

Jonathan Greenblatt

CEO and National Director



February 14, 2020

Ms. Virginia Sung
Chief Executive Officer
USA Table Tennis
4065 Sinton Road, Suite 120
Colorado Springs, CO 80907

Dear Ms. Sung,

We write to express our deep concern about your organization's refusal to accommodate the Jewish religious observance of Estee Ackerman at the upcoming U.S. Olympic Table Tennis Team trials scheduled in Santa Monica, CA for later this month.

According to news reports, Estee, an Orthodox Jewish teenager, likely will not be able to compete at the Olympic trials because one day of the four-day tournament falls on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. In January, her father sought a religious accommodation for her. According to emails obtained by the media, however, "a tournament director turned him down, saying it's too hard to coordinate the with the other players in her bracket."

The Olympics are about embracing diversity in competition. Forcing Estee choose between her faith and her lifelong dream is completely antithetical to that mission. Furthermore, this decision, at a minimum, appears to violate the spirit of the USA Table Tennis Member Code of Conduct, which states:

As a member of USA Table Tennis, I am committed to fair competition and respect for other members and opponents, including athletes, coaches, umpires, referees, volunteers, tournament officials, administrators, parents, spectators and fans, regardless of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation. I understand that sportsmanship is a key tenant of competition and will exhibit the qualities of sportsmanship at all times. ...

I will ... Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all members and opponents, including athletes, coaches, umpires, referees, volunteers, tournament officials, administrators, parents, spectators, and fans, regardless of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation.

The rejection of Estee's accommodation request is disrespectful of her faith and undermines the Olympic Trials being viewed as fair.

It is our understanding that USA Table Tennis has until today to reverse its decision. Securing a spot for the Olympics should be based purely on skill and merit. We therefore urge your organization to reconsider its determination and make concerted efforts to allow Estee to compete.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jonathan Greenblatt'.

Jonathan Greenblatt
CEO and National Director