

Lenoir-Rhyne University

Department of Intercollegiate Athletics

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

INTRODUCTION

In the ever-popular world of Social Media, one can quickly forget just how powerful this communication tool can be and the significant impact it can have on an individual, friend, family, teammates, etc. This is also the most popular way for employers to do a “quick check” on prospects. Do not give them a reason to not hire you.

Social media refers to the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogue. Examples of Social Media include, but are not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Myspace, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Instagram, Periscope, Yik Yak, WhatsApp, Tiger Text, and many more as technology advances.

As a student-athlete participating in NCAA intercollegiate athletics at LR, you are a representative of the University and are **ALWAYS** in the public eye whether you think so or not. **As a student-athlete, you are held to a higher standard than other students on campus, as such, please allow your coaching staff to follow all social media platforms that you operate – we are here to help make your presence a GREAT ONE!** Please keep in mind the following guidelines below as you participate on the various social media sites.

REGULATIONS

LR Athletics recognizes the athletes’ right to actively participate in Social Media. However, it maintains and will enforce the following expectations of team members:

- Players will not post sexist, racist, obscene or profane material of any kind.
- Players will not use social media to degrade, demean, or attack any person or school.
- Players will not post material relating to acts in violation of any Federal or State laws, LR policies, or team guidelines.
- Players will not post material which reflects negatively on themselves, Lenoir-Rhyne University and its Athletic Department, the respective teams or other schools.

SANCTIONS

- Severe punishments can be handed down for a quick “Tweet” or “Facebook” post. Timelines are flooded with negativity, don’t let that be yours.
- Teams at all levels (including a Division II team in our own region) have had seasons completely cancelled because of Social Media mishaps. Don’t be the one person that costs your teammates their season because you went overboard on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Myspace, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Instagram, Periscope, Yik Yak, WhatsApp, Tiger Text, and many more as technology advances.
- Any activity or language in violation of the above prohibitions, including first time offenses, is subject to investigation and possible sanctions by Lenoir-Rhyne University officials as well as civil authorities.

Sanctions imposed by the Athletics Department may include, but are not limited to, the following (in no particular order):

1. Notification from the Head Coach, to the student-athlete, outlining the policy and requiring that the unacceptable content be removed or the social network be deactivated.
2. Suspensions from the team and all team-related activities. Based on your situation, you can be temporarily suspended for a determined length of time or indefinitely.
3. Immediate loss, or non-renewal, of athletics grant-in-aid (loss of athletics scholarship).
4. Student-athletes may face review by University’s Judicial Board.

POSTING GUIDELINES

THINK FIRST – before you post anything (text, photo, video, audio), be aware that once you post, it is available and viewable to anyone, anywhere in the **WORLD**. The moment you put it in cyber space, it is out of your control – even if you limit access to your site! Is your post something you'd want your mother, father, grandparents to see or broadcast on ESPN (it's public, they can use it)!

FREEDOM OF SPEECH – be sure not to have a false sense of security about your rights to freedom of speech. Understand that freedom of speech is **NOT** unlimited. The online social network sites are not a place where you can say whatever you want without repercussions.

STRIVE FOR ACCURACY – get your facts straight before posting them on Social Media sites. Don't start rumors or start anything you are not 100% sure of. Review all of your content for **GRAMMATICAL** and **SPELLING** purposes. Don't make yourself sound uneducated.

BE AWARE OF LIABILITY – at all times, you are responsible for what you post on your own site **AND** the site of others. You **CAN** be held liable for anything deemed to be copyright infringement, defamatory, proprietary, libel or obscene (as defined by the courts). Be sure what you post **TODAY** does not come back to haunt you **TOMORROW**.

PHOTOS AND VIDEO – again you are responsible for **ANYTHING** you post **INCLUDING** pictures and video. Do **NOT** post pictures and video of anyone other than yourself unless you get their permission. Photos and videos of drinking activities or other inappropriate photos and video will not be tolerated.

BE YOURSELF – never pretend to be someone else. Tracking tools make it possible for those to find out who posted what comments anonymously. Even if you delete a post or comment, it can still be found within the hard drives of a computer and / or website.

CORRECT MISTAKES – if you make a mistake when posting, admit it. Be upfront and be quick with your correction, don't wait three days to correct something. Also, monitor your teammates. If you see a post that's borderline, encourage them to delete it.

SOCIAL MEDIA REALTIVE TO RECRUITING – once a prospective student-athlete (recruit) signs a National Letter of Intent to attend Lenoir-Rhyne University, team members and staff may include that player in social media posts. If a prospective student-athlete has **NOT** signed a NLI – all players and staff are **PROHIBITED** from posting, liking, sharing, or tagging that player in any social media activity. If you have a pre-existing relationship with the recruit, you are able to share experiences with them on social media, **HOWEVER** the athletics program requires permission from the Head Coach before posting – as no mention of the recruitment process for the recruit may be mentioned.

SAFETY AND PRIVACY

- Never post anything in relation to your home address, local address, phone number(s), date of birth or other personal, private information. Always exercise caution when posting your whereabouts or plans for the night.
- Be aware of who you add as a friend to your site(s) – many people are looking to take advantage of student-athletes or to seek connection with student-athletes to give them a sense of membership on your team.
- Protect yourself at all times! While you want to be honest about yourself, don't provide anything that scam artists or identity thieves could use against you.
- Maintain privacy at all times, especially with pictures and video. Don't discuss or recreate the scene from a picture or video you post involving names of the pictured or filmed individuals.

I, _____ (print name) HAVE READ AND REVIEWED THE POLICY ABOVE AND WILL ABIDE BY ITS RULES AND REGULATIONS WHEN POSTING ON A SOCIAL MEDIA SITE. I UNDERSTAND THAT PENALTIES AND PUNISHMENT MAY CAN OCCUR TO ME OR MY TEAM FOR ANYTHING DEEMED INAPPROPRIATE BY LENOIR-RHYNE UNIVERSITY.

(SIGN)

(SPORT)

(DATE)