



## Social Media Guidelines

These guidelines are designed to provide helpful, practical advice on using social media effectively for athletes, coaches and support staff on a World Class Performance Programme and/or aiming to become members of Team GB or ParalympicsGB.

### The World We Live In...

To set the parameters for these social media guidelines, we should keep in mind three things:

1. We live in a society that promotes free speech and freedom of expression; it is generally expected that an Olympic/Paralympic Team should reflect the values of the society it represents.
2. Social networking is continuing to grow and it is in our interest to sensibly and proactively embrace it.
3. Both the International Olympic Committee and International Paralympic Committee have embraced social media and actively encourage its use.

### Do's and Don't's...

Do's	Don'ts
<p><b>DO...Show your personality.</b></p> <p>Being yourself and letting your personality shine will make it more enjoyable for you. Throwing in a few smiley faces and LOL's (if you're that way inclined) will make you seem more approachable and encourage more people to talk and ask you questions. Use tasteful humour when appropriate.</p>	<p><b>DON'T...Talk negatively about other competitors, countries, organisations or brands.</b></p> <p>Any gossip or slanderous comments can be easily highlighted and taken the wrong way. Remember that you are an ambassador for your sport.</p>
<p><b>DO...Remember everyone can see you.</b></p> <p>Before you write anything, remember that it's public and anyone can take your words and put them in a newspaper, on a website or the TV. Media will be monitoring social media and will use your words as quotes. Pause and think carefully before you mention embarrassing stories about you or other athletes.</p> <p>E.g. Stephanie Rice (an Australian triple Olympic swimming gold medallist) lost a lucrative sponsorship deal after she posted an inappropriate comment on Twitter.</p>	<p><b>DON'T...Forget your rivals may be reading</b></p> <p>Other competitors may gain confidence if they read any comments you make about poor form in training, feeling tired, upset or low on confidence.</p> <p>Eg. A GB gold medallist rower was given the belief that he could win a medal against one of his American competitors by reading his rival's blog: "From his blog I got the impression that he was not some untouchable superstar. He had worries and demons like everyone else. He was beatable."</p>



<p><b>DO...Be responsible.</b></p> <p>You are personally responsible for the content you provide and how you behave online. Be careful and if you're in doubt, don't post it.</p> <p>Eg. England cricketer Dimitri Mascarenhas was uncomplimentary about national team selector Geoff Miller and was fined £1,000.</p>	<p><b>DON'T...Swear.</b></p> <p>Even suggestions of foul or abusive language by replacing letters with symbols e.g. s@£t should be avoided. Similarly, don't get into disputes with your audience – instead, show that you have listened and be responsive in a positive manner.</p> <p>E.g. The ECB suspended Azeem Rafiq, the captain of England under-19 team, for his use of inappropriate language on Twitter.</p>
<p><b>DO...Share your sports performances and achievements.</b></p> <p>Take your fans with you on a journey to 2012. Let them know what it requires to be an elite athlete.</p>	<p><b>DON'T...Assume anything you delete will completely disappear</b></p> <p>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.</p>
<p><b>DO...Answer people's questions with 'real' life stories.</b></p> <p>People want more than just facts about sports - providing them with your personal experiences and emotional stories will be really valuable to them. Feel free to also talk about your interests and life away from sport if appropriate.</p>	<p><b>DON'T...Give out any personal information or encourage a user to do so.</b></p> <p>It's OK to share broad information e.g. what town people live in. However exact locations, names of schools etc should not be encouraged.</p>
<p><b>DO...Be honest</b></p> <p>Always tell the truth and correct any mistakes you make as quickly as possible. Don't alter older posts without indicating that you have done so.</p>	<p><b>DON'T...Forget about spelling or grammar.</b></p> <p>While it's good to talk like a normal Facebook user you should try to use correct spelling and grammar where possible, most of your interactions will be with young people so you should look to set a good example.</p>
<p><b>DO...Post regular comments.</b></p> <p>The more you interact with and reply to fans, the better relationships you will build with them, and the more frequently they will come back to the site and check out your page.</p> <p>E.g. Lance Armstrong has been successful at making a direct connection with fans via social media, allowing him to build relationships with a very large audience.</p>	<p><b>DON'T...Link to any unsuitable content.</b></p> <p>Make sure that any links you give are sending users to appropriate content and following the guidelines stated above.</p>
<p><b>DO...Report anything that concerns you.</b></p> <p>If you see any comments or photos that concern you or you feel in the course of a conversation that somebody may need help or be in danger, report it to the relevant authority.</p>	



## Important Hints and Tips...

### Privacy Settings

Review privacy settings of the social networking site you are using. Choose social sites and appropriate settings depending on the content you are posting. Any information that you post should be considered public, regardless of your privacy settings since your postings could be reposted elsewhere and may be viewed by people other than your intended audience.

### Facebook Accounts

We suggest you create (or keep) a private account to which you only accept and communicate with your close friends and family. This should be separate from a 'public' account (such as the Team 2012 Facebook site) to which you accept members of the public and use to promote yourself effectively. See the attached Facebook Guide for more information.

### Twitter – Direct Messaging

Learn the difference between a general tweet and a Direct Message and how to use them appropriately. E.g. England cricketer Kevin Pietersen, believing he was replying to a private message, expressed his anger at being dropped from the Twenty20 and one-day squads against Pakistan, for which he was fined an undisclosed sum by the England and Wales Cricket Board. See the attached Twitter Guide for more information.