

USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

The UNC Department of Athletics recognizes and supports its student-athletes' rights to freedom of speech, expression, and association, including the use of social networks. In this context, however, each student-athlete must remember that playing and competing for The University of North Carolina is a privilege, not a right. As a student-athlete, you represent the University and you are expected to portray yourself, your team, and the University in a positive manner at all times. Any online postings must therefore be consistent with federal and State laws, and team, Department, University, and NCAA rules and policies (including the Guidelines listed below).

Guidelines

If you participate on a social networking site, you must keep the following guidance in mind:

- Everything you post is public information – any text or photo placed online is completely out of your control the moment it is placed online – even if you limit access to your site. Information (including pictures, videos, comments, and posters) may be accessible even after you remove it.
- Use caution when adding someone or inviting someone to be a friend. Many individuals are looking to take advantage of students-athletes, to get close to student-athletes to give themselves a sense of membership, or to gain information about you, your teammates, or your team for the purposes of sports gambling or negative publicity.
- Limit information about your whereabouts or plans to minimize the potential of being stalked, assaulted, or the victim of other criminal activity.
- What you post may affect your future. Many employers and graduate school admissions officers review social networking sites as part of their overall evaluation of an applicant. Carefully consider how you want people to perceive you before you give them a chance to misinterpret your information (including pictures, videos, comments, and posters).
- Similar to comments made in person, the Department of Athletics will not tolerate disrespectful comments and behavior online, such as:
 - Derogatory or defamatory language;
 - Comments that create a serious danger to the safety of another person or that constitute a credible threat of serious physical or emotional injury to another person;
 - Comments or photos that describe or depict unlawful assault, abuse, hazing, harassment, or discrimination; selling, possessing, or using controlled substances; or any other illegal or prohibited conduct, including violating the University's Policy on Prohibited Harassment and Discrimination.

Monitoring and Consequences

Each team must identify at least one coach or administrator who is responsible for having access to and regularly monitoring the content of team members' social networking sites and postings. The Department of Athletics also reserves the right to have other staff members review and/or monitor student-athletes' social networking sites and postings.

Any violation of law or of NCAA, University, or Department of Athletics' Policy (e.g., the University's Policy on Prohibited Harassment and Discrimination, Instrument of Student Governance [Honor Code], Student-Athlete Code of Conduct, or Hazing and Initiation Policy) or evidence of such violation in your online content is subject to investigation and sanction by the Department of Athletics, the University, the NCAA, and/or law enforcement agencies. Internal sanctions may range from notice to remove the posting or photo to dismissal from the team and non-renewal or reduction of athletic grant-in-aid.