



TRACK AND FIELD / ROAD RUNNING / CROSS COUNTRY

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SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Manitoba Track and Field Association Inc. (Athletics Manitoba)

“Organization” refers to Athletics Manitoba

Definitions

1. The following terms have these meanings in this Code:

- a) “*Individuals*” – Individuals employed by, or engaged in activities with, the Organization including, but not limited to, athletes, coaches, convenors, referees, officials, volunteers, managers, administrators, committee members, and Directors and Officers of the Organization
- b) “*Workplace*” - Any place where business or work-related activities are conducted. Workplaces include but are not limited to, the Organization’s office, work-related social functions, work assignments outside the Organization’s offices, work-related travel, and work-related conferences or training sessions
- c) “*Social media*” – The catch-all term that is applied broadly to new computer-mediated communication media such as blogs, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter
- d) “*Branded social media*” – Official social media engagement by the Association including the Association’s Facebook page(s), Twitter feed, photo sharing accounts, YouTube channels, blogs, message boards, or other social media engagement; both those that exist currently and those that will be created by the Organization in the future

Social Media – Internal

Purpose

1. The Association encourages the use of social media by its Representatives to enhance effective communication, build the Association brand, and interact with members and clients. Since there is so much ambiguity in the use of social media, the Association has established this policy to inform its representatives about boundaries and standards for Representatives’ social media use.

Application of this Policy

2. This Policy applies to all Representatives.

Representatives’ Responsibilities

3. In their capacity as an Association representative, Association Representatives will not:

- a) Use social media for the purpose of fraud or any other activity that contravenes the laws of Canada, the Association’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 Association
- c) Display preference or favouritism with regard to athletes, coaches, or other individuals associated with the Association
- 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 Association's confidential information or intellectual property, per the Association's *Privacy Policy*
4. Representatives shall refrain from discussing matters related to the Association or its operations on Representatives' personal social media. Instead, matters related to the Association or its operations should be handled through more official communication channels (like email) or through the Association-branded social media.
5. Representatives shall use their best judgment to respond to controversial or negative content posted by other people on the Association-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 Association.
6. Representatives shall use a clear and appropriate writing style.
7. 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 with the Association. The Association 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 Association's *Code of Conduct and Ethics*) for communication.
8. Representatives who create external websites, Facebook pages, or other social media related to the Association activities must abide by the following conditions:
 - a) Must follow Section 22 of this Policy when posting material
 - b) Must obtain consent (per Association's *Privacy Policy*) before posting personal information (as defined in the Association's *Privacy Policy*) or pictures of athletes or other individuals
 - c) Must contain a hyperlink to the Association website

Association Responsibilities

9. The Association will:
 - a) Ensure that Representatives only use the Association-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, Association-branded social media
 - c) Monitor Representatives' use of the Association-branded social media

Enforcement

10. Failure to adhere to this Policy may permit discipline in accordance with the Association's *Discipline and Complaints Policy*, legal recourse, or termination of the employment/volunteer position.

Social Media – External

11. Preamble

- a) The Association is aware that Stakeholder interaction and communication occurs frequently on Social Media and is a tool for The Association to engage its Stakeholders. The Association cautions Stakeholders that any conduct falling short of the standard of behaviour required by the Association's Code of Conduct will be subject to the disciplinary sanctions identified within the Association's Discipline and Complaints Policy.

12. Conduct and Behaviour

- a) Per the Association'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:
- b) 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 Association.
- c) 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 Association.
- d) 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 Association or its reputation.
- e) 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 Association.
- f) 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.
- g) Acting as any other person other than the Stakeholder.

13. In addition to the Conduct and Behavior section above, Stakeholders 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 Association 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

Stakeholder Responsibilities

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

APPENDIX: SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES for COACHES and ATHLETES

Purpose

1. These Guidelines provide coaches and athletes with tips and suggestions 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 AM's *Code of Conduct and Ethics*.
2. Given the nature of social media as a continually developing communication sphere, AM trusts its coaches and athletes to use their best judgment when interacting with social media. These Guidelines are not hard and fast rules or behavioural laws; but rather ideas that will inform coaches' and athletes' best judgment.

Social Media Guidelines for Coaches

3. The following tips should be used by coaches to inform their own strategy for social media use:
 - 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 AM'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

Social Media Guidelines for Athletes

4. 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 AM
 - 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 AM. As a Member of AM, you have agreed to AM’s *Code of Conduct and Ethics* and most 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 AM and content or behaviour demonstrated in social media may be subject to sanction under AM’s *Discipline and Complaints Policy*

Club Responsibilities

5. 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 situations where social media contact is unwanted and risky. Coaches and athletes should be trusted, pursuant to AM’s *Code of Conduct and Ethics*, to navigate social media using their best judgment.
6. 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 AM’s *Code of Conduct and Ethics*.
7. Complaints and concerns about an athlete’s or a coach’s conduct or behaviour in social media can be addressed under AM’s *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.