

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Type: Governance

Policy Number: 35

Authority: Board of Directors

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Definitions

The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:

1. “*Social media*” – The catch-all term that is applied broadly to new computer-mediated communication media such as blogs, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, TikTok, Snapchat, and Twitter
2. “*Organization-branded social media*” – Official social media engagement by the Organization including the Organization’s Facebook page(s), Twitter feed, photo sharing accounts, YouTube channels, blogs, or other social media engagement; both those that exist currently and those that will be created by the Organization in the future.
3. “*Person in Authority*” – Any Registrant who holds a position of authority within the MWPA including, but not limited to, coaches, instructors, officials, managers and chaperones.
4. “*Representative*” – All individuals employed by, or engaged in activities on behalf of, the MWPA. Representatives include, but are not limited to, staff, administrators, Directors and Officers of the MWPA, committee members, and volunteers.
5. “*Registrant*” – All individuals who has applied for registration with the MWPA and who have been accepted, which may include, but is not limited to: athletes, coaches, officials, and volunteers (including those who serve on Club executives or boards of directors).

Purpose

The MWPA encourages the use of social media by its Representatives and Registrants to enhance the sport of water polo and interact with members. Since there is so much ambiguity in the use of social media, the MWPA has created this policy to set boundaries and standards for the use of social media by its Representatives and Registrants.

Application of this Policy:

This policy applies to all Representatives and Registrants.

Representatives' Responsibilities

All Representatives of MWPA shall not:

- a. Use social media for the purpose of fraud or any other activity that contravenes the laws of Canada, the laws of Manitoba, the *Code of Conduct*, or any other applicable policy of the MWPA.
- b. Impersonate any other person or misrepresent their identity, role, or position with the MWPA.
- c. Display preference or favouritism with regard to clubs or Registrants.
- d. Upload, post, email, or otherwise transmit:
 - i. Any material that infringes on the patent, trademark, trade secrets, copyright, or other proprietary right of any other party.
 - ii. Any material that is considered the MWPA's confidential information or intellectual property such as financial information, legal matters, organizational internal strategies, campaign benchmarks, unreleased advertising or promotions, internal processes or methodologies, rumors, or Registrant's personal information.
- e. discuss matters related to the MWPA or its operations on their personal social media.

Representatives shall use their best judgment to respond to controversial or negative content posted by other people on the MWPA-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 the Executive Director or the President of the Board of Directors.

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

Conduct and Behaviour

The following Social Media conduct may be considered minor or major infractions of the Code of Conduct and the *Discipline and Complaints Policy*:

- a. Posting a disrespectful, hateful, harmful, disparaging, insulting, or otherwise negative comment on a social medium that is directed at a Registrant, at the MWPA, or at other individuals connected with the MWPA;
- b. Posting a picture, altered picture, or video on a social medium that is harmful, disrespectful, insulting, embarrassing, suggestive, provocative, or otherwise offensive, and that is directed at a Registrant, at the MWPA, or at other individuals connected with the MWPA;

- c. Creating or contributing to a Facebook group, webpage, Instagram account, Twitter feed, blog, or online forum devoted solely or in part to promoting negative or disparaging remarks or commentary about the MWPA, or its stakeholders or reputation;
- d. Any instance of cyber-bullying or cyber-harassment against, but not limited to, 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 behaviour, pranks or jokes, threats, posing as another person, spreading rumours or lies, or other harmful behaviour.

All conduct and behaviour occurring on Social Media may be subject to the *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.

Removing content from Social Media after it has been posted (either publicly or privately) does not excuse the person from being subject to the *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.

An individual who believes that a Representative or Registrant's Social Media activity is inappropriate or may violate policies and procedures should report the matter to the MWPA in the manner outlined by the *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.

Social Media Guidelines for Clubs and Persons in Authority

Clubs are strongly encouraged to develop their own strategy for Social Media use and ensure that their strategy for Social Media use is acceptable pursuant to the MWPA *Code of Conduct*.

Clubs should consider the following guidelines to inform their own strategy for Persons in Authority and Social Media use:

- a. ensure that parents/guardians of minor athletes are aware if some interactions may take place on Social Media and the context for those interactions, and give parents/guardians the option to prohibit or restrict communication in this space.
- b. Athletes may wish to have easy and quick access to coaches through Social Media– coaches should not impose themselves into an athlete's personal Social Media space.
- c. Ensure all Social Media communication is professional, unambiguous, and on-topic. Do not use emojis and unspecific language that can be interpreted in multiple ways.
- d. Choosing not to engage with Social Media is an acceptable strategy. Be prepared to inform athletes (and/or parents/guardians) why you will not engage in this space and explain which media you will use to communicate with them.
- e. Athletes will search for your Social Media accounts. Be prepared for how you will respond when an athlete attempts to interact with you on Social Media.

- f. Annually review and update the privacy settings on all your Social Media accounts.
- g. Never ask for access to an athlete's private posts on Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook.
- h. Do not send friend requests to athletes. Never pressure athletes to send you a friend request or follow your Social Media accounts.
- i. Be careful not to show favouritism on Social Media.
- j. Consider managing your Social Media so that athletes do not have the option to follow you on Twitter or send you a friend request on Facebook.
- k. Do not identify/tag minor athletes on publicly available Social Media.
- l. Seek permission from adult athletes before identifying them on Social Media.
- m. Do not send snapchats to Athletes.
- n. Never post pictures or videos of minor athletes on your personal Social Media accounts.
- o. 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).
- p. If selection decisions and other official team business are announced on Social Media, ensure they are also posted on a less-social medium like a website or distributed via email
- q. Never require athletes to join Facebook, join a Facebook group, subscribe to a Twitter feed, or join a Facebook page about your team or organization.
- r. If you create a page on Facebook or Instagram for your team do not make this Social Media site the exclusive location for important information. Duplicate important information in less-social channels (like on a website or via email).
- s. Exercise appropriate discretion when using Social Media for your own personal communications (with friends, colleagues, and other Persons in Authority) with the knowledge that your behaviour may be used as a model by athletes.
- t. Do not associate with Facebook groups, Instagram accounts, or Twitter feeds with explicit sexual conduct or viewpoints that might offend or compromise your relationship with an athlete
- u. Never misrepresent yourself by using a fake name or fake profile.

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 ask you to be “friends” on Facebook or to follow you on Instagram or Twitter. You are not required to follow anyone or be Facebook friends with anyone.
- c. Avoid adding persons of authority (coaches) to Snapchat and do not send snapchats to persons of authority (coaches).
- d. If you feel harassed by someone in a social medium, report it to your coach, club official, or to the MWPA.
- e. Do not feel pressure to join a fan page on Facebook or follow a Twitter feed or Instagram account.
- f. Content posted on a social medium, 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
- g. Content posted to a social medium is almost always permanent – consider that other individuals may take screen caps of your content (even snapchats) before you can delete them.
- h. Avoid posting pictures of, or alluding to, participation in illegal activity such as: speeding, physical assault, harassment, drinking alcohol or smoking marijuana (if underage) or using illegal substances.
- i. Model appropriate behaviour in social media befitting your status as
 1. an elite athlete, and
 2. a member of your club and of the MWPA. As a representative of the MWPA, you have agreed to the *Code of Conduct* and must follow that Code when you post material and interact with other people through social media.
- j. Be aware that your public Facebook page, Instagram account, or Twitter feed may be monitored by your club, coach, or by the MWPA and content or behaviour demonstrated in social media may be subject to sanction under the *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.

Complaints and concerns about an athlete’s or a coach’s conduct or behaviour in social media can be addressed under the MWPA *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.