

Midland Region Hockey Umpiring Association

Social Media Policy & Guidelines

This document is issued by the MRHUA Executive and outlines the social media policy and guidelines for members of MRHUA and others accepting MRHUA appointments (e.g. candidates, regional guests, colleagues on exchange visits, etc.). It provides guidance on use of social media and the disciplinary process that may be instigated should any breach of policy arise.

For the purposes of this policy, social media includes, but is not exclusively limited to, Facebook, Twitter, any internet forums, websites and also covers activities wherein a personal opinion can be viewed in or obtained via public means, whether already in existence or in the future.

1. Policy

When using and contributing to social media, MRHUA members are expected to behave in a manner that is consistent and appropriate to their role as ambassadors for and representatives of England Hockey and MRHUA. Any contribution, posting, message or associated conduct that is deemed to be in contravention of the policy could lead to the instigation of disciplinary proceedings.

2. Social media content guidelines for members

Be responsive – respond to players, coaches and colleagues and engage with your audience. Remember though, that not all followers / viewers will be supportive and that your posts may well be visible to a very wide audience. Don't engage in online disputes about hockey issues with your audience or allow others (including family & friends) to argue on your behalf. Don't take up issues on behalf of colleagues. You may come into contact online with under 18s. Familiarise yourself with the EHB's 'Proud to Protect' safeguarding regulations in relation to engaging with under 18s.

Be aware – what you say can have an impact on the image of the sport, on your colleagues and on the EHB and MRHUA as a whole. Banter amongst colleagues is good but beware of using 'private jokes'. It is important to be aware of the context in which comments made may be interpreted. Consider how the public, the media and other users will view your comments.

Think – pause and think before you post or send a message. If you're in doubt about posting something, ask a colleague or simply don't post it. Remember, you are personally responsible for everything that you post. "*If in doubt, leave it out*" is a useful approach to take when engaged in social media.

Treat it as a quote – Don't write anything on social media that you wouldn't feel comfortable seeing in a newspaper or hearing on TV or the radio.

Don't talk negatively about players, team officials, match officials or colleagues. More general comments around matches are of course fine, for example, pleasure with performances, information about results etc. However, you should **NEVER** post anything about disciplinary issues that have arisen before, during or after a game or tournament. Even the most vaguely expressed comments are open to misinterpretation by readers and may compromise any EHB disciplinary process arising from the incidents in question.

Remember reputation – don't post images, comments or other content that are not in keeping with the image and conduct of all umpires, irrespective of level of umpiring, or could damage the reputation of the sport, the EHB, MRHUA or any sponsors.

Midland Region Hockey Umpiring Association
Social Media Policy & Guidelines

3. Use of social media on match days and during multi-game events – the ‘window of inactivity’

For ‘stand-alone’ matches (e.g. a single game on a weekend), the use of social media by members to comment on any hockey-related matter is prohibited during the ‘window of inactivity’. The window commences one hour before the official match start time and ends two hours after the match has finished.

During multi-game events (e.g. indoor tournaments/Leagues or end-of-season play-off competitions), the use of social media by members during ‘down time’ is permissible, provided that the integrity of the event is maintained by members refraining from commenting on any contentious issues that may arise. Members should not initiate, or add to, negative social media commentary on the performances of colleagues, match officials, players or any other participant at a multi-game event. The ‘window of inactivity’ should also be applied with regard to members’ own games during such events.

4. NPUA and other appointments

Members accepting NPUA or other appointments should ensure that they are aware of the appropriate social media guidance issued by those organisations. However, MRHUA reserves the right to instigate disciplinary proceedings should these guidelines be breached by members during such events, with specific regard to matters pertaining to MRHUA.

5. Breaches of the social media policy and guidelines, and disciplinary process

Breaches of the social media policy will be considered under section 15 of MRHUA’s Constitution (“Complaints and Appeals”) and may result in disciplinary proceedings. The Constitution may be found here: <http://www.mrhua.org.uk/handbook/handbook420.pdf>

Version: 1

Approved by MRHUA Executive 04.02.14