



Champion Coach Note: Social Media

With the Internet, we are more connected today than ever before. Like all mediums of communication, however, the Internet and social media are not without their dangers. "Cyber bullying," especially, has become more prevalent. This form of bullying isn't just practiced by children and teens – adults, too, abuse social media and the Internet as mediums for negative or derogatory comments. Digital Trends indicates that 26% of teachers report "cyber bullying" by parents. Recently, an Indiana youth football coach was fired for making derogatory comments about an 8-year old player on Facebook. These trends are disturbing; it is up to you, as coaches, to be aware of these dangers, model proper use of social media, and educate your athletes about appropriate and positive ways to use the media.

Those who use the Internet and social media must realize that, regardless of the medium, online connections are still human interactions. Therefore, feelings are capable of being hurt. At the same time, real love can be communicated and spread through social media. Social media should foster real human connections, not rupture them; it should build bridges, not burn them; it should strengthen relationships, not undermine and weaken them.

Coaches, athletes, and parents all are responsible for using social media responsibly. Dr. Eugene Gan, a professor at Franciscan University of Steubenville, outlines several media keys to consider when using or consuming media. He stresses that "all media and all media technology should respect the dignity of the human person; be truth-filled; inspire people towards the good, the true, and the beautiful; be skillfully developed; and be motivated by and rooted

Happy St. Patrick's Day from all of us at Notre Dame



Oratory Prep, NJ High School Partner

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down,
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in the eye that sees me, Christ in the ear that hears me.

From the Lorica of St. Patrick

Athlete Reflection

Watch this video with your athletes (as a positive example of social media usage) and reflect on the following questions for yourself and with your team: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4z7gDsSKUmU>

1. Do I use the Internet and social media as tools to spread joy and love?
2. Do I respect the dignity of other people through social media?
3. Do I inspire others through my use of social media?
4. Do I try to make a positive difference through my use of the media?

in human experience.”

As a coach, you should consider a number of important questions when using social media. Does your use, as the Pontifical Council for Social Communications stresses, “build and sustain human community”? Is it truth-filled? Does it respect the dignity of the human person? Stress to your athletes and parents that these standards be met. Give your parents and athletes a summary of Dr. Gan’s media keys and provide some examples of positive social media outlets (Jeremy Lin’s YouTube, Soul Pancake YouTube channel, the Pope’s Twitter account). Develop a code of conduct together with your athletes specifically regarding their use of social media. Remember that a human person is at the end of all social communication. With your athletes, parents, and school community, commit to using social media in a way that spreads love and joy and upholds the dignity of each and every person.