Social Media Guidelines for Student-Athletes

I. INTRODUCTION

As a student-athlete, you are a valued member of the Central Washington University Athletics Department. Our goal in this document is to give you a set of guidelines for using social media in an appropriate manner and to help protect you from potential risks related to social media use.

Competing for Central Washington as a student-athlete is a privilege, not a right. Central Washington University is a public institution of higher education and supports your rights to freedom of speech and self-expression. These rights include the use of different types of social media. However, as a student-athlete, you are also a representative of the university and you are expected to meet a higher set of behavioral expectations than non-student-athletes.

As a student-athlete, you are responsible for the public portrayal of yourself, your team, and Central Washington University in a positive manner at all times. As a student-athlete, you are a role model to other students, community members, youth, and future students. Your participation in any type of social media should follow federal and state laws, Athletics Department and team policies, university policies and regulations, and the rules and policies of the governing bodies that regulate Central Washington University athletics. These include the Great Northwest Athletic Conference (GNAC) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

Information posted online can have a negative impact on your life as a student-athlete. Social media content is easily accessible to reporters, recruits, “groupies”, fans, predators, sports agents, law enforcement and others. Any social media postings you make can affect your personal safety and future employment opportunities. We encourage you to post only information and images that represent you and Central Washington University in an appropriate manner. If you do this, you will enjoy the positive benefits of using social media and avoid negative outcomes.

Examples of postings that may be viewed as inappropriate or offensive include the following:

1. Posting of photos and videos that show the personal use of alcohol or tobacco
2. Posting of photos, videos or links that are sexual in nature
3. Posting photos, videos or links that condone drug use or drug related activity.
4. Postings of pictures, videos, and comments that include the use of offensive or inappropriate language.
II. GUIDELINES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA USE

The following guidelines are recommendations and tips on how to best use social media and ensure your safety as a student-athlete.

Everything is Public Information

Any text or photo placed you post online is out of your control as soon as it is posted – even if there is limited access to your profile. Even after a picture, video, or comment is deleted, it may still be accessible. Because of this, we ask that you use caution when adding friends or allowing users to “follow” you on social media websites because some users may use your information in a negative manner. **Safety Tip:** Check your privacy settings to help control who can look at your profile, photos and personal information.

Safety First

Being cautious of who you add as a friend or allow to follow you online protects you and others. Some users of social media may try to take advantage of you, by gaining information about your team or teammates. This information could be useful to negatively publicize individuals, teams, Central Washington University, and in some instances to seek an edge in sports gambling. **Safety Tip:** Limiting access to your profile can prevent unwanted users from accessing any of your information. Think carefully about how much information you want to share with the public and even your friends. Social media sites often ask for your cell phone number, birth date, address, email, and possibly your class schedule. If you don’t want everyone on your friends/followers list to know your personal information then limit their access.

Think First

Remember, that information about you can still possibly be viewed by the public even when your site is considered limited to just your friends or private. Search engines display pictures and posts years after the date of publication, even with the strictest settings by social media users. We encourage you to post only thoughts and pictures that you would feel comfortable sharing with the public, and always err on the side of caution. If you are angry, or passionate about a game, or subject, delay postings until you are calm and can think about the potential consequences.
Think About Your Future

Many employers and graduate school admissions officers are reviewing social media use by applicants. They may use the content you have posted on social media sites in evaluating your application. Carefully consider how you want to be viewed by others and the way it might affect your future. Think about information currently existing on your social media profiles that could be misinterpreted (e.g. pictures, videos, comments and other types of postings) and consider removing them.

Be Respectful of Opponents and Officials

Central Washington University student-athletes are expected to keep comments about opposing teams and game officials respectful and game related. You are entitled to comment and have opinions about competition with opposing schools, but these comments should not be derogatory, threatening or offensive. Use appropriate language when posting comments about opponents, officials, coaches, teammates, fans, and administration. Multiple negative issues can arise in competition fueled by conversations or comments posted online.

Be a Loyal Wildcat

Posting information about your team or about the Central Washington University Athletics Department that is not public knowledge, such as information regarding injuries, rosters, eligibility status, travel plans/itineraries or disciplinary actions can have a negative impact your team and teammates. Student-athletes at Central Washington University are expected to be loyal Wildcats.

University-approved activities requiring absence

Sponsors of university-approved activities requiring absence from campus will prepare and sign an official list of the names of those students who plan to be absent. It is each student’s responsibility to present a copy of the official list to the appropriate instructors and make arrangements prior to the absence(s). Instructors are encouraged to make accommodations.

Members of the university community directing or arranging such activities must adhere to the following guidelines:

a. Scheduling of such activities shall not overlap with official final examination periods.
b. Scheduling of such activities shall not require an absence of more than three (3) consecutive class days.

c. Scheduling of such activities shall be announced to the students far enough in advance for them to plan to fulfill course requirements.

d. Seeking permission for an exception lies with the sponsor and not with the student(s).