



## **Social Media Guidance**

### **Opening Statements**

British Weight Lifting encourages athletes to embrace and respect the power and opportunity which social media offers Weightlifting and Para-Powerlifting's best known ambassadors - the athletes - to reach out and directly interact with third parties.

This social media guidance is designed to encourage and help athletes, members and staff to use social media and other digital media appropriately to enhance our sport. There are many benefits to using social media as it helps communicate with the public, to consult and engage and be transparent and accountable. Alongside these benefits, we need to be aware of the responsibilities that come with it, and ensure we maintain the highest levels of propriety.

When choosing to use social media, you are acting as a public ambassador of BWL so this guidance should help you understand your responsibilities and look after yourself, British Weight Lifting and any associated programmes, including the Para Powerlifting World Class Programme. As an athlete you are seen by the press and are potential role models for young people, fans and you are expected to conduct yourself professionally and with due respect to all others at all times.

Social media means any form of personal online communication. It includes well-known websites and Apps such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, SnapChat, Whatsapp and iMessage but also includes less well known and developing Apps. Social media is constantly evolving, and this guidance covers these well-established mediums as well as new ones which may arise in future.

### **Confidentiality**

You should never disclose confidential and/or commercially sensitive information relating to BWL or its programmes. Confidential information can include: contractual or financial information, images, information taken exclusively from the Loughborough High Performance Training Centre, commercially sensitive information relating to sponsors or other partners, internal and external communications.

Your social media posts should always respect the rights and privacy of others. You should not post images, videos or information which reveal private moments, or private information about other athletes, members or BWL employees.

## **Conduct:**

You must not publish anything on any form of social media which may bring you, the sport, BWL and its programmes into disrepute. In particular:

- Don't make inappropriate references, criticism or derogatory remarks about other athletes, support staff, BWL employees, or other people connected to BWL programmes.
- Don't criticise or make fun of officials, coaches, competitors or any other individuals or bodies connected with the sport
- Treat everyone you interact with online with respect
- Don't post any comments, videos or photographs which are likely to upset, offend or otherwise cause harm to others that see the content
- When considering the audience that you are posting to, be aware that there will be different sensitivities and life views. Content which isn't intended to be offensive can cause distress or offense to others
- If in any doubt, don't post it.
- Remember – once something is posted online, it's very difficult to remove it.

Don't make comments or jokes or post any content which could be offensive to protected groups or communities. This includes content relating to the following:

- Race, colour or ethnicity
- Nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Gender, including transgender
- Religions and beliefs, including those that don't have a belief
- Sexuality
- Disability and other conditions.

Unless otherwise agreed in advance with the CEO of BWL, you should avoid expressing personal opinions on controversial matters such as politics on any account which is designed solely for the purpose of promoting the sport or BWL.

## **Commercial Matters**

British Weight Lifting has a number of commercial relationships, which provide support to the organisation and its athletes. When representing BWL Programmes, on camps, at competitions, or attending official governing body activities in the UK or overseas, athletes must not promote, in any way, on social media any brand, company or other commercial enterprise which competes with British Weight Lifting.

If an athlete is in any doubt about what commercial relationships compete with British Weight Lifting, then they should discuss this with the CEO of BWL.

## **Staff**

Members of staff are permitted to use social media platforms sensibly and responsibly and in accordance with this guidance and employee policies. You should not identify yourself on any social media platform as an employee of BWL with the exception of LinkedIn.

Where staff operate social media accounts for purely personal reasons, they are encouraged to operate these accounts using the highest possible privacy settings, including Protected Tweets on Twitter, high privacy settings on Facebook or a Private Account on Instagram. This is to protect the private information of staff as well as to protect BWL and its programmes.

When posting on social media platforms you should consider fully the potential consequences of engaging publicly. Any post on social media regardless of privacy setting, is essentially public and can be tracked back to you and/or BWL, even if it is deleted.

You are responsible for everything you post, say and share.

Use of BWL logos, trademarks or images (including those of potential partners) and any other intellectual property of the BWL and its programmes is strictly prohibited unless expressly authorised by BWL - this includes images of the governing body, its premises, staff, athletes, customers, suppliers, partners, well known individuals you may meet through your work and/or other stakeholders.

Professional networking sites such as LinkedIn differ from social sites like Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. On professional sites, staff are permitted to identify themselves as employees where appropriate but should be careful, accurate and discreet and still follow this guidance and other related employee policies.

It is often natural for work colleagues to connect personally online and it is not forbidden to do so, however, BWL does recommend caution before opening up your personal networks to colleagues which will reveal personal information, photographs and personal details that you would not ordinarily volunteer to work connections.

Staff members should never use social media (whether private messaging or public posts) to discuss any work-related matter.

Failure to comply with any of the above could result in disciplinary action, up to and including, in serious matters, dismissal

This guidance may be amended by BWL at any time at its absolute discretion. This information should be read together with athletes' agreements, contracts of employment or during inductions to BWL programmes and your obligations of confidentiality that are contained therein.

## **Online Security and Safety**

Ensure you always have the best security on all of your social media settings. Particularly, you should always seek to use the most up to date two factor authentication or login verification offered by each platform/App.

Online abuse is a fact of modern life, but this does not mean it should be tolerated. If you receive any form of abuse online, we recommend that you do not respond to the abuser but instead seek the help and support of BWL. Take a screen shot of any abuse received and report it to BWL who will do everything it can to help and support you.

When using Snapchat (or indeed any platform/App where content is supposed to disappear) please be aware that there are many third party programmes and other ways that people you communicate with can download your material without you knowing.

There have been many instances of people sharing information, photos or videos on Snapchat and that content appearing online. Be extremely cautious about sharing sensitive information and don't work under the misapprehension that what you do online will disappear.

## **Safeguarding**

You should avoid interacting on social media with children or other vulnerable people in your care or who you work with on a professional level. Particularly, you should not accept friend requests nor engage with private direct messages on social media.

The minimum age for use of social media is 13 and you should never encourage children younger than that age to use social media (for example, posts by children of that age should never be liked).

*Updated: 2019*