

MSHA Social Media Policy

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Social Media Policy & Guidelines for Athletes

Competing as a member of the Mitchell Skating and Hockey Association is a privilege. As a member of MSHA, you are a representative of the Association, your team and your teammates, and as such you are ALWAYS in the public eye – whether in competition, in practice, in the classroom, or online.

MSHA expects all of its members to conduct themselves in a manner that will not discredit their team or the Association. These expectations extend to the athletes' activities in social media.

Social media is defined as websites and mobile applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to: Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube, YikYak, Whisper, LinkedIn, Podcasts, Blogs, Myspace, etc.

As a participant it is important to remember how powerful online communication can be and the significant impact it can have on an individual, friends, family, teammates and an athletic program either immediately or in the future.

MSHA SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The Mitchell Skating and Hockey Association recognizes its participants rights to fully participate in social media; however, it maintains and will enforce the following expectations of its participants.

- Players will not post sexist, racist, obscene or profane material of any kind
- Players will not use social media to degrade, demean, attack or threaten any person, school, organization, etc. Cyber-bullying of any kind will not be tolerated.
- Players will not post material of acts that are in violation of team, MSHA, SDAHA, USA Hockey, State or Federal laws, policies or rules.
- Players will not post materials that reflect negatively on themselves, MSHA, SDAHA, USA Hockey, their respective teams or other institutions.

SANCTIONS: In addition to team policies and consequences, additional sanctions may be imposed by the MSHA (Disciplinary Committee or Board) to include but not limited to:

1. Notification of the violation of the MSHA Social Media Policy, requiring the removal of unacceptable content
2. Suspension from the team and team related functions.
3. Further sanctions in line with the Player Code of Conduct

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN ONLINE

1. *There is no difference between your online persona and your real-life persona.*

Nearly all employers and university recruiters use social media background checks prior to hiring.

Regardless of intent, what you post online has real world consequences.

2. *The internet is forever*

Regardless of your privacy settings the Library of Congress is saving all tweets.

Snapchat does not actually disappear, and can easily have content “screen-shotted,” as can all other forms of online communication.

Courts can subpoena all digital media, including text messages.

Once you post or share any form of media that application technically has usage rights.

3. *What you associate with becomes who you are perceived to be regardless of intent.*

What are you sharing, liking and commenting on?

What are your friends “tagging” you in?

4. *Your social media accounts are your brand*

How are you choosing to represent yourself? Are you sending the right message about yourself to the public? What does your social media portfolio say about you?

Coaches, College Admissions, Potential Employers ALL use social media as a reference check.

If asked right now, would you want an administrator, coach, or employer to see your online persona?

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

- Think First
 - Once you post online, it is available to anyone – even if you limit access to your site. Privacy is important to safe guard yourself and your identity, but do not use privacy settings to mask poor online behavior
 - Mindful Photography
 - Avoid posting photos of alcohol consumption regardless of legal ability. What story do your photographs tell about you?
 - Be Accurate
 - Make sure your online persona is true to who you are
 - Is your job/education information accurate?
 - Are they consistent across all platforms?
 - Even if it was accidental, out-of-date or inaccurate information can make it appear you are misrepresenting yourself.
 - Be Authentic
 - Part of self-expression is taking responsibility for your own thoughts, opinions and actions. Using an alias, or an identity other than your own, is disingenuous and could cause legal trouble
 - If you feel the need to use an alias, that means you don’t want to be associated with what you are sharing, so that means it probably is not a good idea to begin with.
 - Be Respectful
 - Social media should not be used to defame, attack or disrespect other people
 - If you wouldn’t say it to someone directly, don’t put it online
 - Freedom of Speech
 - Freedom of Speech will not absolve you from the consequences of your actions, words or expressions.