



International
Paralympic
Committee

Summary of the panel decision

15 September 2016

International Paralympic Committee

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An NPC President has been excluded from the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games and had his accreditation revoked as of September 15, 2016 after a hearing held on September 13, 2016. The IPC filed a Statement of Case with the Legal and Ethics Committee on September 12 raising allegations that an NPC President had verbally sexually harassed a Rio 2016 Games Volunteer in violation of the IPC Code of Ethics sections 1.1, 1.7 and 1.8.

The Code of Ethics provides: “Any member of the Paralympic Family, i.e. a person who accepts and assumes a function in the IPC, or in association with the IPC, regardless whether it is a voluntary or paid position, elected or appointed, an athlete or team official, shall be subject to the provisions as laid down in the IPC Code of Ethics. The specific provisions Respondent is alleged to have violated include:

1.1 Safeguard the dignity of the individual and of the sport.

1.7 Not tolerate any practice constituting any form of physical or mental injury. All forms of harassment including physical, mental, professional, or sexual are prohibited. Behaviours that are humiliating, intimidating, or insulting will not be tolerated.

1.8 Conduct business with integrity, maintain a high standard of personal conduct and avoid any behaviour or action that would tarnish or give the impression of tarnishing the reputation of the Paralympic movement.

The IPC asked the Panel to find that the harassment occurred, that it violated the IPC Code of Ethics, and that the Respondent’s sanction should be withdrawal of his accreditation and exclusion from the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games.

The IPC Handbook Chapter 4.2 Position Statement on Sexual Harassment and Abuse in Sport provides in its General Principles that, “every individual is entitled to live and work in an environment that is free from embarrassment, discomfort, intimidation or humiliation arising from sexual harassment and abuse. In particular, the IPC recognises the right of athletes and all other members of the Paralympic Family to enjoy a safe and supportive sport environment.”

Further, it states “sexual harassment and abuse are violations of human rights, regardless of cultural setting, that damage both individual and organisational health. Every member of the Paralympic family shares the responsibility to identify and prevent sexual harassment and



abuse, and to develop a culture of dignity, respect, and safety within the Paralympic sport community.”

Finally, “sexual harassment and abuse is in breach of the IPC Code of Ethics and will be sanctioned accordingly.”

Sexual harassment is defined as “any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favours or any other form of unsolicited or unwelcome sexual conduct.” A nonexhaustive list of examples of what constitutes sexual harassment for purposes of the IPC Code of Ethics includes: intimidating sexual remarks, invitations or familiarity; ongoing use of humour based on sexual insinuations; and intrusive inquiries into a person’s private life or reference to their sexuality or physical appearance.

Allegations raised against the Respondent were that he had made several sexually suggestive comments and asked several sexually suggestive questions, causing the volunteer to experience discomfort, embarrassment, humiliation and fear. She realized what she had experienced was sexual harassment, reported it to her superiors, and sought counselling for the trauma she had undergone. At hearing, Respondent offered no credible alternative explanation for the events that had transpired.

In its requested relief, Complainant asked that the Panel sanction Respondent, exclude him from the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games and withdraw his accreditation for the Games.

After a full hearing before an Ethics Panel convened by the Chairperson of the IPC Legal and Ethics Committee, the Panel determined that on the balance of probabilities, the Respondent verbally sexually harassed a Rio 2016 Games Volunteer by making unwelcome statements that were sexual in nature, and engaging in unsolicited and unwelcome sexual conduct in clear violation of the IPC Code of Ethics sections 1.1, 1.7 and 1.8.

The Panel ordered that “Respondent shall be excluded from the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games with immediate effect from the date of this Order until the date of the closing of the Paralympic Village. Respondent shall have his accreditation revoked immediately and shall have no right to enter any Paralympic Games venue, village, or hotel. “ The decision was delivered to Respondent NPC President on the morning of September 15, 2016.

In reaching its decision, the Panel issued a stern warning to all members of the Paralympic Family. “Conduct as egregious as that outlined in this complaint has no place in the Paralympic Movement, or indeed in any part of civilized society. We must take these allegations seriously, and send a strong and clear message that actions such as these will not be tolerated against any Member of the Paralympic Family at the Paralympic Games or anywhere within the Paralympic Movement. “