



Policy: Social Media Policy
Created: 2011 Re-approved: July 2018

Introduction

Alpine Ontario Alpin (AOA) is committed to providing an environment to lead, develop and promote positive alpine ski racing experiences. As a member of AOA you have a significant “voice” in the ski racing community whether you are an athlete, parent, official, coach or general member. This “voice” using social media can be one of AOA’s greatest communication tools to promote positive alpine ski racing experiences, and just as quickly, can be one of AOA’s greatest tools to disseminate negative experiences.

Please take the time to review the guidelines outlined here, and learn as much as you can about Social Media – the good and the bad. The guidelines set out in this Policy are designed to protect AOA, as well as its members and others associated with them from illegal, unauthorized, irresponsible or abusive use of social media. Please treat this seriously and with respect. Please note, that any form of harassment using electronic devices commonly known as cyber bullying by athletes, coaches, parents, volunteers and officials will not be tolerated. Please also see the AOA Harassment Policy under Resources.

Scope of the Policy

AOA members include any general member, athlete, coach, official, parent and administrator who have registered online with AOA. All AOA members are required to comply with this Policy when participating or engaging in communications in social media personally, or as an official representative of the sport.

What is Social Media?

The term “social media” includes any media used for web-based, digital or mobile social interaction. Social media applications allow individuals to create and share user generated

content with others. When used inappropriately, or for questionable motives, social media interactions can be harmful and may cause substantial harm to the sport of alpine ski racing and those involved with, or otherwise associated with them.

Examples of social media covered by the Policy include, but are not limited to:

- Social Networking Sites (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn);
- Micro-blogging Sites (i.e. Twitter, Tumblr, Reddit);
- Online Video and Photo Sharing Communities (i.e. YouTube, Flickr, Vimeo, Tumblr);
- Online Discussion Forums;
- Website Encyclopaedias (i.e. Wikipedia);
- Online User Review Forums (i.e. TripAdvisor, Yelp!);
- Personal or Corporate Blogs.

What is Cyber bullying?

Cyberbullying is the use of any electronic communication device to convey a message in any form (text, image, audio or video) that defames, intimidates, harasses or is otherwise intended to harm, insult or humiliate another in a deliberate, repeated or hostile and unwanted manner under a person's true or false identity. In addition, any communication of this form that disputes or prevents a safe and positive environment may also be considered cyberbullying.

Social Media Guidelines

a) ALWAYS comply with all laws, including those relating to libel, copyright, trademark and data protection and regulations. The obvious laws include the legal age to purchase and consume alcohol, cigarettes and vape. Not as obvious is the privacy law and age of minors. In Ontario, Quebec and Alberta a minor is anyone under 18. In B.C. it is under 19. What does this mean to you? Simply put, stay away from posts with minors, or be aware that anything inappropriate could escalate beyond AOA disciplinary actions, it could be breaking the law.

b) Comments or remarks of an inappropriate nature which are detrimental to any ski team, ski club, Alpine Ontario, other PSOs, Alpine Canada or an individual will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action.

- i) Protect AOA Never post anything that puts AOA or yourself at risk.
- ii) Don't criticize AOA, our athletes, coaches, officials, ROC's, etc.
- iii) Don't overshare: Once you hit "share," you can't get it back.

- c) It should be recognized that social media comments are on the record and instantly published and available to the public and media. Everyone including AOA and/or Team Coaches, competitors, corporate partners and the media can review social media communications. You should conduct yourself in an appropriate and professional manner at all times.
- d) DO NOT post, shoot video or take photos inside a hotel room, or change room. Posts of any sexual connotation will be subject to disciplinary action.
- e) Use Common Sense. Perception is reality (rephrase – perception is not reality) and through the use of online social networks, the lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred. Remain courteous and professional at all times when representing your sport and AOA ski club.
- f) Refrain from divulging confidential information of a personal or team related nature. Do not discuss injury, or any type of personal health information about any competitor. Only divulge information that is considered public knowledge. Maintain AOA's Confidentiality Agreement: Never reveal classified or confidential.
- g) Use your best judgment at all times – pause before posting. Once your comments are posted they cannot be retracted. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for your comments and they are published for the public record.
 - i) Please represent AOA ethically and with integrity.
 - ii) Be transparent: Use your real name, identify who you are and be clear about your role.
 - iii) Be truthful: If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, be the first to point it out and be specific about what it is.
 - iv) Be yourself: Stick to your area of expertise; write what you know. Do not misrepresent your level of knowledge or certification.
- h) Respect our Sponsors. AOA are generously supported by many great companies and we need to support them, their products and services. AOA High Performance programs and age group programs are paid for by corporate partners and as such, these companies expect that we are representatives of their corporate brand. Please visit the AOA website to ensure you are familiar with the current AOA partners.

i) Be smart about comments. Your comments can be as detrimental to our image as a post. Positive comments are a great opportunity to engage and promote positive ski racing experiences. Negative comments, including offensive language or wording that is detrimental to your image and our sport need to be deleted immediately. It is best not to engage at all in negative posts in a public matter. You can do so using ‘Private messaging, etc.’ but in general it is best not to respond and delete the post.

Examples of Social Media Violations

The following are examples of conduct through social media and networking mediums that are considered violations of the AOA social media policy and may be subject to disciplinary action.

a) Any statement deemed to be publicly critical of an AOA official or detrimental to the welfare of a member. *“Terrible set...better luck next time.”*

b) Divulging confidential information that may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Athlete injuries or health concerns; *“Best wishes to Jane xoxo”...location tag “Chile, Hospital”*
- Any other matter of a sensitive nature to a member of a team, AOA, ACA or an individual *“Talk about a head case on the U16 OCUP circuit”...tagging a team mate*

c) Negative or derogatory comments about any team, club, AOA staff, volunteers, programs, stakeholder, players or any AOA member. *“Quebec on our heels, again”*

d) Any form of bullying, harassment or threats against competitors, coaches or officials. *“This official is awful.”*

e) Photographs, video or comments promoting negative influences or criminal behavior, including but not limited to:

- Drug use (including underage smoking and vape);
- Alcohol abuse;
- Public intoxication;
- Hazing;
- Sexual exploitation; etc.

g) Inappropriate, derogatory, racist, or sexist comments of any kind, in keeping with AOA policies and regulations on these matters.

“Skiing like a girl today. So slow” – post from a male skiers to his female teammate or

“Step up and join the boys club” – post from a male Coach directed towards a female coach

h) Online activity that is meant to alarm other individuals or to misrepresent fact or truth.

“No talent in the pool” #U16Weak -- directed to up & coming U16s after a weak showing at say, Nationals or CanAms.

Discipline

Complaints denoted to AOA will be investigated and reviewed by the AOA Discipline and Ethics Committee and if deemed, warranted members of AOA may be subject to disciplinary action.

When a member of an AOA Travel team is in violation of this social media policy, the AOA Executive Director and Communications Manager along with the competitor’s immediate coach (if applicable) will deal with the matter immediately in the following manner:

1 – Investigate the complaint.

2 – If a post or comment is still live and is in obvious violation of the guidelines set out here the athlete, coach or administrator will be reprimanded as follows:

- i) Verbal & written warning for their 1st offence
- ii) Verbal & written warning for their 2nd offence with additional disciplinary actions as deemed necessary by coaches and/or AOA. For example sit out the next race series, volunteer at next race, community work, etc.
- iii) Possible removal from the competition and future AOA sanctioned events.

Support Staff

AOA has a dedicated Communications Manager who is here to help you should you confront any issues. Please contact any or all of the following AOA staff members with any concerns.

Scott Barrett,
AOA Executive Director
705-444-5111x206

Robyn Skinner
Competition Director
705-444-5111x128

Kristin Ellis
Communications Manager
705-444-5111x132