

Social Media Policy

The Organization refers to: Ontario Cycling Association

1) Definitions

- a) The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:
 - i) **Code of Conduct** – the Organization’s *Code of Conduct & Ethics*.
 - ii) **Discipline & Complaints Policy** – the Organization’s *Discipline & Complaints Policy*.
 - iii) **Individual** – Participants registered with Ontario Cycling including but not limited to registration to participate in any Ontario Cycling sanctioned event (including but not limited to, athletes, coaches, referees, directors, managers, and administrators).
 - iv) **Members** – All Members (Member Clubs, Individual Members and Participant Members) as defined in the Organization’s By-Laws.
 - v) **Social Media** – includes any form of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content. These include, but are not limited to: LinkedIn, blogs, micro-blogging (Twitter), Facebook, Pinterest, Google Plus, YouTube, Flickr, Snapchat, and Instagram.

2) Policy Statement

- a) The Organization recognizes that Social Media, used in a responsible manner, can be an effective tool for positive communication among athletes, coaches, commissaires, clubs, teams, and staff. While the Organization recognizes the popularity and utility of Social Media (including but not limited to networking, blogging and video blogging), certain conduct must be observed in order to protect Individuals, Members and the Organization (including but not limited to their respective reputations).

3) Purpose

- a) This Policy provides Members with guidelines for the responsible use of Social Media.

4) Application and Scope

- a) This Policy applies to all Members.
- b) All conduct occurring on Social Media may be subject to sanction under the *Discipline & Complaints Policy*.
- c) Conduct falling short of the standards outlined in this Policy or in the *Code of Conduct* may be subject to discipline under the *Discipline & Complaints Policy*.
- d) A person who believes that an Individual’s Social Media activity is inappropriate or may violate any of the Organization’s policies and procedures should report the matter in the manner outlined in the *Discipline & Complaints Policy*.

5) Provisions

- a) The Organization encourages Individuals to engage with Social Media but cautions that such engagement must meet the standards outlined in this Policy and the *Code of Conduct*.
- b) Given the nature of Social Media, as a continually developing form of communication, the Organization requires its coaches, athletes and commissaires to use their best judgement when interacting with others through Social Media.
- c) The Organization supports and encourages the rights to freedom of speech, expression, and association, including but not limited to the use of Social Media. Nevertheless, as representatives of the Organization, Individuals should recognize that they can be held to a higher standard and may be viewed as public role models.
- d) Individuals are encouraged to embrace Social Media while following these guidelines:
 - i) Understand that Individuals represent the Organization and their teams. There are no “off hours” when it comes to Social Media.
 - ii) Accept that everything posted is on the record and public. The ability to share Social Media communications is powerful and anything sent to a few can be shared with many thousands in a matter of seconds.
 - iii) Choose your language and messaging wisely.
- e) Individuals acknowledge that their Social Media may be viewed by anyone, including but not limited to the Organization, individuals, sponsors, and the public.
- f) Inappropriate material found by third parties affects the third parties’ perception of the Individual, their team or club, and the Organization and its programs. This can also be detrimental to an Individual’s future, including but not limited to future professional employment.
- g) When using Social Media, an Individual must model appropriate conduct befitting the Individual’s role in connection with the Organization.
- h) The following Social Media conduct may be considered a minor or major infraction, at the discretion of the Organization:
 - i) Posting on Social Media an inappropriate, disrespectful, hateful, harmful, disparaging, insulting, defamatory or otherwise negative comment that is directed at any person or persons.
 - ii) Posting on Social Media a picture, altered picture, video or graphic which is determined to be inappropriate, disrespectful, hateful, harmful, disparaging, insulting, defamatory or otherwise negative.
 - iii) Creating or contributing to a Social Media group, webpage, blog, or online forum, which is determined to be devoted solely, or in part, to promoting negative or disparaging remarks or commentary about the Organization, its stakeholders, or its reputation.

- iv) Any instance on Social Media of bullying or harassment between an Individual and another person.
- v) Appearing on Social Media in a picture, altered picture, video or graphic which is determined to be inappropriate, disrespectful, hateful, harmful, disparaging, insulting, defamatory or otherwise negative while wearing a Team Ontario uniform.

6) Social Media Guidelines for Coaches

- a) The following guidelines should be used by coaches to inform their own strategy for Social Media use:
 - i) Choosing not to engage with Social Media is an acceptable Social Media strategy – but should have good reasons for your choice and you should be active in other communication media.
 - ii) Despite Social Media terminology, you are not, for example, actually “friends” with athletes. Resist commenting on athletes’ personal activities, status updates, or Social Media communications.
 - iii) Consider monitoring or being generally aware of athletes’ public Social Media activity with respect to compliance with the *Code of Conduct* and this Policy.
 - iv) Coaches may not demand access to an athlete’s private posts on any Social Media platform.
 - v) Do not “friend” (or equivalent) athletes unless they request the connection. Never pressure athletes to “friend” you.
 - vi) If you accept some “friend” requests, or follow one athlete on Social Media, you should accept all friend requests and follow all the athletes. Be careful not to show favouritism on Social Media.
 - vii) Consider managing your Social Media so that athletes do not have the option to follow you or “friend” you.
 - viii) Seek permission from athletes before posting pictures or videos of the athletes on publicly available Social Media.
 - ix) Do not use Social Media to “trap” an athlete if they say one thing to you in person but their Social Media activity reveals they were doing something different.
 - x) Keep selection decisions and other official team business off Social Media.
 - xi) Never require athletes to join a Social Media platform or group, to subscribe to a Social Media feed, or to join a Social Media page about your team or organization.
 - xii) If you create a Social Media page or blog 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).

- xiii) Communicate to parents / guardians that some coach-athlete interactions may take place on Social Media.
- xiv) Exercise appropriate discretion when using Social Media for your own personal communications (e.g., with friends) with the knowledge that your conduct may be used as a model by your athletes.
- xv) Avoid association with Social Media groups, accounts or feeds with explicit sexual contact or viewpoints that might offend or compromise the coach-athlete relationship.
- xvi) Never misrepresent yourself by using a fake name or fake profile.
- xvii) 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).
- xviii) 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 involving yourself in an athlete’s personal Social Media space unless explicitly requested to do so.
- xix) Avoid adding athletes to Snapchat (or similar apps) and do not send Snapchats to athletes.

7) Social Media Guidelines for Athletes

- a) The following guidelines should be used by athletes to inform their own strategy for Social Media use:
 - i) Set your privacy settings to restrict who can search for you and what private information others can see.
 - ii) Coaches, teammates, officials, or opposing competitors may all friend you or add you to Social Media pages or follow you on Social Media. You are not required to accept being added, to follow anyone or be a Social Media friend with anyone.
 - iii) Avoid adding coaches to Snapchat (or similar apps) and do not send Snapchats to coaches.
 - iv) If you feel bullied or harassed by someone on Social Media, report it to your coach, to a club official, or to the Organization.
 - v) Do not feel pressure to join a fan page or to follow a feed or an account.
 - vi) Content posted on a Social Media platform, subject to your privacy settings, should be considered public. In most cases, you do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy for any material that you post.
 - vii) Content posted on a Social Media platform is almost always permanent – consider that others may take screenshots of your content (even Snapchats or similar apps) before you can delete them.

- viii) Avoid posting pictures of, or alluding to, participation in illegal activity such as: speeding, physical assault, harassment, drinking alcohol (if underage), and illegal use of drugs.
- ix) Model appropriate conduct in Social Media befitting your status as: a) an elite athlete; b) a member of your club; and c) a Member of the Organization. As a Member, you have agreed to this Policy and the *Code of Conduct* which you must follow when you post material and interact with others through Social Media.
- x) Be aware that your public Social Media activity may be monitored by your club, coach, or by the Organization and that content or conduct in Social Media may be subject to sanction under the *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.

8) Review

- a) This Policy will be reviewed annually or as decided by the Organization's President & CEO.