



Rugby Canada / Rugby Ontario

Rugby Club Social Media Reference Guide

Project Lead: Bryan Kelly, Rugby Canada's National Program Communications Coordinator

Supplementary Assistance: Brock Smith, Rugby Ontario's Communications Coordinator

Background:

- Rugby Canada has created a social media initiative that is dedicated to the growth and development of social media for provincial unions across Canada, which has been edited and adapted by Rugby Ontario to aid the province's rugby clubs
- Rugby's growth on social media platforms in the last year has been tremendous and we will continue to foster and grow these communities throughout the upcoming rugby seasons
- With the game of rugby growing in Canada, Rugby Canada and Rugby Ontario are using new and exciting mediums to keep up with growing trends

Assumptions:

- Social media has become a valuable communications tool, and many of your fans and supporters are relying on these platforms more than ever to receive their team and club information
- Social media is here to stay and will only continue to grow
- Social media is a proven tool for directing online traffic to your website, promoting upcoming games and events, and encouraging new fans and followers
- Canadian rugby fans have become increasingly dependent on social media as a means of receiving their team and club information

Objectives – Rugby Ontario:

- Help promote exposure to club Facebook and Twitter accounts, in hopes of attracting new followers to club-level rugby

- Distribute social media reference guides to club representatives, to help outline the benefits of proper social media use
- Help create successful platforms where clubs can not only align with their players and fans, but also with Rugby Ontario

Objectives – Clubs:

- Grow club Facebook and Twitter accounts, as a means of attracting new followers and strengthening current relationships
- Promote social media use, as a means of growing and promoting the game from a grassroots level
- Provide regular posts that include, but are not limited to, game scores, event information, local news items, and fundraising and sponsor opportunities

Target Audience:

- Current club social media followers
- Canadian rugby supporters including fans, players, players' family and friends, coaches, officials etc. who are active on social media and are not currently following your platforms
- Club, provincial, and Canadian rugby fans who are new adapters joining social media
- Businesses who currently sponsor club teams, or are interested in sponsoring your club brand

Strategies:

- Engage your social networking followers and strengthen relationships with them
- Deliver interactive content that builds on fan loyalty and team popularity and deepen the fans' emotional connection to Rugby Ontario's club teams
- Attempt to reach new followers by providing fresh, up-to-date, accurate content, especially game scores
- Create excitement and fun around attending the home games and events

Tactics:

Social Media Tips and Trick:

Facebook:

- Provide content when your teams are playing at home and on the road
- Double and triple check your spelling and grammar before pressing send
- Don't hesitate to post links to your own website, to expose more people to your club

Twitter:

- Retweet and answer accounts that mention your Twitter account if and when their tweets relate to your brand and will promote your teams.
(ie. Fan asks -- @AuroraBarbs when is kickoff between the #Barbs vs. #TorontoScottish on Saturday?
Example response – Kickoff is 3pm. Enjoy the Game! #GoBarbsGo)
- Provide useful information such as kick-off times, score updates and community information.
- If you want Rugby Ontario to help get your message out to a wider audience, tag Rugby Ontario in your tweets by writing @RugbyOntario (ie, The final in the Barbs vs Scottish match was xx-xx (cc: @RugbyOntario)) Rugby Ontario can then retweet the information to their followers.

Social Media - Do's and Do Not's

Treat social media the same way you'd treat mainstream media. Although social media is more casual in nature, anything you say can be picked up, used and distributed globally by mainstream media.

No inappropriate language or content. Do not allow any swearing, racist or sexist remarks, homophobic slurs, slander towards any company or sponsor or references to drugs etc.

Remember, you represent your club. Everything you say on social media is a representation of your club.

Be authentic. Be honest about who you are, whom you represent and your motivations for posting. Avoid marketing lingo and jargon. Rather, use clear, concise and direct language.

Be professional

- Treat all users courteously, even if you disagree with their comments.
- Don't drink & tweet.
- Don't instigate arguments and negative player interaction on Twitter or any other social channel.

Participate regularly, if possible

Building engagement means participating in conversations frequently and reliably.

Create interesting content

- Promote your events, activities and teams in unique and interesting ways with content fans and users find informative

Think Twice. Always ask yourself if you'd want your post or tweet to be on the front page a newspaper. If so, DON'T send it!

Use Hashtags on Twitter. Any time you're talking about a game, a specific tour or tournament, or a World Cup, please use the appropriate hashtags: #RugbyCanada, #RugbyOntario, #McCormickCup, #OWLCup, etc. to make your comments searchable.

Interaction is King. The most successful people on Twitter interact with their followers. If you decide to interact with fans remember these tips:

- To reply publicly to someone, just use the '@' symbol and the person's handle.
- If a fan/follower asks you a question that you feel is appropriate, answer them publicly
- Re-tweeting is a great way to show you like a comment & it engages your followers – people like having their tweets validated.
- Avoid heated debates and keep emotion out of the equation. If you're tempted to react negatively, give yourself 12 hours before you reply.
- Keep it clean

Do not say anything personal. The public can search anything you put on the Internet at any time. DO NOT post personal information such as your address etc.

Proofread before you send. Before you send your tweet, double-and triple-check that your grammar and spelling is perfect and the information is accurate and non-confidential.

One-Page Twitter Recap

Do:

- Tweet about things related to your involvement with rugby. IE: upcoming games, road trips, working out, congratulating teammates etc.
- Retweet content sent from @RugbyCanada, @RugbyOntario and fellow rugby clubs
- Tweet about the great products and services of your sponsors
- Try to tweet on a regular basis
- Reply to questions from fans
- Use hashtags – BUT keep them under 15 characters max
- Check your spelling and grammar & always use complete words
- Always remember you're not only representing yourself, but also the entire Rugby Canada and Rugby Ontario organizations.

Don't:

- DON'T tweet anything that's offensive to anyone, including swearing, racist and sexist remarks, and homophobic slurs. You wouldn't swear or say disrespectful things during a live television interview, therefore the same rules must be followed.
- DON'T retweet anything that will make you look negative. When in doubt, DON'T retweet it!
- Do not say anything regarded towards: drugs, alcohol, partying, officiating mistakes, badmouthing other players in the league or your organization.
- DON'T be disrespectful

If you have questions, please contact Brock Smith – bsmith@rugbyontario.com