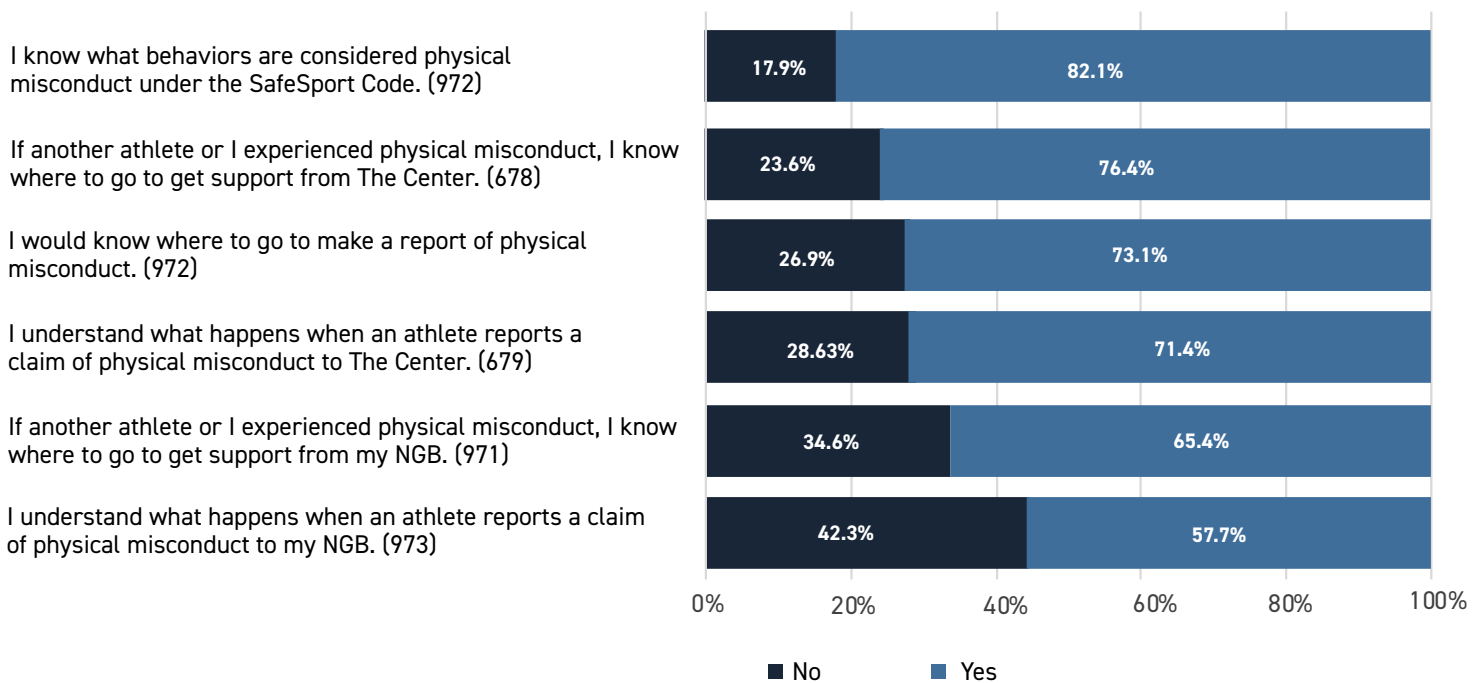


## REPORTING PHYSICAL MISCONDUCT

Athletes responded to a series of questions regarding their general knowledge of reporting physical misconduct under the SafeSport Code and what they would do if they or another athlete experienced physical misconduct. Figure 59 shows these responses for athletes that are part of an NGB and Figure 60 shows responses for those that are not part of an NGB.

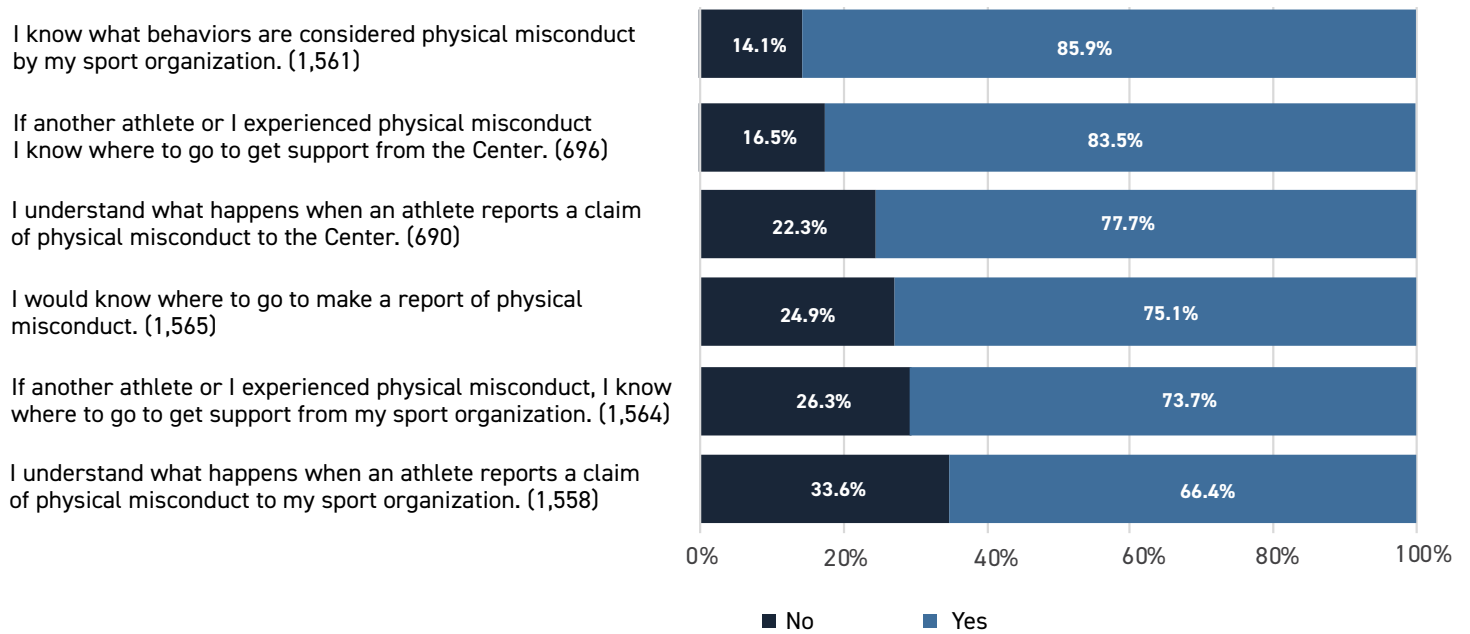
Of athletes that are part of a NGB, Figure 59 shows that 82% know what behaviors are considered physical misconduct under the SafeSport Code. Over 75% of athletes know where to get support from The Center for physical misconduct, but only 65% know where to get support from their NGB.

Figure 59. Knowledge of physical misconduct for NGB athletes



For non-NGB athletes, Figure 60 shows that nearly 86% know what behaviors are considered physical misconduct by their sport organization. Over 84% of athletes know where to get support from the Center when they experience physical misconduct and nearly 74% know where to get support from their sports organizations.

Figure 60. Knowledge of physical misconduct for non-NGB Athletes

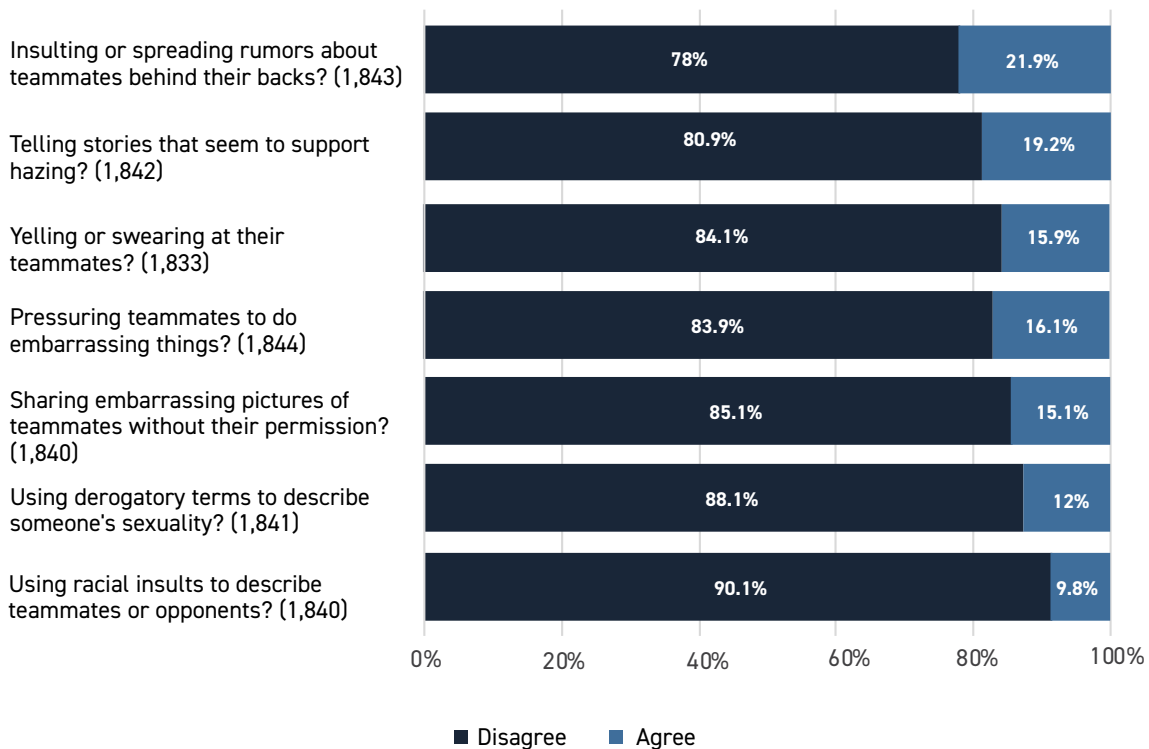


# PEER NORMS

Athletes' perceptions related to what types of behaviors are considered acceptable in their athlete peer groups.

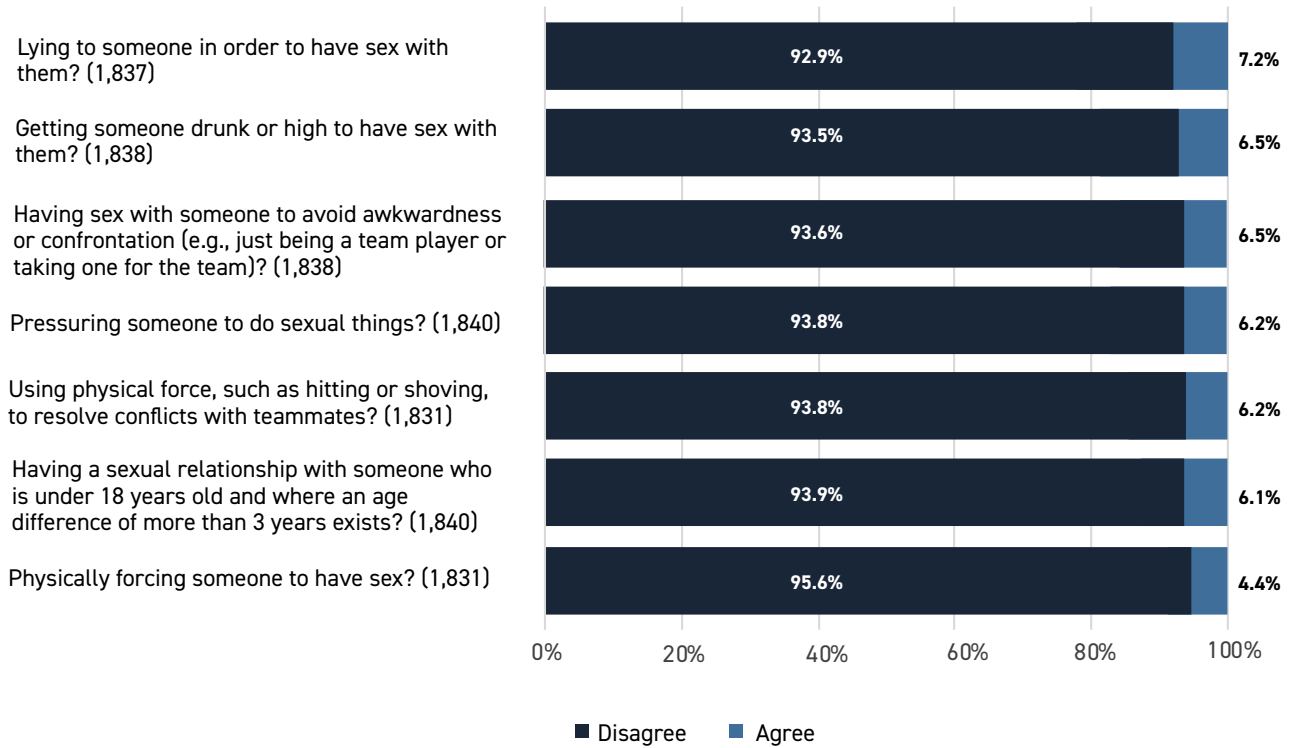
Athletes were asked their perceptions of what they think their athlete peers would approve of in terms of derogatory remarks or behavior, seen in Figure 61. All items received low levels of agreement from athletes, which suggests that most athletes perceive derogatory behaviors to be outside of the norm in their sports. The item with the most athletes' agreement (21.9%) in this section related to athletes' belief that their peers would approve of insulting or spreading rumors about teammates behind their backs.

Figure 61. Athletes' perception of peer approval of derogatory remarks or behavior



Athletes in general disagreed even more strongly that their peers would approve of coercion or intimidation of others. Figure 62 shows that only 7% of athletes thought that their peers would approve of lying to someone to have sex with them and 4% thought their peers would approve of physically forcing someone to have sex with them.

Figure 62. Athletes' perception of peer approval of coercion or intimidation



# ATHLETE SUGGESTIONS & COMMENTS

Athletes shared their suggestions and final comments for the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

Athletes who responded to the survey were asked two open-ended questions. The first one requested their recommendations to assist the U.S. Center for SafeSport in preventing abuse, protecting athletes, and resolving reports of misconduct against athletes. Over eight hundred athletes (N = 826) responded, providing a mix of suggestions and comments. In the second open-ended survey question, athletes were asked whether there was anything else they would like to share or make known to the researchers conducting this survey. Over six hundred athletes (N = 622) responded to the second question. Tables 27 and 28 below display the primary themes that emerged from all responses (many of which were the same for both survey questions), and the narrative that follows elaborates on key themes and provides quotations from the athlete survey participants.

Table 27. Response themes and frequencies for the open-ended survey question: What recommendations do you have to assist the U.S. Center for SafeSport in preventing abuse, protecting athletes, and resolving reports of misconduct against athletes? (N = 826)

Response Themes	n	%
Theme: Athlete Suggestions*	465	56.3%
*Many athletes made more than one suggestion.		
Subthemes:		
Provide education & training	194	23.5%
Spread awareness	175	21.2%
Protect young athletes & involve parents/caregivers	102	12.3%
Improve & publicize reporting methods	94	11.4%
Take swift action on investigations	68	8.2%
Follow through to ensure fair resolutions	59	7.1%
Better protect athletes, prevent abuse and misconduct	57	6.9%
Refine, clarify, and publicize the Center's policy and guidelines	54	6.5%
Provide support resources for survivors	36	4.4%
Protect accused against false claims; utilize due process	31	3.8%
Prevent whistleblower retaliation; change victim shaming norms	27	3.3%
Learn from and partner with other entities	25	3.0%
Theme: Critical Feedback	164	19.3%
Subthemes:		
Feedback about The U.S. Center for SafeSport	109	13.2%
Feedback about another entity (e.g., an NGB)	55	6.1%

Response Themes	n	%
Theme: Other Types of Comments (i.e., of a personal or unique nature)	148	17.9%
Theme: None, Don't Know, or N/A	132	16.0%
Theme: Endorsements of The U.S. Center for SafeSport	39	4.7%

Table 28. Response themes and frequencies for the open-ended question: Is there anything else you would like to share or make known to the researchers conducting this survey? (N = 622)

Response Themes	n	%
Theme: No, N/A	241	38.7%
Theme: Athlete Suggestions	175	28.1%
Subthemes:		
Survey & research suggestions	68	10.9%
Other recommendations (i.e., many distinct recommendations)	36	5.8%
Improve reporting, investigation, and resolution processes	35	5.6%
Better protect athletes, prevent abuse and misconduct	21	3.4%
Prevent whistleblower retaliation, victim shaming	15	2.4%
Theme: Critical Feedback	111	17.8%
Subthemes:		
Feedback about The U.S. Center for SafeSport	104	16.7%
Feedback about the Athlete Culture & Climate Survey	31	5.0%
Feedback about another entity (e.g., an NGB)	7	1.1%
Theme: Positive Feedback	106	17.0%
Subthemes:		
Endorsements of The U.S. Center for SafeSport	68	10.9%
Endorsements of Athlete Culture & Climate Survey	38	6.1%
Theme: Other Types of Comments (i.e., many distinct responses)	77	12.4%
Subtheme:		
Opinions on transgender athlete participation	21	3.4%
Theme: Descriptions of Personal Experiences of Abuse or Misconduct in Sport	69	11.1%

## ATHLETE SUGGESTIONS

As presented in Tables 27 and 28 above, surveyed athletes' suggestions covered a broad range of topics which most commonly included: providing education and training, spreading awareness, protecting young athletes and involving their parents or caregivers, and improving and publicizing reporting methods. Each of these topic areas is expanded upon below.

## PROVIDE EDUCATION & TRAINING

Athletes (N=194) commonly recommended that the Center continue to develop, provide, and expand upon the education and formal training opportunities. Some recommended that SafeSport training be made mandatory and provided more regularly for coaching staff and parents. Athletes also suggested the Center expand its training on emotional and verbal abuse as these are the most prevalent forms of athlete maltreatment. Other athlete suggestions included making the SafeSport training sport-specific and role-specific, such as tailoring content to parents. Finally, a few athletes recommended more in-person training opportunities to prevent participants from quickly going through the material without engaging deeply enough to learn and retain crucial information. Selected quotes from athletes on this topic are presented in Table 29, below.

Table 29. Selected quotes from athletes about providing education and training

Selected Quotes
“Provide regular training sessions for coaches, staff, and volunteers on appropriate conduct, recognizing signs of abuse, and the importance of maintaining a safe and respectful environment.”
“Require all coaches and athletes to meet a yearly education quota.”
“Prioritize emotional abuse... There is a whole culture of [athletes] who think that being good at absorbing your trainer’s abusive harmful behavior makes you a better, more valuable [athlete]. Silence is encouraged and rewarded.”
“Please develop more materials and content on emotional abuse.”
“Adjust the rules and training so they apply to each sport.”
“Coaches should be required to do the online SafeSport training in an in-person seminar... Online classes can be guessed on, or someone can just mentally check out because they are given or just know the answers.”

## SPREADING AWARENESS

The second most common suggestion from athletes was to further spread awareness about the content available through the Center. As seen in Table 27 above, 21.2% of athletes stressed the importance of making the Center’s resources widely known and accessible to everyone involved in sport, including athletes, coaches, staff, and parents. They recommended that the Center increase its efforts to spread

the word about what constitutes abuse and misconduct, where to seek help, and how to access reporting channels. Further, these athletes suggested various outreach strategies such as creating awareness campaigns, sending out regular emails, posting flyers, providing information at event sign-ups, and communicating through NGBs or directly to athletes. Selected athlete quotes related to this topic are presented in Table 30, below.

Table 30. Selected quotes from athletes about spreading awareness.

<b>Selected Quotes</b>
<i>"I believe it is important to keep pushing the message and information out to the athletes, parents, coaches, and all adults involved in the sport the information about what is and isn't acceptable behavior as well as the reporting procedures."</i>
<i>"Being more known to athletes. I had no idea this existed and could have greatly benefitted from this when I was an athlete to deal with conflict between myself and my coach."</i>
<i>"Give information to parents. In an individual sport that selects for high achieving student/athletes, parents don't always understand that intense attention from a coach or staff is not always a good thing."</i>
<i>"More awareness of [SafeSport] and how you came to be. Better recognition of you as a national body not owned or operated by any sport entity."</i>
<i>"Send out emails or hand out flyers at the start of every season reminding people of the Safe Sport organization, its mission, and its contact numbers."</i>
<i>"Work with the media to promote a climate of public opinion that focuses on athletes' rights."</i>

## **PROTECT YOUNG ATHLETES & INVOLVE PARENTS/CAREGIVERS**

Approximately 12% (12.3%) of athletes emphasized that the Center should prioritize promoting its SafeSport courses for parents, guardians, and children involved in sport (see Table 27 above). According to these athletes, parents should be required to take SafeSport classes to help them identify and report potential misconduct, and there should be a modified version of SafeSport training mandatory for minors. Further, these athletes emphasized the importance of teaching children how to communicate with trusted adults about any misconduct or potential harm they may experience. Table 31 below displays a selection of athlete quotes related to this issue.



Table 31. Selected quotes from athletes about protecting young athletes and involving their parents or caregivers

<b>Selected Quotes</b>
<p>"I think it would be beneficial to require a player's parent or guardian to take a safe sport class if their child is signed up for youth sports so that they know what to look for and are informed of all outlets available to them and their child."</p>
<p>"Keep working to get SafeSport training to be a requirement of parents for their children to participate in sports."</p>
<p>"I think a modified version of SafeSport training should be mandatory for minors, so they know what behaviors to look out for and how/when to ask for help."</p>
<p>"Teach children athletes how to properly communicate with trusted adults about misconduct issues and potential harm to them."</p>

## IMPROVE & PUBLICIZE REPORTING METHODS

Approximately 11% (11.4%) of athletes recommended that the Center improve and publicize methods for reporting abuse or misconduct in sport. These athletes emphasized the importance of publicizing how to report abuse or misconduct in sport, for example, through email campaigns, newsletters, or within workshops. They suggested reporting methods such as links to online report templates on NGB websites and sport-specific hotlines. Some athletes recommended that the Center better understand and apply best practices for creating reporting channels, for example, making reporting anonymous. They also urged the Center to prioritize the protection of both accusers and the accused during the reporting and investigation processes and before any resolutions are made. Finally, athletes recommended that the Center lead cultural change by helping to normalize "speaking up and speaking out" about abuse and misconduct in sport. Table 32 below displays a selection of related athlete quotes.

Table 32. Selected quotes from athletes about improving and publicizing reporting methods

<b>Selected Quotes</b>
<p>"I think you folks are doing a great job. You need to continue encouraging all athletes, coaches, and parents to report any attempts at misconduct."</p>

## Selected Quotes

*"Putting a simple hotline, email address, online report template, DM, or some other straightforward item on its communications. No one needs to know the process or understand too much. Anyone who has experienced abuse needs a place to start."*

*"Implement a confidential and independent reporting mechanism where athletes can report any concerns or incidents without fear of retaliation."*

*"There must be 100% anonymous ways to report without giving your name, phone number, etc. Also, it is not fair for the accused to be suspended and have their life ruined over a simple accusation. If you can prevent this from happening there will be more people reporting incidents."*

*"Use the right channel Ensure that the right channel is chosen for the report, which may be the sports center's complaints channel, a sports organization, a local law enforcement agency, or a suitable independent body."*

*"Creating spaces that make it seem normalized to speak up and speak out."*

The types of suggestions that athletes provided unique to the second open-ended survey question were about improving this survey and research topics for the Center to explore. As presented in Table 28 above, approximately 10.9% of athletes made such suggestions.

## SURVEY & RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

Athletes proposed a variety of research topics for the Center to consider investigating, such as causes and risk factors for abuse and misconduct in sport, effects of abuse on athletes, and the effectiveness of abuse prevention measures. Regarding suggestions for improving this survey, some athletes commented that it is too lengthy and recommended that it be shortened. A few others recommended allowing survey respondents to answer questions based on multiple sports they had played, rather than only one. A few others suggested including "N/A" or "I don't know" as response options. For example, this could allow those who participated in sport before the widespread use of social media a chance to indicate that these questions did not apply to them. Table 33 displays a selection of related athlete quotes.

Table 33. Selected quotes from athletes containing suggestions for this survey or potential research topics

<b>Selected Quotations</b>
“Examine the power structures and dynamics within sport organizations to understand the possible root causes of misconduct.”
“Examine the role of social media in exacerbating or preventing abuse.”
“Investigate the impact of abuse on athletes’ performance and motivation.”
“Evaluate the impact of an anonymous reporting system on rates of misconduct disclosure and resolution.”
“Collect suggestions and comments from participants to improve the efficiency and fairness of the whistleblowing process.”
“Evaluate the effectiveness of preventive education programs to understand their impact on athlete awareness and behavior.”

## **CRITICAL FEEDBACK**

Some athletes used the open-ended survey questions to provide critical feedback about the Center or other entities, e.g., NGBs. Specifically, 19.3% of athletes provided critical responses to the first question (Table 27) and 17.8% to the second question (Table 28). In both survey questions, athletes’ critical responses that were about their NGB or other entities were mostly of a personal or unique nature and did not fall into clear response themes. Feedback specific to the Center included:

- The Center is slow to respond to or does not act on reports of abuse or misconduct in sport.
- The Center exaggerates the problem of abuse or misconduct in sport. For example, some articulated that certain instances of coaching behavior deemed as verbal or emotional abuse by some could be considered valid approaches to coaching by others.
- A few athletes expressed mistrust in the Center or the need for the organization to repair its reputation.
- A few stated that SafeSport training was too lengthy or ineffective.
- The Center does not adequately protect the accused or those who may be accused from false claims of abuse or misconduct.
- The survey was too long, and the survey questions were not applicable.

Table 34 below displays a selection of athletes' critical feedback specific to the Center

Table 34. Selected quotes from athletes providing critical feedback.

<b>Selected Quotations</b>
<i>"Follow-through needs to be done more quickly. Cases take far too long for The Center to be seen as trustworthy or helpful."</i>
<i>"Considerable frustration exists around the time it takes for SafeSport to address a claim and to complete the investigation... Taking more than 3 months to reach a verdict and receive any guidance, while accused persons are still participating, makes families and organizations feel unsupported and vulnerable at a time when they need to opposite - support and reassurance. Please address this as it is eroding the faith in SafeSport and the process."</i>
<i>"This new organization seems to be looking to create problems where they don't exist."</i>
<i>"In my sport, many of us adult competitors have nothing to do with junior athletes, and the long, repetitive section of SafeSport training that covers things like "why sport is good for children's mental health" and "how to be the responsible adult at an overnight away game" is completely irrelevant to us."</i>
<i>"Maybe you lose people with how [SafeSport classes] are taught and people stop paying attention."</i>
<i>"I would prefer the reporting system to be better about doing due diligence in making sure that reports are true... I think we need to stress that MOST of us are just trying to do our job and love what we do and are aware of and adhering to the rules."</i>
<i>"Be very careful to not automatically assume that a potential perpetrator is guilty without due process."</i>
<i>"Retaliation should be punished. Bullying and sexual harassment include spreading rumors, lying, and making up stories of sexual assault and need to be investigated and punished with the same fervor as a sexual assault complaint. The reporting party should not be hinted at or divulged to any claimant, respondent, or witness."</i>
<i>"I'm old enough that anything I experienced or could have experienced predated social media. Thus, the questions that related to that content don't apply."</i>

## **ATHLETE ENDORSEMENTS OF THE U.S. CENTER FOR SAFESPORT**

Athletes also used both open-ended survey questions as opportunities to provide endorsements of the Center. Specifically, 4.7% of athletes provided positive responses to the first open-ended question (Table 27) and 17.0% to the second (Table 28). These athletes affirmed the importance and urgency of the Center's mission and encouraged the organization to "keep up the good work." Athletes also provided positive feedback about the SafeSport training. The feedback from athletes that was unique to the second open-ended survey question affirmed the value of this survey. Table 35 below displays selected athlete quotes.

Table 35. Selected quotes from athletes endorsing the U.S. Center for SafeSport

<b>Selected Quotations</b>
<i>"I think it's important to continue educating and raising awareness of the various ways abuse/misconduct can happen, with emphasis on some of the normalized ways it can be embedded in sports teams and culture."</i>
<i>"I think SafeSport is an incredible institution - I think our national sport organizations protect people in power, including abusers, and culture is slow to change. But it is changing."</i>
<i>"Keep up good work, continue focus, and move forward."</i>
<i>Their program is comprehensive and to the extent they practice what they teach, it should be effective. I was very impressed with how thorough their program is. I am a criminal investigator, so I have seen many kinds of abuse to children and adults, and this program is the best and most comprehensive child safety training program I have ever taken.</i>
<i>"I appreciate taking Safe Sport each year to remind myself of behaviors to watch for and knowing all adults on my team have the same knowledge and training to support youth athletes."</i>
<i>"Thank you for conducting this survey to learn more about making sports safe for all! I'm interested in learning more."</i>

# REPORT INSIGHTS & NEXT STEPS

- Sports are an important and valued aspect of athletes' lives. According to this survey, most athletes feel strongly that their athletic experiences have positively impacted their life. Nevertheless, findings from this report shed light on the ongoing issues of emotional, physical, and sexual harm in sports. Therefore, there is both great need and great potential when it comes to creating safer and more supportive athletic environments where all athletes can thrive.
- Findings in this report suggest that emotional harm and neglect in sports is highly prevalent and has been experienced by a large majority of athletes (nearly 80%). While physical harm and sexual harm are less prevalent, they are still present in sports environments across the country. It is therefore critical for coaches, officials, and other individuals who are involved in sports to know what to look out for when it comes to signs of abuse and misconduct, how to report concerns, and how to apply strategies and best practices to prevent all forms of abuse and misconduct from occurring.
- Athletes experienced varying rates of harmful or potentially harmful behaviors depending on a number of personal characteristics. This report points to some of the specific behaviors that certain groups of athletes are more likely to experience than others. For example: Black athletes disproportionately experience being hassled by security at athletic events; Asian athletes experience high rates of discrimination based on their national origin; Athletes with disabilities experience being forced to get in or stay in confined spaces more than athletes without disabilities. These and other sub-group differences highlighted throughout this report may have important implications for the prevention of abuse in sports.
- The Center is a resource for athletes when it comes to preventing and reporting abuse and misconduct in sports; however, nearly half of athletes who responded to this survey had not heard of the Center prior to taking the survey. Among those who had heard of the Center, only a little over half expressed the belief that athletes in their sport organization consider the Center a trusted resource. Together, these findings suggest a need for outreach efforts and tangible next steps by the Center to both raise awareness and earn the trust of athletes across the nation.
- Many athletes shared suggestions and criticisms of the survey instrument itself. In particular, many athletes expressed that the survey should be shorter, a criticism that was shared by the SafeSport Athlete Advisory Team (SAAT) who provided guidance and support in the survey's development. The Center and its research partners will strive to determine and apply strategies to shorten the length of surveys launched in the future. Potential strategies may include conducting multiple surveys focused on different topic areas, as well as creating culture and climate surveys that target specific audiences (e.g., coaches, parents, or officials, in addition to athletes).

# REPORT INSIGHTS & NEXT STEPS

The results of the 2024 Athlete Culture and Climate Survey will guide the U.S. Center for SafeSport's efforts to:

- Continue evaluating and improving our approach to investigations of abuse and misconduct;
- Enhance our training, educational content, and ongoing engagement with athletes and survivors;
- Host information sessions for national governing bodies (NGBs) and athletes to further explore the data;
- Inform the broader abuse prevention landscape throughout the United States and abroad through our research, analysis, and evaluation of the athlete experience; and
- Prepare for a follow-up survey in 2027 to be released ahead of the 2028 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games.

# REPORTING & RESOURCES

## REPORTING

**[Report here](#)** to the U.S. Center for SafeSport if you have experienced abuse or misconduct—or if you have reasonable suspicion of abuse or misconduct—inflicted by someone in the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement. You can also call the Center at: 833-587-7233.

## RESOURCES

**[RAINN's 24/7 online hotline](#)** is available for crisis intervention, referrals, or emotional support at any time. You can also call RAINN at: 800-656-HOPE (4673).

The **[Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)** provides 24/7 free and confidential support at 988lifeline.org or by calling 988.



# APPENDIX: KEY FINDINGS

72%



of athletes strongly agreed that their athletic experience has had a positive impact on their life.

62%



of athletes felt that equal treatment occurred frequently or very frequently in their sport.

The social, emotional, and physical benefits of sport can and should last a lifetime. The 2024 Culture and Climate Survey findings show that a majority of those surveyed felt sport had a positive impact on their lives. That's what all athletes deserve, but it is not what many experience. The following outcomes highlight the need for a shift in sport culture so that all athletes can feel safe, supported, and strengthened throughout their sport experience.

49%

of athletes who experienced mental health struggles during their participation in sports reported having suicidal thoughts.

78%



of athletes shared that they had experienced behaviors related to emotional harm and neglect during their sports involvement.

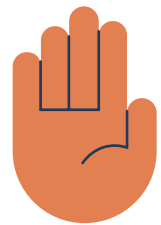
89%



of athletes who experienced unwanted sexual behavior during their sports involvement **did not submit** a formal complaint or report.

11%

of athletes indicated that they had experienced unwanted sexual contact or sexually explicit behaviors during their sports involvement.



43%

of athletes who experienced unwanted sexual behavior indicated that at least one instance occurred before they were 18.



Survey findings shed light on the disproportionate frequency of unwanted sexual experiences endured by athletes with disabilities, those in gender minorities, and those who identify as having a non-heterosexual sexual orientation.