

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

Every minute of the day millions of pieces of content are posted to Facebook, millions of tweets are exchanged on Twitter; thousands of photos are shared on Instagram and countless hours of YouTube videos are uploaded ... amongst all the other social media platforms.

The majority of us now use some form of social media as a matter of course in our everyday lives; communicating with friends and family, organising events, reading and posting etc.

As a player, coach, official or other volunteer member of the Great Britain Softball programme, you represent the sport and all its constituents on a local, national and international level.

There are many positives and negatives of using social media. When you post content on the Internet, it can be shared rapidly and this has the potential to be very damaging if the content is viewed negatively or portrays the wrong message.

You may also think that a post, tweet, video or photo may only be visible to limited number of selected people, but often the content on social media that people believe to be limited to 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; and posting content or comments that bring the 'game into disrepute' under rules and regulations that leads to disciplinary action.

The following list has been compiled from social media guidelines used by other sporting organisations, including those recently circulated by the British Olympic Association.

DO

- **DO...be yourself.** Be authentic, natural, personable and insightful on social media.
- **DO...use tasteful humour when appropriate.**
- **DO...engage with other players, fans and individuals where appropriate.**
- **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 on what you say.** You are personally responsible for what you post. If in doubt, don't post it.
- **DO ...think about your image and the image you portray of GB Softball.** Ask yourself what you want people to think about you or GB Softball!
- **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.** Items such as tactics, squad information, announcements, coaching advice, training sessions etc should remain confidential, as you could be divulging tactical decisions.
- **DO ...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.
- **DO...be aware of imposters.**

DON'T

- **DON'T...bully.** Don't ever speak negatively about teammates. Never use slurs, personal insults or obscenity. Be professional and respectful.
- **DON'T...gossip.** Don't talk negatively about other competitors, countries, officials, governing bodies, organisations or brands. Any gossip or slanderous comments can be easily highlighted and taken the wrong way. Remember that you are an ambassador for GB Softball.
- **DON'T...post inappropriately.** Make sure you don't post pictures or statements that are not in keeping with the conduct and ethics of GB Softball. Make sure that any links you send out are appropriate and follow these guidelines. Be very careful what you say and post because once it's on social media, it can go viral very quickly.
- **DON'T...give out any personal information.** It's ok to share broad information, but providing exact locations, names of schools etc is discouraged.
- **DON'T...forget your rivals may be reading.** Other competitors may get valuable insight into team strategy and gain confidence if they read any comments you make about poor form in training, feeling tired, upset or low on confidence etc.
- **DON'T...fight.** Make sure you don't engage in on-line disputes and don't allow family or friends to argue on your behalf. Don't get into disputes with your audience – instead, show that you have listened and be responsive in a positive manner -- or don't respond at all.
- **DON'T...swear.** Even suggestions of foul or abusive language by replacing letters with symbols e.g. s@£t should be avoided.
- **DON'T...assume that anything you delete will completely disappear.** It's almost impossible to completely remove information on social networking sites even if you "remove/delete" it from the original source. There is no way of knowing where it may have been reposted. So think before you post.
- **DON'T... forget about spelling or grammar.** While it's good to talk like a normal Facebook user, you should try to use correct language where possible. Many of your interactions will be with people looking up to you, so you should look to set a good example.

THINK BEFORE YOU POST!