



Social Media Policy

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Social Media

Background

Football Northern Territory acknowledges that social media is an integral part of the way our football community communicates. Like all organisations and businesses, we wish our community members to share their football experience, to celebrate their successes and to highlight individual achievements or lessons learnt. However, Football in the Northern Territory, your Club and your brand and colours have a public reputation. This reputation is most valuable and so are the reputations of Football members, sponsors and stakeholders. It is for this reason and to also help restore some sense of civility in our online lives that Football NT has a social media policy that prohibits any posting or sharing of a link on social media that is misleading, deceptive, abusive, defamatory, obscene, misrepresentative and proprietary of Football in the Northern Territory or Australia.

In their relentless search for more users and more engagement, the global social media platform giants have given multiple outlets to the loudest, most hateful and abrasive voices. They have tweaked their algorithms to make sure that you are manipulated both emotionally and psychologically every time you interact with them. Clearly, social media is effective in dividing us, in making much of our differences and making little of our commonalities. Social media specialists speak of: "If it's outrageous, it's contagious." By which they mean it has gone viral. It basically encourages people to be as outrageous as possible on social media, in order to demand attention. Remember Mr Trump?

Bubbles

Most of us would have heard about the "bubbles" or filters created by the social media giants. Bubbles are constructed where you see the same types of content from the same types of people repeatedly, as long as you are commenting on and liking that content. Once for example that Facebook or Amazon algorithms have zeroed in on you Facebook or Amazon will continue to surround you with ideas and narratives, products and services that confirm your own biases, interests, passions, and opinions. One consequence is a hardening of your views and the unwillingness to consider the view of others. It encourages the criticism of the person and not what that person may believe in or the ideas they may have.

What is Social Media

Social media is a vast and fluid thing. It is developing and changing every day with new platforms being designed and implemented. Generally, it refers to interactive digital forums and internet-based media where individuals are bookmarking, posting, sharing, networking, and communicating etc. The activity can be written, photographic, video, or audio and it includes but is not limited to the usual suspects:

- Image/video sharing websites/apps (examples include, Tik Tok, YouTube, Instagram, Vimeo, Flickr)
- Social networking sites and related domains (examples include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest, Tumblr)
- Podcasting (audio) (examples include Buzzsprout, Spotify, Listner, Acast)
 - Blogging platforms and review sites (examples include Amazon, Tumblr, WordPress, Blogger), Trip Advisor, Foursquare)
- Instant messaging (examples include SMS, Skype, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Viber)
- Online multiplayer gaming platforms (examples include Fortnite, Among Us etc)
- and a multitude of public and private online forums and discussion panels

Application

This social media policy applies when using social media or any other forum which might reasonably be adjudged as social media as that term is generally understood:

1. As a designated individual representing a club on social media
2. As a Play Football registered player, coach, referee, or volunteer
3. As a Club committee member or Club associate
4. As a Football NT Board member, staff member, strategic partner or volunteer

This policy forms part of the Football NT Code of Conduct and aligns with Football NT's Photographic and Video use Guidelines and Child Safety Policy.

The policy does not apply to someone's personal use of social media where it is **not** related to or there is **no** reference to a Football NT sanctioned competition or club or Football NT's reputation, business, teams, participants, services, events, products or our strategic partners.

Accountability and avoiding bringing the game into disrepute

Liability

With the recent Australian High Court decision on social media publication in which any entity or organisation that permits the sharing of comments, images, video etc via social media platforms is deemed to be a publisher and therefore liable for those comments, images, videos etc it is time to reinforce the enduring value of common sense.

Clubs and individuals should use common sense whenever you are unsure as to whether the content you wish to share is appropriate, seek advice from your peers before doing so or refrain from sharing the post or link to err on the side of caution. Once on social media, the lines between public and private, personal and business are often blurred. Do not post or link to content that contains illegal or indecent content, including defamatory, vilifying, or what lawyers term misleading and deceptive content.

Protecting privacy

Be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy. When posting content online there is potential for that content to become publicly available through a variety of means, even if it was intended to be shared privately. Therefore, you should refrain from posting any content online that you would not be happy for anyone to see, even if you feel confident that an individual would never see it. Where possible, privacy settings on social media platforms should be set to limit access. You should also be cautious about disclosing your personal details.

Social Media and Integrity

There is much that is dishonest, misleading and downright untrue on social media. Reposting without checking the source is unwise in the extreme. It is recommended to err on the side of caution – if in doubt, do not post or upload. Do not post anonymously, use pseudonyms or false screen names. Be transparent. Use your real name, be clear about who you are and declare any affiliations/connections you may have. If you have a personal stake in a matter you are discussing, then make a point of declaring that. If you make a recommendation about something you have a connection to or you endorse a product or indeed a person you have a relationship with, you must disclose that connection. Never impersonate or falsely represent any other person. As generation Z will tell you the web is not anonymous. You should assume that all information posted online can be traced back to you. We are all accountable for our actions and that equally applies to online, including the information you post via your personal social media accounts.

Social media and copyright

There are copyright laws in Australia that apply to social media as well so never post material that infringes the intellectual property rights of others. Intellectual property includes but is not limited to trademarks, logos, positioning statements, imagery etc which has been posted on the owner's official sites, be that a website or social media site.

Excessive social media behaviour

You must not make excessive postings on a particular matter or post multiple versions of the same opinion or information on social media platforms operated by Football Australia, Football Northern Territory, and its Clubs. It will be considered as harassment.

Disclaimers

Wherever practical, include a clear disclaimer indicating who you work for or are affiliated with (for example a referee or a member of club) and that anything you publish is your opinion and that you are not posting in an official capacity. This is sensible behaviour and is encouraged but please note it is best not to count on the use of disclaimers to avoid litigation – it may have little or no legal merit.

Confidentiality

If you are active on social media, you should always maintain the privacy of the club or competitions confidential information. This includes information that is not publicly accessible or not to be shared outside of the organisation. While it is okay to post about the club or NT Football and have a conversation with the football community, it is not okay to publish confidential information of the club. Confidential information includes financial information, member personal details or situations, team selections, coaching strategies, internet addresses, links to websites, email addresses or other personal information etc.

Online is on the record/Seek permission

As noted above if you are online, you are on the record—content posted online is public and discoverable. When active on social media, you should be considerate to others (and civil!) and should not share information when you have been asked not to, or where consent has not been sought or given. Being respectful (and civil) includes immediately removing information about another person if that person requests you to do so. Permission should always be sought if directly related to an individual. If you do not get the permission DO NOT share or post.

Social media and minors

Permission is also key to publishing any information regarding minors. In such circumstances, parental or guardian consent is always mandatory. Football NT has clear policies on taking photos or videos of minors and likewise you must gain permission when publishing a minors clearly identifiable image. Obviously, this applies to adults as well. You must obtain written permission from an individual to use a direct, identifiable image of that person on social.

Social media and sensitivity

There is a lot of dumb, insensitive material on social media. You must refrain from posting any information or photos of a sensitive nature. This includes accidents, incidents, or what would be commonly seen as controversial or unsavoury behaviour. Again, as before, you need to have consent of the owner of copyright in the image.

Social media and harassment

Discrimination, harassment of any kind, and bullying are never acceptable. Your Club, your team, your community will have a diverse array of opinions, values and belief systems. In Football we celebrate our diversity and inclusion. Diversity is our Game. You must never post or share a link to any material that is offensive, hateful, discriminatory, intimidating, sexually explicit, belittles another or inciting discussions that may have negative repercussions.

Simply refrain from personally targeting other users or making hateful, libellous comments.

Social Media vigilance and your Club

Given the recent High Court ruling you must be vigilant. Your social media platforms are your responsibility. Someone in your Club must be assigned to monitor this. While you can state that the Club does not take responsibility for the language and behaviour of those who utilise your networks it is clear now that more is needed. When there is a violation of our social media code of behaviour take immediate action and while stating you reserve the right to block users and remove comments...don't hesitate to remove and block. While Twitter/Facebook/Instagram/TikTok/Snapchat etc have their terms and conditions there are means within their systems to minimise defamatory or unacceptable behaviour. Do the research.

And remember if someone accuses your club of posting something improper or defamatory, address it promptly and appropriately and if necessary, seek legal advice. Football NT will assist with that legal advice but only if the Club can demonstrate that it was vigilant and judicious with their social media management.

Social Media Policy Breaches

Football NT and Football Australia staff monitor online activity in relation to the social media of Football NT. We encourage the reporting of breaches or suspected breaches of this Social Media Policy to Football NT or Football Australia. In circumstances of a breach or suspected breach of this Social Media Policy, Football NT and its member Clubs may:

- 1). make a necessary public comment such as an apology, a clarification or correction or issue a formal warning to the protagonist
- 2) report any breach of any Territory or Commonwealth law to any local agency or alleged wronged party
- 3). take any disciplinary action available to it under Football Australia and Football NT Codes of Conduct and Member Protection Policies and Club Participation Agreements; or
- 4). exercise any of Football NT's available rights or remedy at law.