



SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR SCOTTISH HOCKEY MEMBERS



Introduction

A large number of us now use social media as a matter of course in our everyday lives; communicating with friends and family, organising events, building awareness of socio-cultural issues, promoting business, consuming news, creating fun and interesting content, and much more.

Before the explosion of web and social media technologies, communication was predominantly delivered via the traditional press and media outlets; newspapers, magazines, TV and radio. Now, information can be delivered instantly online and via social media. And we have the tools to interact and share this information ourselves. In sport, the advent of social media has allowed us to get up close and interact with athletes, coaches, managers, teams, clubs and governing bodies like never before.

With a number of hockey players, coaches, officials, volunteers and clubs in Scotland using social media to talk about the sport and promote activities, there is merit in providing some useful advice and guidance to ensure we all get the best value from its potential and the opportunities available.

Why use social media?

Success in the use of social media involves providing engaging content, building relationships with people and communities, conversing with people and sharing insights, offering value, and providing news and updates of interest to your communities.

The question 'why use social media?' is important; if the answer to this question is to help promote the sport you love, raise its profile and engage with various hockey enthusiasts, then listed below are just some ideas of how social media could help:

- Promote club activities and events e.g. open days, taster sessions, training times, matches, competitions, and social occasions.



- Provide club news and updates e.g. match reports, team news, successes/achievements, and events
- Communicate with the media to raise awareness and build profile e.g. provide interviews with players, coaches and club members
- Attract and secure new sponsors or sources of funding to clubs, players or coaches by raising the profile of these partnerships
- Communicate with club members and other hockey clubs
- Post photos and video content from matches and club events
- Provide online coaching seminars and advice
- Provide umpire seminars, demonstrations of rules, guidance on officiating
- Build a following for the team during the season or for a particular tournament from supporters, sponsors and the media
- Provide insight into the lives of hockey players, coaches, officials, volunteers

The challenges of social media

Conversely, there are as many challenges and potential pitfalls of using social media as there are opportunities. For example, when you post content on the Internet, it can be shared rapidly. This can be very damaging if the content is viewed negatively.

You may also think that a post, tweet, video and photo may be visible to limited number of selected people, but often the content on social media that people believe to be visible to only a limited number of selected 'followers' still ends up in other public domains.

There have been a number of high profile examples in a sporting context where social media has been misused, including posting content or comments that are considered inappropriate, inflammatory, abusive, indecent or offensive; publishing or posting confidential information; posting content or comments that bring the 'game into disrepute' under rules and regulations and leads to disciplinary action.



Using guidance for your social media communications

In light of the opportunities, and the potential pitfalls, of social media, it may be worth considering a list of 'do's and don'ts'. Ultimately, the most practical advice we've heard is 'be sensible about what you post'.

The following list has been compiled from social media guidelines used by other sporting organisations.

Dos

- Be authentic, natural, personable and insightful.
- Show your personality and discuss your interests on and off the pitch. People will engage with you when you have something interesting to say or they share a common interest and connection with you.
- Use tasteful humour when appropriate.
- Do engage with other players, fans and individuals. They are interested in you.
- Do pause and think about what you are saying. Engage your brain before you type and think about the impact of what you say.
- Do be careful, respectful and positive. You are personally responsible for what you post. If in doubt, don't post it.
- Do think about your image – 'what do I want people to think about me or my club?'
- Do consider who you are interacting with - you will likely come into contact online with under 18s. Familiarise yourself with safeguarding regulations in relation to engaging with under 18s.
- Do respect confidentiality within the team e.g. tactics, squad information, announcements, coaching advice, training sessions.



- Be smart about protecting yourself, your privacy, and confidential information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully.
- Be aware of imposters.

Don'ts

- Don't post content that discriminates against individuals or groups on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.
- Don't talk about tactics, specialist set plays, technical nutrition, team selection or anything that might give away confidentialities. These are competitive advantages.
- Don't write anything on social media channels that you wouldn't feel comfortable seeing in a newspaper or hearing on TV. Everything you write is treated as a direct quote i.e. 'Don't tweet what you wouldn't say to your mum/gran' or 'Think before you tweet' or 'Would I say this to a journalist?'
- Don't speak negatively about team mates, competitors, officials or governing bodies. Never use slurs, personal insults or obscenity. Be professional and respectful.
- Don't Tweet or use social media within the agreed timescales set by team management during competition time e.g. X hours before a match, Y minutes after a match.
- Don't 'drink and dial'! If you are socialising and have access to your social media accounts on your smartphone or a PC/laptop, it is advisable to step away from the keyboard! Be very careful what you say, do and post because once it's on a social media channel, it can go viral very quickly.
- Don't engage in on-line disputes and don't allow family or friends to argue on your behalf.



- Don't post pictures or statements that are not in keeping with the conduct and ethics of the sport

Please be aware that the Scottish Hockey Ethics Manual (Section 9.9) covers the use of social media and networking and that any transgressions may be dealt with under the application of the Ethics Manual.

If you have any questions or queries about these social media guidelines, please contact Paul Elliott, Communications Manager, paul.elliott@scottish-hockey.org.uk or call 0141 550 5999.