

Badminton Ghana: Social Media Networking Guidelines for Athletes

Facebook, Twitter and the like are very valuable tools for both marketing and for keeping in touch. Ghana Badminton Association (BAG) promotes itself and members via Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and several websites.

We understand that as many of you travel away from home for long periods to compete and you may be using Facebook and Twitter (and other various networks) to stay in touch with friends and family. We encourage this BUT we also want to ensure you do not risk the reputation and standing of the BAG national team, the National Sports Authority (NSA), BAG sponsors or, indeed your own personal reputation.

A good rule of thumb is to think twice and post once. Don't put anything out in public that you wouldn't want your grandmother to read because once it's in cyberspace it's there forever. You might delete it later but that doesn't mean it hasn't been cached (stored) in one of the thousands of search engines that operate on the Internet or hasn't been forwarded on or copied into someone else's domain. What might seem amusing and innocent to you this year might not be so in a couple of years' time when you are about to sign a contract, and photos of you, say on a pub crawl drunk, emerge in the media. Likewise, a comment you made about someone comes back to haunt you further down the track.

The safest option is to ensure that your own profiles on Social media are set to PRIVATE. By keeping profiles private, fans and strangers will not be able to click into your profiles and invade your privacy. Fans and strangers can join you through the official Ghana BAGdminton Association Facebook page, your own official Facebook fan page, or they can follow you on the BAG website.

Athletes are encouraged to interact with fans on the BAG Facebook wall (or their own fan page) and engage with fans in the following way:

- sharing your achievements or the achievements of your teammates;
- congratulating athletes, staff, team sponsors;
- thanking people for helping you achieve results;
- chatting with fans of the team; and
- some 'fun' information (e.g. who recorded the fastest smash for the day).

The guidelines for athletes in the online environment are the same as those that apply to other forms of communication, including print media, television, radio, and public appearances. It is important to remember, however, that information and views can spread very quickly and widely through online media and can easily be subject to distortion and misrepresentation. **SO BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY AND DO.**

Cautions BAG recommends:

- Do not include personal information of yourself or others;
- Do not disclose any confidential information, including competitive information belonging to BAG, your team, unless authorised to do so;
- Do not use offensive language or any defamatory statements, (likely to injure the reputation of another person);
- Use your best judgment – do not publish something that makes you the slightest bit uncomfortable, and never write/publish if you are feeling emotional or upset (or are intoxicated);
- Always ask for a person's permission before posting their picture on a social networking forum;
- Never comment on rumours, do not deny or affirm them or speculate about rumours;

- Do not make any misleading or false statement;
- Do not make available any intellectual property, including copyright material (for example, documents, music, film, photographs, artistic works, etc) that you don't have permission to use;
- Do not make any statement that might bring the team, the sport, sponsors, BAG or NSA into disrepute.
- Always use social network forums to add value and promote the sport in a positive way.

IF IN DOUBT LEAVE IT OUT! HELP & ADVICE

If you have a question, want some advice or need some extra tips and training we are here to help. You train hard to succeed but being a successful professional is also about how you present in the public so we urge you to put some effort into your personal development as well.