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## Social media policy

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For review by the Executive Committee: by February 2023

# 1. Policy overview and purpose

Social media has changed the way we communicate. Social media can be used positively connecting our members and fans as well as getting important information disseminated. It is far more immediate and once a post is uploaded, it is in the public domain and can often not be withdrawn or withdrawn before people see it. With traditional media, there is an obligation to report facts and to ensure all sides of the story are provided to the reader; this does not happen with social media. Increasingly, national legislators are considering holding the social media company accountable for what its clients post on their particular form of media and, as such, it is important for Squash South Africa (SSA) to set out a policy to guide players, technical officials, coaches, supporters, family members and followers of the game. In some instances, a person posting in their personal capacity may still be perceived as speaking on behalf of SSA and lead to reputational damage to SSA through association. Thus a balance between freedom of speech and possible abuse needs to be found.

This policy guides our community on using social media so everyone is enabled to participate if they so wish, while being aware of their responsibilities and obligations. In particular, this policy provides practical guidance allowing all parties to benefit from the use of social media, to minimise potential risks and protect those involved, particularly vulnerable persons. This is balanced against openness and transparency, trust and integrity as well as encouraging positive feedback on our sport.

In circumstances where guidance about social media issues has not been given in this policy, please use common sense or seek advice.

## 2. Underlying principles

SSA has identified its mission to become a world-class sports organisation built on our collective passion for the game while promoting diversity, innovation and good governance. This is supported by our commitment to respect, integrity and professional ethics including safeguarding.

The Executive Committee is responsible for the policy and the National Manager for its implementation.

## 3. Coverage

This policy applies to all persons involved in squash in South Africa, whether in a paid or unpaid/voluntary capacity registered with SSA including:

- players
- support personnel including managers, medical and para-medical, coaches and assistant coaches
- referees, umpires and other event related officials
- persons appointed or elected to the Executive Committee, committees and sub-committees, including life members
- employees and contractors

- members of provincial associations, clubs and associate members.

As a part of SSA you are an extension of our brand. As such, the boundaries between when you are representing yourself and when you are representing SSA can often be blurred. This becomes even more of an issue as you increase your profile or position. It is important that you represent both yourself and SSA appropriately online at all times.

## 4. Scope

Social media mean websites and applications, current and future, that enable users to create and share content, communicate or participate in social networking via the internet.

This policy applies to platforms including, but not limited to:

- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest, Yammer, WeChat, Reddit etc.)
- Video and photo sharing websites or apps (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo, Instagram, Flickr, Vine, Tiktok etc.)
- Blogs and micro-blogging platforms (e.g. Tumblr, Wordpress, Blogger, etc.)
- Review sites (e.g. Yelp, Urban Spoon, etc.)
- Live broadcasting apps (e.g. Periscope, Meerkat, Facebook Mentions, etc.)
- Podcasting (e.g. iTunes, Stitcher, Sound cloud, etc.)
- Geo-spatial tagging (e.g. Foursquare, etc.)
- Online encyclopedia (e.g. Wikit, Wikipedia, etc.)
- Instant messaging (e.g. SMS, Skype, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Viber, Signal, Telegram etc.)
- Online multiplayer gaming platforms (e.g. World of Warcraft, Second life, Xbox Live etc.)
- Online voting or polls
- Public and private online forums and discussion boards
- Any other online technologies that allow individual users to upload and share content.

This policy is applicable when using social media as:

1. an official representative on social media; and
2. an individual posting content on social media in relation to SSA that might affect our business, products, services, events, sponsors, members, employees or reputation.

NOTE: This policy does not apply to the personal use of social media where it is not related or there is no reference to SSA or our operations, competitions, teams, participants, products, services, events, sponsors, members or reputation. However, any post on social media that may be understood as indirectly referring to SSA may still be considered in terms of this policy.

## 5. Using social media in an official capacity

Only the President (policy) and National Manager (operations) or nominee/s may represent SSA on social media as an official representative for a specified period of time or for a specified topic.

Those acting as an official representative shall not:

- Post or like messages or material that could damage SSA's image or reputation
- Create or transmit material that might be defamatory or incur any liability
- Post messages, status updates or links to material or content that is inappropriate including information or content that encourages illegal, criminal activities or terrorism, or pornography, or which contains information or content that could reasonably offend on the basis of race, gender, sex, age, religious or political beliefs, disability, sexual orientation
- Send or post offensive or harassing material
- Broadcast views on social, political, religious or other non-squash related matters
- Post, upload, forward or link to spam, junk email or chain emails and messages
- Post images and/or names of minors on their personal account without the minor's guardians' consent

There are guides available for reference including:

<https://esafety.gov.au/esafety-information/games-apps-and-social-networking>

<https://archive.acas.org.uk/socialnetworking>.

## 6. Guidelines

Using social media has benefits including:

- players connecting with their supporters
- players and SSA building our brand, profile and visibility
- leveraging social media for sponsorships and future employment
- promoting a positive relationship and image of sponsors

Please adhere to the following guidelines when using social media.

### 6.1 Use common sense

Whenever you are unsure as to whether or not the content you wish to share is appropriate, please seek advice from SSA before doing so or refrain from sharing the content to be on the safe side.

A good approach is to consider the likely impact on you personally and professionally if such social media use was to be reported on the front page of the daily newspaper where you or your family would be embarrassed, face anger or disappointment from family and/or friends, or be likely to face disciplinary action or criminal charges, then such posts should not be posted on social media. If you would not like what you are about to post said about you, do not post it.

### 6.2 Protecting your 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 a particular individual would never see it.

Set appropriate privacy settings on your social media platforms to limit access. Privacy policies and settings may change so you are responsible for keeping up to date. You should always follow the terms and conditions for any third-party sites in which you participate. Be cautious about disclosing your personal details noting that increasingly social media accounts are hacked.

Private information is automatically transmitted across national borders and, in some instances, may contravene national legislation in other jurisdictions. Several countries have strict requirements in not broadcasting private information including names, ages, places being visited, or accompanying people as this provides personal identification.

### **6.3 Honesty**

Check your facts and do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue or misleading.

Do not post anonymously, use pseudonyms or false screen names. Be transparent and honest. Use your real name, be clear about who you are and identify any affiliations you have.

If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, point it out. If you make an endorsement or recommendation about something you are affiliated with, or have a close relationship with, you must disclose that affiliation.

The web is not anonymous. Assume that all information posted online can be traced back to you. You are accountable for your actions both on and offline, including the information you post via your personal social media account/s.

### **6.4 Disclaimers**

Wherever practical, include a prominent disclaimer stating who you work for or are affiliated to and that anything you publish is your personal opinion and that you are not speaking officially. However, this may not protect you from legal liability.

### **6.5 Reasonable use**

If you are an employee, you must ensure that your personal use of social media does not interfere with your work commitments or productivity. Unless authorised to use social media for official purposes, no employee should use social media during working hours.

### **6.6 Respect, confidentiality and sensitivity**

When using social media, you must maintain confidentiality in relation to SSA information. This includes information that is not publically accessible, widely known, or not reasonably expected to be shared outside SSA.

Confidential information includes details about litigation, medical information and unpublished details about team selection, coaching practices, financial information etc.

When using social media you should be considerate to others and should not post information when you have been asked not to, or where consent has not been sought and given. You must also remove information about another person if that person asks you to do so.

Permission should always be sought if the use or publication of information is not incidental, but directly related to an individual. This is particularly relevant to publishing any information regarding minors. In such circumstances, parental or guardian consent is required.

### **6.7 Gaining permission when publishing a person's identifiable image**

You must obtain express permission from an individual to use a direct, clearly identifiable image of that person.

You should also refrain from posting any information or photos of a sensitive nature. This could include accidents, incidents or controversial behaviour.

In every instance, you need to have consent of the owner of copyright in the image as well as the person in the image.

### **6.8 Complying with applicable laws**

Do not post or link to content that contains illegal or indecent content, including defamatory, vilifying, discriminatory, derogatory or misleading and deceptive content.

As social media crosses national borders, be aware of the applicable national legislation where you are and where the social media company is based.

### **6.9 Abiding by copyright laws**

It is critical that you comply with copyright laws for material owned by others and SSA's own copyrights and brands.

You should never quote or use more than short excerpts of someone else's work, and you should always attribute such work to the original author/source.

### **6.10 Branding and intellectual property**

You must not use any SSA intellectual property or imagery on your personal social media without prior approval from the National Manager. Our intellectual property includes but is not limited to:

- trademarks
- logos
- slogans
- imagery which has been posted on SSA's official social media sites or website.

### **6.11 Discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying**

South Africans in general, and our employees and members, reflect a diverse set of customs, values and opinions.

You must not post any material that is offensive, harassing, discriminatory, embarrassing, intimidating, sexually explicit, bullying, hateful, racist, sexist, homophobic or otherwise inappropriate.

### **6.12 Avoid controversial issues**

Wherever possible, avoid controversy. Generally sponsors are averse to controversy and this can affect your professional income as well as SSA's reputation.

### **6.13 Deal with mistakes**

If you make a genuine error while posting on social media, own up to the mistake and address it, including an apology, as soon as possible. If you modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so.

## **7. Policy breaches**

### **7.1 Reporting a breach**

If you notice inappropriate or unlawful content online relating to SSA or any of our members or content that may otherwise have been published in breach of this policy, you should report the circumstances immediately to the National Manager with screenshots.

Please note that disputes between individuals who happen to be members of SSA but the content is unrelated to SSA should be resolved between the individuals in the first instance. If the issue is not resolved and one party feels that they have been defamed, he/she should report the matter to the police.

### **7.2 Investigation**

Alleged breaches of this social media policy will be investigated according to our procedures. Where necessary, SSA reserves the right to a breach of this social media policy to the police.

### **7.3 Disciplinary process, consequences and appeals**

Depending on the circumstances, alleged breaches of this policy may be dealt with in accordance with our disciplinary procedure.

Any person under section 3 above alleged to have breached this policy may face disciplinary action up to and including expulsion or termination of employment as relevant in accordance with our policies.

### **7.4 Appeals**

Any person sanctioned by SSA under a disciplinary process for breach of this policy may have a right of appeal. Such appeal, setting out the reason for the appeal (finding and/or process) shall be submitted to the National Manager within seven working days of the notice of the original sanction being received.

Approved by the Executive Committee on 20 January 2021.