



MANITOBA SOCCER ASSOCIATION POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

STATEMENT

The Manitoba Soccer Association (MSA) is committed to creating a sport environment in which all individuals are treated with respect, dignity and within the same rules and regulations.

Social media (twitter, Facebook, instagram etc.) plays an important role in engagement, promotion, discussions, or awareness. It is also an invaluable communications tool to help drive and promote soccer in our province.

The MSA encourages and supports the ethical and professional use of social media by sanctioned soccer participants to enhance effective communication, build brand, interact with other participants, clients or Members.

The MSA expects individuals using social media to conduct themselves at all times in a manner consistent with the values of the MSA that include fairness, integrity, accountability, excellence, accessibility, innovation, and respect. To that end the MSA has created this policy and cautions all involved that any conduct falling short of the standard of behaviour required by the MSA or Member Organization's Code of Conduct will be subject to the disciplinary sanctions identified within the MSA or Member Organization's Discipline and Complaints Policy.

Within the policy the MSA provides the athletes and coaches with guidelines for social media use. Coaches and athletes are strongly encouraged to develop their own strategy for social media use (either written down or not) and ensure that their strategy for social media use is acceptable pursuant to the MSA or Member Organization's Code of Conduct and Ethics.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Definitions

- a) "Social media" – The catch-all term that is applied broadly to new computer-mediated communication media such as blogs, YouTube, Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter, the MSA or Member Organization Facebook page, the National Team Blog, MSA or Member Organization Twitter Account, AttackPoint Training Log, AttackPoint Discussions, DOMA, etc.
- b) "Branded social media" – Official social media engagement by the MSA or Member organizations including their Facebook page(s), Twitter feed, photo sharing accounts,





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YouTube channels, blogs, message boards, or other social media engagement; both those that exist currently and those that will be created by the MSA or Member organizations in the future

- c) “Representative” – All individuals employed by, or engaged in activities on behalf of, the MSA or Member organizations. Representatives include, but are not limited to, staff members, contract personnel, volunteers, medical personnel, researchers, administrators, committee members, and directors and officers of the organization in question
- d) “Case Manager” – The person or organization appointed by MSA or Member Organization to oversee management and administration of complaints.
- e) “Stakeholders” – Stakeholders include:
 - i. All categories of membership defined in the MSA or Member Organization’s By-Laws
 - ii. All individuals engaged in activities with, MSA or Member Organization including, but not limited to, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, team managers, medical personnel, administrators, etc.
 - iii. All members of MSA or Member Organizations within the umbrella of the Provincial Soccer Association
- f) “Club” - an organization or group of individuals or teams organized under central government structure for the purpose of player development through competitive events and includes community centres in the city of Winnipeg

Application of this Policy

This Policy applies to all those involved in sanctioned soccer.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

Conduct and Behaviour

1. Per the MSA or Member Organization’s *Discipline and Complaints Policy and Code of Conduct*, the following Social Media conduct may be considered minor or major infractions at the discretion of the Case Manager:
 - a) Posting a disrespectful, hateful, insulting, or otherwise negative comment on a personal blog, in a Facebook post or note, or as a Tweet on Twitter, that is directed at Stakeholders or at other persons connected with the MSA or Member Organization.
 - b) Posting a disparaging or harmful comment on a personal blog, in a Facebook post or note, or as a Tweet on Twitter, that is directed at the MSA or Member Organization.





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- c) Creating or contributing to a Facebook group, webpage, blog, or online forum devoted solely or in part to promoting negative or disparaging remarks or commentary about the MSA or Member Organization or their reputation.
 - d) Posting a picture, altered picture, or video on Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter, YouTube, or other social medium that is harmful, disrespectful, insulting, or otherwise offensive, and that is directed at Stakeholders or at other persons connected with the MSA or Member Organization.
 - e) Any instance of cyber-bullying or cyber-harassment between one Stakeholder and another Stakeholder (including a teammate, coach, opponent, volunteer, or official), where incidents of cyber-bullying and cyber-harassment can include but are not limited to the following conduct on any social medium, via text-message, or via email: regular insults, negative comments, vexatious behavior, pranks or jokes, threats, posing as another person, spreading rumors or lies, or other harmful behavior.
 - f) Acting as any other person other than the Stakeholder.
2. In addition to the Conduct and Behaviour Section those involved have a responsibility to:
- a) Use casual, respectful and friendly language, and never say anything online that a Stakeholder would not say in front of individuals to whom they respect
 - b) Be truthful and in the case of an inadvertent mistake, make every effort to correct the mistake as soon as possible
 - c) Refrain from the use of profanity and hateful language
 - d) Refrain from venting frustrations about a race, event or decisions or actions by other Stakeholders
 - e) Understand that what is posted on Social Media becomes a permanent public record
 - f) Understand that it is not productive to get into an argument with anyone online or via Social Media
 - g) Understand that the Organization relies on volunteer efforts of organizers and will be respectful of this and show appreciation when appropriate and avoid public criticism at all times
 - h) Understand that Stakeholders are ambassadors for sport and will act in a manner that positively promotes sport





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Representatives' Responsibilities

1. MSA or Member Organization Representatives will not:
 - a) Use social media for the purpose of fraud or any other activity that contravenes the laws of Canada, the MSA's *Code of Conduct and Ethics*, or any other applicable jurisdiction
 - b) Impersonate any other person or misrepresent their identity, role, or position with the Organization
 - c) Display preference or favouritism with regard to athletes, coaches, or other individuals associated with the Organization
 - d) Upload, post, email, or otherwise transmit:
 - i. Any content that is offensive, obscene, unlawful, threatening, abusive, harassing, defamatory, hateful, invasive or another person's privacy, or otherwise objectionable
 - ii. Any material which is designed to cause annoyance, inconvenience, or needless anxiety to others
 - iii. Any material that infringes on the patent, trademark, trade secrets, copyright, or other proprietary right of any other party
 - iv. Any material that is considered MSA or Member Organization's confidential information or intellectual property, per the MSA or Member Organization's *Confidentiality Policy*
2. Representatives shall refrain from discussing matters related to the MSA's or Member Organization or their operations on Representatives' personal social media. Instead, matters related to the MSA or Member Organization or their operations should be handled through more official communication channels (like email) or through the MSA or Member's Organization-branded social media.
3. Representatives shall use their best judgment to respond to controversial or negative content posted by other people on the MSA or Member Organization-branded social media. In some cases, deletion of the material may be the most prudent action. In other cases, responding publicly may be preferred. If a Representative questions the correct action to take, the Representative shall consult with another Representative who has more decision-making authority at the MSA or Member Organization.
4. Representatives shall use a clear and appropriate writing style.
5. Representatives must use their best judgement when using their personal social media to interact with athletes, parents/guardians of athletes, coaches, and other individuals affiliated





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with the MSA and Member Organization. The MSA or Member Organization does not prescribe social media rules for Representatives' personal social media use but instead trusts and encourages Representatives to develop their own personal social media strategy (informed by the MSA or Member Organization's *Code of Conduct and Ethics*) for communication.

6. Representatives who create external websites, Facebook pages, or other social media related to the MSA or Member Organization activities must abide by the following conditions:
 - a) Must follow article 1 of this section of this Policy when posting material
 - b) Must obtain consent (per MSA or Member Organization's *Privacy Policy*) before posting personal information (as defined in the MSA or Member Organization's *Privacy Policy*) or pictures of athletes or other individuals
 - c) Must contain a hyperlink to the MSA or Member Organization website

Stakeholder Responsibilities

1. Stakeholders must be aware that their Social Media use may be monitored by the MSA or Member Organization or by the Stakeholder' local associations.
2. When using Social Media, a Stakeholder must model appropriate behaviour benefitting the Stakeholder's status as an athlete, coach, volunteer, etc. and a Stakeholder of the MSA or Member Organization.
3. Removing content from Social Media after it has been posted (either publicly or privately) does not excuse the Stakeholder from being subject to the MSA or Member Organization *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.
4. Any individual who believes that the Social Media use by another Stakeholder is inappropriate or may violate the MSA or Member Organization's policies and procedures should report the matter to the MSA or Member Organization in the manner outlined by the MSA or Member Organization *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.

Club Responsibilities

1. Clubs should not attempt to impose social media restrictions onto coaches or athletes. There are many situations where social media contact is desirable and necessary; yet many





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situations where social media contact is unwanted and risky. Coaches and athletes should be trusted, pursuant to the MSA or Member Organization's *Code of Conduct and Ethics*, to navigate social media using their best judgment.

2. Clubs should monitor social media use by its athletes and coaches and should consider regular surveys and reviews to understand how coaches and athletes are using social media. Coaches and athletes may need to be reminded that behaviour in social media is still subject to the MSA or Member Organization's *Code of Conduct and Ethics*.
3. Complaints and concerns about an athlete's or a coach's conduct or behaviour in social media can be addressed under the MSA or Member Organization's *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.

MSA or Member Organization Responsibilities

The Organization will:

- a) Ensure that Representatives only use the MSA or Member Organization-branded social media in a positive manner when connecting with others
- b) Properly vet and understand each social medium before directing Representatives to engage with, or create, MSA or Member Organization-branded social media
- c) Monitor Representatives' use of the MSA or Member Organization-branded social media

Enforcement

Failure to adhere to this Policy may permit discipline in accordance with the MSA or Member Organization's *Discipline and Complaints Policy*, that may range from formal warnings to suspensions from all soccer related activities for a period of time depending on the severity of the incident.

Social Media Guidelines for Coaches

The following tips should be used by coaches to inform their own strategy for social media use:





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- a) Choosing not to engage with social media is an acceptable social media strategy. But you must have good reasons for your choice and be active in other communication media
- b) Despite what Facebook says, you are not actually “friends” with athletes. Resist commenting on athletes’ personal activities, status updates, or tweets on Twitter
- c) Consider monitoring or being generally aware of athletes’ public social media behaviour to ensure compliance with MSA or Member Organization’s *Code of Conduct and Ethics*
- d) Coaches may not demand access to an athlete’s private posts on Twitter or Facebook
- e) Do not “friend” athletes on Facebook unless they request the connection. Never pressure athletes to “friend” you
- f) If you accept some “friend” requests, or follow one athlete on Twitter, you should accept all friend requests and follow all the athletes. Be careful not to show favouritism on social media
- g) Consider managing your social media so that athletes do not have the option to follow you on Twitter or “friend” you on Facebook
- h) Seek permission from athletes before posting pictures or videos of the athletes on publicly available social media like a blog or on YouTube
- i) Do not use social media to ‘trap’ athletes if they say one thing to you in person but their social media activity reveals they were doing something different
- j) Keep selection decisions and other official team business off social media
- k) Never require athletes to join Facebook, join a Facebook group, subscribe to a Twitter feed, or join a Facebook fan page about your team or organization
- l) If you create a fan page on Facebook for your team or athlete, do not make this social media site the exclusive location for important information. Duplicate important information in more official channels (like on a website or via email)
- m) Ensure that parents are aware that some coach-athlete interactions may take place on Facebook
- n) Exercise appropriate discretion when using social media for your own personal communications (with friends, colleagues, and other athletes) with the knowledge that your behaviour may be used as a model by your athletes
- o) Avoid association with Facebook groups or Twitter feeds with explicit sexual contact or viewpoints that might offend or compromise the coach-athlete relationship
- p) Never misrepresent yourself by using a fake name or fake profile
- q) Be aware that you may acquire information about an athlete that imposes an obligation of disclosure on your part (such as seeing pictures of underage athletes drinking during a trip)
- r) Attempt to make communication with athletes in social media as one-sided as possible. Be available for athletes if they initiate contact via social media – athletes may wish to have this easy and quick access to you – but avoid imposing yourself into an athlete’s personal social media space unless explicitly requested to do so





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Social Media Guidelines for Athletes

The following tips should be used by athletes to inform their own strategy for social media use:

- a) Set your privacy settings to restrict who can search for you and what private information other people can see
- b) Coaches, teammates, officials, or opposing competitors may all add you to Facebook or follow you on Twitter. You are not required to follow anyone or be Facebook friends with anyone
- c) If you feel harassed by someone in a social medium, report it to your coach, club official, or to MSA or Member Organization
- d) Do not feel pressure to join a fan page on Facebook or follow a Twitter feed
- e) Content posted on Twitter and Facebook, relative to your privacy settings, is considered public. In most cases, you do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy for any material that you post
- f) Avoid posting pictures of, or alluding to, participation in illegal activity such as: speeding, physical assault, harassment, drinking alcohol (if underage), and smoking marijuana
- g) Model appropriate behaviour in social media befitting your status as a) an elite athlete, and b) a member of your club and of MSA or Member Organization. As a Member of the MSA or Member Organization, you have agreed to the MSA or Member Organization's *Code of Conduct and Ethics* and must follow that Code when you post material and interact with other people through social media
- h) Be aware that your public Facebook page or Twitter feed may be monitored by your club, coach, or by MSA or Member Organization and content or behaviour demonstrated in social media may be subject to sanction under the MSA or Member Organization's *Discipline and Complaints Policy*

