



Social Media Policy

March 29, 2023

This policy governs the publication of and commentary on social media by North Toronto Soccer volunteers, employees and members. For the purposes of this policy, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including but not limited to:

- Social Media sites such as X/Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Youtube, LinkedIn etc.
- Team communication sites such as TeamSnap
- Blogs

This policy pertains to any communication which references, directly or indirectly, North Toronto Soccer. **Additionally**, this policy pertains to references to **associations** of which North Toronto Soccer is a member - Toronto Soccer Association, Ontario Soccer, Canada Soccer – and **all leagues** in which North Toronto Soccer teams compete.

Club volunteers, employees and members are free to publish or comment via social media in accordance with this policy. Club employees are subject to this policy to the extent they identify themselves as an employee of the club (other than as an incidental mention of place of employment in a personal blog on topics unrelated to the Club).

The distinction between the private and the professional has largely been obliterated and it must be assumed that one's private and professional social media activity will be treated as one no matter how much effort is spent attempting to keep them separate.

Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary. All uses of social media must follow the same legal and ethical standards that the Club must otherwise follow.

Social media is in real time. Postings are available to a wide audience in seconds and may be digitally captured for eternity.

Maintaining Confidentiality

North Toronto Soccer is a community club which publishes its policies and much additional information on the club website and provides financial statements to its

members at annual general meetings. However, some information is not in the public domain at all times; such as unpublished details about the club's financial position, upcoming projects, tentative roster selections, and contemplated coaching assignments. Personal information about members, especially children, can never be published. It is perfectly acceptable to talk about the club and to have a dialog with the soccer community and general community, but it is absolutely unacceptable to publish this confidential information.

Protecting Your Own Privacy

Privacy settings on social media platforms should be set to allow anyone to see profile information similar to what would be on the club website. Other privacy settings that might allow others to post information or see information that is personal should be set to limited access. Be mindful of posting information that is not intended to be shared with the general public. Remember that another party may be able, without your permission, to copy it, store it in a different location, or link to it.

Honesty and Forthrightness

It is unacceptable to blog or post comments anonymously, or to use pseudonyms or false screen names. Instead, it is always best to use your real name and clearly identify who you are. Anything less than complete honesty is damaging to the individual blogger and to organizations with which they are associated. Nothing gains notice in social media more than honesty and transparency on one hand, and dishonesty and misrepresentation on the other. Be careful to check all facts and pause a moment before posting new content to ensure that nothing published is dishonest, untrue, or misleading. If you have a vested interest in an issue, it is best to reveal it.

Being honest in what you post does not mean that you need to reveal everything about yourself. Be smart about protecting yourself, your identity and your privacy. What you publish will be available digitally for a long time and may be easily searchable and traced to you.

Respect Copyright Laws and Trademarks

It is critical to respect laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others. It is illegal to quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work without explicit permission, and any material must be attributed to the original author/source. It is good general practice to link to others' work rather than reproduce more than short excerpts from it. If the link is to remain on a blog for an extended period, the link should be checked periodically to confirm that it is still active and that any updates to the original material are acceptable.

Use of logos and trademarks must be authorized by the owner of the trademark, including Club marks: *North Toronto Soccer, NT Soccer and North Toronto Nitros*

Respect your Audience, the Club, and your Colleagues

The public in general, and Club employees, volunteers and members, reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Be careful not to say anything contradictory or in conflict with Club policies and material published on the website or elsewhere. Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, offensive comments, defamatory comments, personal insults, obscenity, etc.) but also proper consideration of privacy and of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory - such as politics and religion. Use your best judgment and be sure to make it clear that the views and opinions expressed are yours alone and do not represent the official views of the Club.

Protect our Members, Sponsors, Facility Providers and Suppliers

Members and partners should not be cited or obviously referenced without their approval. Never identify a member or partner by name without permission and never discuss confidential details of a situation. It is acceptable to discuss general details about situations so long as the information provided does not violate any non-disclosure agreements that may be in place. Your blog is not the place to settle private matters.

Dealing with Controversial Issues

If you see misrepresentations made about the Club in the media, you may point that out. Always do so with respect and with the facts. If you speak about others, make sure what you say is factual and that it does not disparage that party. Avoid arguments. Brawls may generate traffic, but nobody wins in the end. Don't try to settle scores or goad others into inflammatory debates. Make sure what you are saying is factually correct and can be supported.

Correcting Mistakes

In the fast-moving world of social media, it is possible to inadvertently (or carelessly) make a mistake or to repeat someone else's mistake. If you make an error, be up front about the mistake and correct it quickly. If you modifying an earlier post, make it clear that there is a modification. If someone accuses you of posting something improper (such as their copyrighted material or a defamatory comment about them), deal with it quickly - better to remove it immediately to lessen the possibility of a legal action.

Thinking about Consequences

Careless or inappropriate comments about a member, a sponsor, a partner or the Club itself can result in, at a minimum, bad relations with the offended party, and in the worst case, legal action. Dealing with the fallout from offensive comments can consume an inordinate amount of time and energy.

Disclaimers

Many social media users include a prominent disclaimer saying who they work for, but that they're not speaking officially. This is good practice and is encouraged, but don't count on it to avoid trouble – it may not have much legal effect. Wherever practical, you must use a disclaimer that states while you work or volunteer for the Club, anything you publish is your personal opinion, and not necessarily the opinions of the Club.

Enforcement

Policy violations will be subject to North Toronto Soccer's disciplinary action, up to and including:

- Employees: termination for cause
- Volunteers: removal from the volunteer position and possible suspension from the club
- Members: suspension from the club