

Guidelines for Youth Websites and Social Media

*Twitter, Facebook, Myspace, email, team websites, text, IM, linkedin, blogs, chats, flicker, YouTube, - **B4 u rite it....Would you want it on the front page of the daily newspaper??***

Social networking sites provide teams/clubs a new way to extend their brand identity, establish a community experience for their customers and provide personalized interactions. At the same time, such sites usher in novel forms of risk that can't always be mitigated through traditional risk management strategies. If social networking sites are used in an appropriate, professional manner they can provide data and information that the teams and parents greatly appreciate. Social media services provide instant access to your teams with limited time and money.

What to communicate to your followers? It is important to make "appropriateness" the highest priority.

- Provide game and practice reminders
- Inform about cancellations/postponements
- Score updates
- Convey honors and awards about your student athletes or teams
- Any other relevant information your teams/parents would like to see

Cautions in using technology.

- Be cognizant that your written content is always suitable to all viewers
- Team websites can be used by those who would prey on children to identify, single out and make contact with a victim, whether at home or during a soccer event.
- Keep team rosters confidential, as well as any "contact lists".
- Keep to a minimum the people who need to know the times, dates and locations of practices and games, including directions.
- Keep barriers in place. If communication occurs by text or emails, send group messages to the entire team, including parents. Don't use these means to communicate on an individual basis. Limit the use of adult to player communication through cell phones.
- Secure team websites with an administrator (facebook) allowing only those who need to be included.
- Be aware of COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Act), specifically protects children under the age of 13, by requesting parental consent for any collection of personal information. (add a statement to your registration form for parents to sign if player is 13 or younger)