



Coaches and Social Media

Managing Social Media Pages

Having a social media presence can be helpful for groups like schools and athletic teams. As many young people use social media, it can be an easy way for coaches and teams to stay in communication with each other. How can coaches best utilize this tool to keep in touch and disperse important information to teammates, parents and fans?

Team Social Media Pages

If a coach is running their team social media page, it could be helpful to view the team as a business and the coach as the CEO. How can team values be expressed over social media? What information do team members need to be successful? What outcome do constituents want to see? What events need promoted? How can the account be used to celebrate the successes of teams and business?

Though maintaining social media may seem time consuming, it can save time sharing important information with athletes, parents and fans. Posting practice and game times and locations gives people a one stop shop for info that coaches may find themselves repeating. It can also be used to boost morale before games and get athletes and fans excited for an event.

No one expects a coach to be a social media guru, if running a social media page is something a coach wants to explore, they can find inspiration and ideas from other local teams, NCAA teams or professional teams. Coaches could even consider an athlete-run social media page. How coaches utilize social media should be at whatever level they are comfortable with.



Personal Social Media Pages

If a coach chooses to use their personal social media to share posts about their athletes and team, it might be beneficial to review school social media policies with their athletes. Some schools do not allow online interactions between school staff and students. Athletes may engage with the team social media account that their coach maintains, but it may not be appropriate for coaches and athletes to be "friends" on personal social media accounts.

If a coach can and chooses to interact with their athletes online, it makes them more available to their athletes for questions and concerns.

If a coach feels comfortable, using personal social media accounts can be a great way to connect with parents and future coaches of athletes. It is also a great place to celebrate the successes of your team- anything from a great first practice of the season or a big win against a league rival- share the hard work!

A coach should be mindful using personal social media for communication that players, parents and fans will see content on their page that is not related to their role as coach (political opinions or pictures of themselves in social situations). If you a coach uses a personal page for team-related communication, anyone who looks at their feed will see everything, not just what is posted about the team.



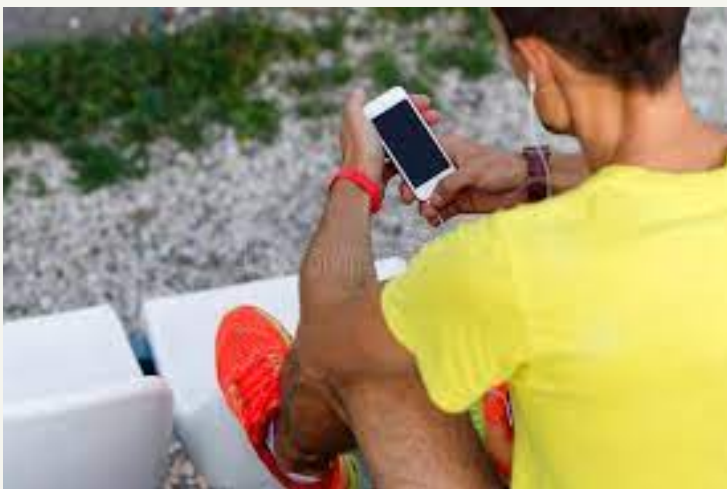
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Managing Student-Athlete Social Media

Coaches should be aware that their athletes are interacting with their teammates not only throughout the school day and after practice but at any hour of the day via social media. As much as a coach wants their athletes to all be kind to one another, they may find themselves in a situation involving online bullying or harassment.

Conversations with Athletes

If a coach notices hurtful or negative social media posts from their athletes, it might be a good opportunity for a coach to sit down with that athlete and have a conversation. Understanding where the athlete was coming from could serve as a teaching moment for both parties. A coach does not always need to be a disciplinarian in these situations but should think through when it would be appropriate for them to become involved in an athlete's personal posts about sports.



Social Media in Schools

Coaches should make sure they are well informed on their school's social media policies as they can differ per district. Staying informed on how a school handles discipline for social media bullying can help a coach inform their team on expectations on and offline, in turn protecting the team from misusing their social media and causing harm or disruption to their season.