



WHEELCHAIR RUGBY CANADA (WRC) Social Media Policy and Guidelines

Definitions

1. The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:
 - a) *“Discipline Chair or Independent Case Manager”* – The person or organization appointed by WRC to oversee management and administration of complaints, as applicable.
 - b) *“Individuals”* – Individuals employed by, or engaged in activities with, WRC including, but not limited to, athletes, coaches, convenors, referees, officials, volunteers, managers, administrators, committee members, medical and paramedical personnel, and Directors and Officers of WRC.
 - c) *“Person in Authority”* – An Individual who holds a position of authority within WRC including, but not limited to, coaches, managers, support personnel, chaperones, and Directors.
 - d) *“Social media”* – The catch-all term that is applied broadly to new computer-mediated communication media such as blogs, YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Tumblr, Snapchat, and Twitter.

Application of this Policy

2. This Policy applies to all Individuals.

Conduct and Behaviour

3. Per WRC’s *Discipline and Complaints Policy* and *Code of Conduct and Ethics*, the following Social Media conduct may be considered minor or major infractions at the discretion of the Discipline Chair or Independent Case Manager:
 - a) Posting a disrespectful, hateful, harmful, disparaging, insulting, or otherwise negative comment on a social medium that is directed at an Individual, at WRC, or at other individuals connected with WRC.
 - 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 an Individual, at WRC, or at other individuals connected with WRC.
 - 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 WRC, its stakeholders, or its reputation.
 - d) Any instance of cyber-bullying or cyber-harassment between one Individual and another Individual (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 behaviour, pranks or jokes, threats, posing as another person, spreading rumours or lies, or other harmful behaviour.
4. All conduct and behaviour occurring on Social Media may be subject to WRC’s *Discipline and Complaints Policy* at the discretion of the Discipline Chair or Independent Case Manager.

Individuals Responsibilities

5. Individuals should be aware that their Social Media activity may be viewed by anyone; including WRC.
6. If WRC unofficially engages with an Individual in Social Media (such as by retweeting a tweet or sharing a photo on Facebook) the Individual may, at any time, ask WRC to cease this engagement.
7. When using Social Media, an Individual must model appropriate behaviour befitting the Individual's role and status in connection with WRC.
8. Removing content from Social Media after it has been posted (either publicly or privately) does not excuse the Individual from being subject to WRC's *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.
9. An individual who believes that an Individual's Social Media activity is inappropriate or may violate WRC's policies and procedures should report the matter to WRC in the manner outlined by WRC's *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.

Organization Responsibilities

10. WRC has a responsibility to understand if and how coaches and athletes are using Social Media to communicate with each other. Coaches and athletes may need to be reminded that behaviour in Social Media is still subject to WRC's *Code of Conduct and Ethics* and *Social Media Policy*.
11. Complaints and concerns about an athlete's or a coach's conduct or behaviour in Social Media can be addressed under WRC's *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.

Guidelines

12. The Guidelines in this section 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 WRC's *Code of Conduct and Ethics*.
13. Given the nature of Social Media as a continually developing communication sphere, WRC 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 recommendations that will inform coaches' and athletes' best judgment.

Social Media Guidelines for Coaches

14. Coaches should consider the following guidelines to inform their own strategy for Social Media use:
 - a) With minor athletes, ensure that parents/guardians are aware that 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) Attempt to make communication with athletes in Social Media as one-sided as possible. Be available for athletes if they initiate contact – 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
 - c) Ensure all Social Media communication is professional, unambiguous, and on-topic. Avoid 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) Consider monitoring or being generally aware of athletes' public Social Media behaviour to ensure compliance with WRC's *Code of Conduct and Ethics* and this Policy
- h) Coaches should not demand access to an athlete's private posts on Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook
- i) Do not initiate "friend" requests with athletes on Facebook. Never pressure athletes to "friend" you
- j) If you accept a "friend" request from one athlete, you should accept these requests from all athletes. Be careful not to show favouritism on Social Media
- k) Consider managing your Social Media so that athletes do not have the option to follow you on Twitter or "friend" you on Facebook
- l) Seek permission from athletes before identifying them on publicly available Social Media like a blog, Instagram, or YouTube
- m) Avoid adding athletes to Snapchat and do not send snapchats to athletes
- n) Do not post pictures or videos of minor athletes on your private Social Media accounts
- o) 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
- p) 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)
- q) 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
- r) 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
- s) If you create a page on Facebook or Instagram for your team or athlete, 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)
- t) 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 athletes
- u) Avoid association with Facebook groups, Instagram accounts, or Twitter feeds with explicit sexual conduct or viewpoints that might offend or compromise your relationship with an athlete
- v) Never misrepresent yourself by using a fake name or fake profile

Social Media Guidelines for Athletes

15. 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 Instagram or Twitter. You are not required to follow anyone or be Facebook friends with anyone.
- c) Avoid adding coaches to Snapchat and do not send snapchats to coaches.
- d) If you feel harassed by someone in a social medium, report it to your coach, club official, or to WRC.
- e) You do not have 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 screenshots 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 (if underage), and smoking marijuana.

- i) Model appropriate behaviour in Social Media befitting your status as a) an elite athlete, and b) a member of your club and of WRC. As a representative of WRC, you have agreed to WRC's *Code of Conduct and Ethics* 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 WRC and content or behaviour demonstrated in Social Media may be subject to sanction under WRC's *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.