



ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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Rev.	0
Originator:	D. Hawkins
Checker	I. Toellner
Approver:	C. Craig
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Electronic Communications

As part of Big Country Soccer Association's emphasis on athlete safety, communications involving our youth athletes should be appropriate, productive, and transparent. Effective communication concerning travel, practice or games schedules, and administrative issues among administrators, coaches, athletes, and their families is critical. However, the use of mobile devices, web-based applications, social media, and other forms of electronic communications increases the possibility for improprieties and misunderstandings. The improper use of mobile and electronic communications can result in misconduct and is strictly prohibited by Big Country Soccer Association.

Big Country Soccer Association states that any participant involved in any of its or associated member's programs as a player, coach, employee, volunteer, or adult participant shall adhere to this Policy for electronic communications and social media. All electronic communications between team personnel and athletes must be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. Coaches and athletes must follow the common-sense guidelines regarding the volume and time of day of any allowed electronic communication. All content of electronic communication should be readily available to share with the public or families of the athlete or coach.

General Guidelines

1. Coaches (and other volunteers, or adult participants) must copy parent(s)/ guardian(s) on all electronic and mobile communications to minor athletes unless the parent(s)/ guardian(s) have previously approved (in writing) direct communications between the coach and the athlete.
2. To ease communications, coaches may set-up e-mail and texting groups with parent(s)/ guardian(s) and athletes and make this group communication a norm for the team. Coaches must include parents on all email and text messaging groups.
3. Should a coach inadvertently send an athlete an electronic or mobile communication without including the parent(s) (or guardian(s)), acknowledge the oversight to the parents and forward the communication to the parent(s) (or guardian(s)) as soon as possible.
4. Coaches should not hesitate to speak with a parent or guardian if a coach receives electronic and mobile communications from an athlete that make the coach uncomfortable.

Social Media

Big Country Soccer Association members reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. As representatives of the Association, we require our members and participants to exercise good judgment in its use of Social Media websites and conduct themselves in a responsible and respectful manner. For the purposes of this Policy, Social Media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including without limitation, blogs, wikis, and social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube, etc.

To assist in posting content and managing these sites, Big Country Soccer Association has developed the following guidelines for official and personal use of social media. Association members and volunteers are free to publish or comment via social media in accordance with this Policy.



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General Guidelines

1. The purpose of using these communication channels on behalf of Big Country Soccer Association is to support the Association's objectives, programs, and sanctioned efforts, including news, information, content, and objectives.
2. When using social media, always assume that you are representing Big Country Soccer Association. Be professional in nature and refrain from reporting, speculating, discussing, or giving any opinions on Big Country Soccer Association topics or personalities that could be considered sensitive, confidential, or disparaging.
3. Confidential or proprietary information or similar information of third parties, who have shared such information with you on behalf of Big Country Soccer Association and its members, should not be shared publicly on social media channels.
4. Members and participants are not permitted to post information, photos, or other representations of inappropriate behavior, or items that could be interpreted as demeaning or inflammatory. All communications will be respectful of others. 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. Members and participants shall use their best judgment and be clear that the views and opinions expressed are theirs alone and do not represent the official views of Big Country Soccer Association.
5. Members and participants are not permitted to tag players, coaches or members' names, accounts, or images. Pictures or updates shall not disclose personal information. Never identify a player, coach, volunteer, referee, or sponsor by name without permission.
6. Big Country Soccer Association's and its members' social media assets are to be used for positive interaction. Please refrain from any negative comments or criticism of anyone or anything, including other players, team officials, teams, clubs, or referees. Additionally, members and participants are not permitted to comment on injuries, officiating, or team matters that could reasonably be expected to be confidential to team members.
7. Big Country Soccer Association's and its members' logos and/ or visual identity cannot be used for personal social media without the permission of Big Country Soccer Association Board and its members.
8. When material is posted on Big Country Soccer Association's and its members' social networking sites that does not follow this Policy, that material will be removed promptly, and the individual informed with the reason why it was removed. It is not the intent of Big Country Soccer Association to police social media accounts, so please, stay positive, humble, and professional.



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Violations of Policy

Social media and electronic communications can be used to commit abuse and misconduct (e.g., emotional, sexual, bullying, harassment, and hazing/ cyber-bullying). Such communications by coaches, employees, volunteers, adult participants, or athletes will not be tolerated and are strictly prohibited by the Big Country Soccer Association.

Anyone who violates this Electronic Communications and Social Media Policy is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, expulsion and/ or referral to law enforcement authorities for criminal investigation under the Criminal Code of Canada. Violations of this Policy should be reported to the associated member's Board and, as necessary, the Big Country Soccer Association Board who will conduct an investigation into the report through the Disciplinary Committee (*Ref: BCSA-GOV-006*).

Be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around a long time, so consider the content carefully. Google and similar platforms do have a long memory.