

# GUIDANCE NOTE

## Social media

Social media is an important communications tool for you. As a professional sports person it enables you to profile yourself, engage with your fans, profile your sponsors and thank the event Promoters.

### General advice

- Know **why** you're on social media. Who are you trying to connect with? What messages or information do you want your audience to receive? The clearer you are about what you're trying to achieve, the more impact your social media activity will have.
- Be yourself. Portraying one type of personality through social media and another in real life can cause problems. It could confuse fans and sponsors, damage your credibility and cause you unnecessary stress.
- You need to be clear about what content is personal and, therefore, not appropriate for your professional communications channels. Once you join the world of professional sport, what you communicate will no longer be personal, so think carefully before sending something out through social media. It will be assumed that what you post or tweet reflects your values, so you are advised to promote a positive, professional image at all times.

### Opportunities

- Social media gives you an opportunity to expand your fan base. Fans love to feel like they have a direct line to, and potentially communicate with, their heroes. This relationship can be very powerful and, in some instances, very fruitful.
- Before playing in an event, check the factsheet for the correct hashtags and usernames, as this helps to keep the media and fans informed.
- Enhance your updates with behind-the-scenes images and video and use content that may be of interest to the media as they may pick up on it.
- Follow people who interest you or who can help to promote your messages.

### Potential negatives

#### a) Self-inflicted problems

There are many examples of athletes who have destroyed their own careers because of something they've posted on social media. As a social media user EVERYTHING you say is in the public sphere. If you're ever unsure about whether you should post/tweet something or not, you probably shouldn't.

Before you communicate, make sure you are confident that no-one will be offended, or that your communications will damage your reputation or that of the LET, Promoters, sponsors, etc..

#### b) Trolls

It is a sad reality that there are people out there who use social media for negative purposes. There might be occasions where someone criticizes you through social media, even through your own channels. When you communicate something through social media, you might get lots of positive responses, but it's all-too-easy to focus on the very few negative ones. Generally, ignore them. Whilst it might be tempting to respond to trolls to challenge them, the best approach is not to engage with them. If you have serious concerns about comments made by a troll, you can report them via the social network or block them.