



Playbook for Addressing Antisemitism in Sports



Introduction

The ADL Playbook for Addressing Antisemitism in Sports is designed to equip athletes, coaches, and athletic organizations with the tools and knowledge necessary to recognize, respond to and combat antisemitism in sports. As global events unfold, the rise of antisemitism has become increasingly apparent, making it crucial for all stakeholders in the sports community to understand and address this issue effectively.*

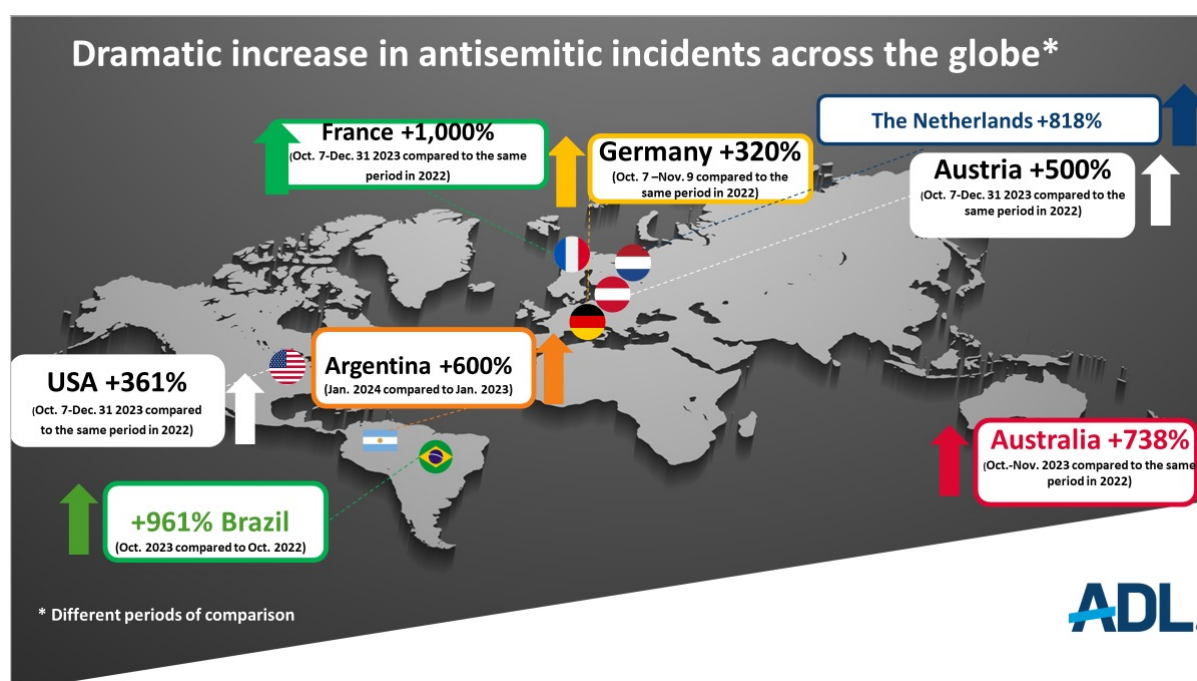
Note: This resource is not intended and should not be construed as providing legal advice. Please consult with your own legal counsel.

Background: Rise of Antisemitism Post October 7 Attack

The world has seen a significant surge in antisemitic incidents following the tragic events of October 7, 2023, accelerating a broader trend that had been escalating for several years. According to the ADL's 2025 Audit of Antisemitic Incidents, there were 6,275 antisemitic incidents across the United States that year, significantly higher than at any point before October 7, 2023 and the third highest year on record. This rise is not confined to the U.S. alone; similar spikes have been documented globally. [ADL's Global 100](#) survey, conducted in partnership with Ipsos, found in 2024 that an estimated 2.2 billion people—46% of the world's population—harbor antisemitic attitudes.

Importance of Combating Antisemitism in Sports

Sports play a pivotal role in bringing people together and promoting unity. However, when antisemitism infiltrates this space, it undermines these values and creates a hostile environment for all athletes, teams, and fans—not just Jewish and Israeli participants. Addressing antisemitism in sports is essential to preserving the integrity of the sporting community and ensuring that everyone can participate in a safe and respectful environment. Beyond being the right thing to do, ADL's Global 100 survey found that nearly three in five (59%) of the global population consider hatred against Jews to be a serious problem.



How to Talk About Antisemitism

Conversations about antisemitism can be complex and emotionally charged. The explanations below are meant to offer common language and guidance, with the understanding that there is no single definition that can capture every experience or context. Through definitions, real-world examples, and practical guidance, the goal is to help sports stakeholders recognize harmful behavior, foster respectful environments, and respond thoughtfully when issues arise.

What is Antisemitism?

- Antisemitism refers to prejudice, discrimination or hostility directed at Jewish people.
 - It is generally based on negative stereotypes, myths or misinformation about Jews, Judaism or Jewish identity.
 - It can range from offensive or biased comments and behavior based on that person's Jewish identity (or perceived identity), to language, rhetoric or actions that demonize, delegitimize or apply a double standard to the Jewish state of Israel and its supporters. For example, expecting Jewish individuals to answer for or defend the actions of Israel in ways that people from other countries are not typically expected to do for their home countries. It can also include physical aggression or acts of vandalism targeting Jewish people or institutions.
 - Antisemitism sometimes targets Jews not as individuals but as a collective—whether that is Jewish organizations, institutions or places of worship, movements like Zionism, or the existence of the Jewish State of Israel.

What is Zionism and Anti-Zionism?

- Zionism is the movement for Jewish self-determination and statehood, reflecting a nearly 4,000-year-old Jewish connection and desire to return to their ancestral homeland, Israel.
- Anti-Zionism downplays the history of Jewish peoplehood, its connection to Israel and Israel's importance to Jews. Advocating for the eradication of the Jewish state of Israel is the extreme idea at the core of anti-Zionism.
- There is significant overlap between anti-Zionism and antisemitism.
- Just as criticizing the policies of any other country in the world is a legitimate form of critique, criticizing Israeli government policies is legitimate and not antisemitic. Many Israelis and other Jews criticize Israeli policies and are committed Zionists and Israel supporters.

How to Talk About Israel/Zionism?

- When talking about Zionism, it's fair to assume that many people don't understand the term, and some mistakenly associate it with a form of racism and/or colonialism. They don't understand that Zionism is the modern-day term used to describe the nearly 4,000-year Jewish connection to the land of Israel, and that Israel has always been an integral part of Jewish identity.
- Demonstrate personal impact. Explain that as a Jewish person, Israel is part of your identity—reflected in Jewish prayer, text, rituals and traditions. When Zionism is misrepresented or demeaned, it impacts you personally as a Jew.
- Finally, you can explain that it's okay to criticize the policies of the Israeli government—just like you can criticize European, the US or other governments. That is **not** anti-Zionism or antisemitism.

Examples

These examples are included to show how antisemitism can show up in the world of sports — from fan behavior to athlete conduct — and how words and actions can quickly lead to real harm. They are meant to help readers recognize patterns and use this playbook as a practical guide.

Amsterdam Maccabi Tel Aviv Attacks

- Following a Europa League match between Ajax and Maccabi Tel Aviv on November 7-8, 2024, Israeli soccer fans were targeted in coordinated “hit-and-run” attacks throughout Amsterdam. Groups used messaging apps to organize violence against “people of Jewish descent and/or supporters of Maccabi Tel Aviv.” At least [10 Israelis were hospitalized](#), and dozens were injured. Social media posts included calls to “[hunt Jews](#).”
- Amsterdam Mayor Femke Halsema described the violence as “an outburst of antisemitism that I hope to [never see again](#).” Dutch authorities opened investigations into antisemitic hate crimes and death threats. Five perpetrators were convicted and four received jail sentences ranging from one to six months. The fifth was convicted under juvenile law and sentenced to [community service](#). Amsterdam banned demonstrations for three days following the attacks.
- This case shows antisemitism tied to sports events can move quickly from online threats to coordinated physical violence, highlighting the need for early intervention and strong security responses.

#JewGoal - Digital Gaming and Sports Culture

- Academic research published in December 2025 documented how the antisemitic hashtag #JewGoal migrated from FIFA video game culture into real-world football commentary on [social media](#). The study analyzed 1,364 tweets between 2010-2020, finding 97.5% contained antisemitism or casual hate. The term “Jew goal” originated in FIFA video gaming to describe a tactical goal but became weaponized with antisemitic stereotypes. Examples include tweets like “Croatia scored the best Jew goal ever #WorldCup2018” used during [actual matches](#).
- The study revealed how gaming language seamlessly moved into mainstream sports discourse, showing the importance of monitoring both in-stadium and online environments. FIFA’s video game brand was directly implicated in normalizing antisemitic language that spread globally.

Puka Nacua Streaming Incident

- While NFL player Puka Nacua was a guest on influencer, Adin Ross and N3on’s livestream in December 2025, Ross and N3on encouraged Nacua to perform a gesture invoking classic antisemitic stereotypes, including rubbing hands together in reference to Jewish greed. While Ross, who is Jewish, and N3on were aware of the gesture’s offensiveness, they discussed whether Nacua would receive criticism for doing the gesture while Nacua was out of earshot. The incident occurred on Twitch, a platform with a history of failing to moderate racist and antisemitic comments in live chat.
- The clip circulated widely on social media, prompting concern from Jewish organizations and fans, especially given the sharp rise in antisemitic violence globally. The incident underscored how antisemitic tropes are often introduced casually or “as jokes,” particularly in digital spaces, and how athletes may participate without understanding the harm. Nacua issued a public apology for the incident, along with the NFL. Ross and N3on, who encouraged this gesture knowing its potential for harm, did not apologize. This incident illustrates how antisemitic stereotypes often surface casually in digital spaces, framed as humor or social banter. Even when the intent is not necessarily hateful, such gestures reinforce harmful tropes and can normalize antisemitic rhetoric among teammates, fans, and online audiences.

Paris Olympics 2024

- At the 2024 Paris Olympics, Israeli athletes faced death threats promising “We will repeat Munich 1972,” referencing the 1972 massacre of 11 [Israeli athletes](#). During an Israel-Paraguay football match, individuals chanted “Heil Hitler,” performed Nazi salutes and other antisemitic gestures, and displayed a banner reading “Genocide Olympics.” Israeli athletes’ personal details, including blood test results and login credentials, were leaked on social media.

- France opened formal investigations into death threats against three Israeli athletes and antisemitic hate crimes during matches. French authorities provided unprecedented security measures with a €320 million security budget, ultimately spending [€1.44 billion on security](#). Israel's Shin Bet provided additional security for delegation members. Olympics organizers worked closely with Israeli Olympic Committee on enhanced safety protocols.
- This case shows how antisemitism at major sporting events can create layered threats to athletes, requiring proactive, coordinated security and incident response.

Algerian Judo Incident

- At the 2020 Tokyo Olympics: An [Algerian judoka Fethi Nourine](#) and his coach were sent home for refusing to compete against an Israeli athlete, highlighting a pattern of some athletes' ongoing refusal to engage with Israeli competitors.
- The International Judo Federation banned Nourine from competition for [10 years](#).
- This case highlights how refusal to compete can serve as a form of exclusion and discrimination against athletes based on nationality or identity, as well as the importance of clear policies and consistent enforcement from sports governing bodies.

Response + Best Practices

Immediate Response

- **Safety:** If you fear for your safety or the safety of others, call 9-1-1 or a local emergency number.
- **Stay calm and document:** Remain calm and immediately document the incident, noting time, place, people involved, and details. This is crucial for reporting and investigation. If it is safe to do so, take pictures or a video of the incident. If the incident involves vandalism, do not clean up or remove until law enforcement has completed its investigation.
- **Report the incident:** Use established channels within your association or league, such as reporting to a coach, team manager, or security officer. Ensure prompt reporting for timely response. You can also [report an incident](#) to ADL using our incident response form.
- **Offer support and solidarity:** If a teammate is the target, offer them support and solidarity. Let them know they are not alone and the team stands with them.
- **Encourage Professional Support:** Encourage the target to seek professional support, such as counseling services provided by the team or external organizations.

Responding Publicly

- **Official statements:** If the incident becomes public, the organization should issue a clear, strong statement condemning antisemitism and supporting the affected individual, demonstrating the team's commitment to combating hate.
- **Encourage other teams/national associations to respond publicly:** Coalitions are important in demonstrating mass rejection of any form of hate.
- **Use of social media:** Before posting, ensure information is verified. Use social media to spread messages of support and solidarity, while being mindful of potential backlash from potential hateful endorsers.

Education

- **Hold team meetings:** Organize team meetings to discuss the incident, the nature of antisemitism, and why it is harmful. Educate team members on recognizing and addressing antisemitism and other forms of discrimination.
- **Engage with experts:** Invite experts from organizations like ADL to conduct workshops or seminars for deeper insights and effective strategies.

Best Practices

Awareness and Education

- **Continuous learning:** Regularly educate yourself and the team about antisemitism and discrimination, understanding both historical and contemporary contexts. Acknowledge that people of all identities can better recognize and challenge antisemitism by learning about its many manifestations.
- **Recognize systemic issues:** Recognize that antisemitism can appear not only through individual incidents, but also through broader cultural norms, online behavior and organizational environments. Education, awareness and consistent standards can help prevent harmful behavior before incidents escalate.
- **Training programs:** Participate in mandatory training programs on belonging and inclusion for all team members. These programs help ensure teams are informed and prepared to act against bias and hate. This should also include **utilizing guidance and resources from organizations, like ADL Center on Antisemitism Research**, on responsible social media use and understanding how digital content can quickly amplify harmful rhetoric or harassment.

Proactive Measures

- **Preventive policies:** Establish and enforce preventive policies within the team. This includes clear guidelines on acceptable behavior, reporting mechanisms, and consequences for discriminatory actions.
- **Clear policies and enforcement:** Sports organizations need clear policies against antisemitism, with strict enforcement mechanisms. This includes consequences for non-compliance and measures to ensure accountability.

Support Network

- **Internal support:** Create a robust internal support network where team members feel safe to speak up about any issues.
- **External partnerships:** Partner with organizations specializing in combating discrimination, like ADL, to access additional resources and expertise.



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Contact:

Sivan Sinnreich

Israel Education Director, ADL

ssinnreich@adl.org

Alex Freeman

Director of Sports Engagement, ADL

afreeman@adl.org



@ADL



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