

Nordiq Alberta

Social Media Policy (2015)



Introduction

In developing this draft policy, the following sources were consulted to ensure NA policy is current and covers the main areas of concern.

- NC social media policy was used as model for this draft. This should build a consistent guide for our sports community which has many of the same points of contact: races, officials, coaches, athletes, mentors, sponsors, media etc. Received authorization from C+M Manager to adapt their material to our purpose.
- Reviewed other policies: Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta amateur hockey. Viasport BC, *Social Media Safety Tips for Sports Organizations* (#1 Create a Social Media Policy).
- Posted question on a LinkedIn forum for Calgary IABC people.
- Revised for September 28 based on board feedback to modify terminology, clarifications and eliminate term *schools* in “Goals”.
- Revised October 15 for typos and to add “Identified Representatives”

Background

At the June 10, 2015 Board Meeting, the absence of a NA Social Media Policy was highlighted as a point of vulnerability for NA and the development of a draft policy was requested.

Goals

The goals of this policy are to:

- Develop a policy which is a guide for people who are broadly associated with NA and its activities so that social media is used as a positive force for cross country skiing in Alberta.
- Create a policy which is consistent with the values and principles of NA, reinforces proper conduct, adheres to government legislation and reflects our belief in fair play and respect for others.
- Protect NA from liability or reputation risk by entrenching a policy with guidelines and a process to address social media issues.
- Insulate NA members, organisations and those associated with NA from negative social media issues by creating a process to address issues and compel a corrective action.

Draft submitted July 15, 2015 by Rod Neander, NA Board.

Revised for September 28, 2015

Revised October 15, 2015

NA Social Media Policy

Introduction

As an organisation committed to building awareness of the benefits of cross country skiing for everyone in Alberta, Nordiq Alberta encourages the use of social media as an outreach tool. Athletes, coaches, parents, supporters and those people with an interest in the sport are the best ambassadors for cross country skiing in Alberta.

By increasing the awareness of the sport in the province, clubs will attract new members and sponsors will reach larger audiences. Greater visibility will help Albertans associate skiing with a healthy lifestyle, vibrant communities and the inspirational achievements of high-performance sport.

Online conversations and social media activities concerning cross country are an integral part of our freedom of speech. NA is committed to a sports environment that supports responsible and respectful use of social media by its athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, staff, supporters and its Board of Directors.

For people with a direct or indirect relationship with Nordiq Alberta, it is important to be aware that media visibility may reflect upon Nordiq Alberta. In social media, any representation of Nordiq Alberta, identification of its participants or reference to NA activities should adhere to the same principles and values found at the core of the organisation. Statements and opinions in social media are cast into the public domain, similar to other broadcast media. For this reason, a social media policy has been developed to provide guidance, identify responsibility for oversight and a disciplinary process for all those involved with Nordiq Alberta.

1. Social Media Policy - Scope

This policy applies to all employees, directors, coaches, athletes, officials, volunteers, supporters and members of NA. It applies to online behaviour as a NA representative and equally as a private individual expressing themselves in social media.

All material posted or circulated online can be considered permanent. The policy intends to cover the broad spectrum of social media channels available today and the foreseeable future, whether these channels of communication are controlled directly by the individual or part of a larger sharing platform. Some examples are Facebook, blogs, Twitter, file sharing portals, emails, online comments/ratings of products or services or webcasts. Individuals are responsible for their opinions and activities including **redistribution of others peoples' comments or opinions.**

This policy applies to all **social media activities that fall within NA's organisational or operational jurisdiction including the protection of: the organisation's and individual's privacy; the reputation of the sport, member clubs and NA; supporters and sponsors; and the profile, brand or reputation of cross country skiing.**

2. Standard of Conduct – Message Tone and Content

NA supports social media when it is used as a positive force for skiing. Adopting an upbeat and enthusiastic tone, combined with content which showcases the positive elements of the sport, will generate loyalty to the communication and camaraderie amongst athletes. NA will not tolerate communication which is hurtful, defamatory or inconsistent with its guiding values and principles.

Examples of social media communication which are unacceptable to NA:

- Hurtful, malicious, degrading or otherwise offensive to an individual or group of individuals.
- Refer to controversial or potentially inflammatory subjects including politics, sex, and religion.
- Are damaging to our brand and/or relationships with our stakeholders and funding partners.
- Divulge confidential or proprietary information that belongs to Nordiq Alberta.
- Fail to respect the privacy of others by disclosing personal information without requisite consent.
- Exploit NA, its events or participants for commercial purposes without prior consent.

3. Standard of Conduct – Public Representation and Social Media Posting

3.1

NA staff, elected officials, people acting in an official capacity for NA as well as the general public may appear on NA social media platforms. This visibility should adhere to the spirit of the social media policy. Examples of this are technical ski blogs/advice, public forums hosted by NA, text exchanges or public dialogue hosted on NA platforms. The NA and board will have the opportunity to use social media to encourage and reinforce the values and goals of NA by sharing knowledge, generating visibility or promoting technical or other aspects of cross country skiing. NA may also invite members of the ski community to create visibility on NA social media platforms.

3.2

Only NA staff, representatives, delegates (such as board members, technical advisers etc.) may represent NA in an official capacity, or create the perception of representing NA officially, in public and social media. Interviews and requests for information from news media are to be directed to NA office.

This will not inhibit the public following an acceptable standard to contribute to the social media dialogue on NA sites where appropriate or freely comment upon NA or its activities.

Positive media coverage of Nordiq Alberta is valuable, however, personal posts or opinions may not be attributed to or appear to be endorsed by NA without consent.

3.3

Governance

The responsibility of overseeing social media visibility falls to the board of NA. Day-to-day decision making and the positive use of NA sites rests with NA staff. The Marketing/Communication Board member will act as staff advisor, consultant and elevate issues to board discussion if necessary.

4. Procedure for Review and Notification

An individual that uses social media irresponsibly or disrespectfully in a manner that brings NA into disrepute and/or is contrary to the standards of conduct for messaging and posting set above will be subject to discipline.

Disciplinary actions will reflect the severity of the infraction. Minor infractions are single, unintentional breaches of this policy that generally do not result in harm to individuals and/or NA. Major infractions may be a single breach of significance or repeated breaches/behaviour which is judged in violation of **NA's values and guiding principles.**

A complaint or the identification of a social media issue will be brought to NA in the following manner: notification by email, writing or other method illustrating the issue with supporting credible material if available. It will be reviewed by panel of three representatives of NA: Manager of NA, the Board Member responsible for Communications and the Board Chair. These representatives may delegate this responsibility to other board members on a case-by-case basis. The review panel of three will convene a discussion to determine: 1. Whether a transgression has occurred; 2. The action to be taken by NA 3. Report to be Board at the next meeting. In the case of a major issue with potential to escalate in severity, an emergency board meeting will be called to review the issue and recommended action.

Disciplinary requirements for minor infractions may include the following:

- Required immediate removal and retraction of messages in question;
- Verbal or written reprimand from NA;
- Required verbal or written apology; and/or
- Any other remedial action considered appropriate relative to the breach.

Disciplinary requirements for major infractions may include:

- Actions identified above and;
- Required public clarification, apology and/or statement indicating discordance with NA values and principles;
- Probation or suspension from NA official activities such as races;
- Any other action considered appropriate relative to the seriousness of the breach including actions supported by legal advice.

The panel reviewing a social media complaint or transgression will provide an opportunity for the accused person to clarify his/her intentions. This interaction may be verbal or written and should provide an opportunity **for clarification prior to the panel's presentation to the Board. In a case of serious liability or infringement, this opportunity to discuss will not delay corrective action by the panel.**

In the course of reviewing a social media breach, NA Board may divulge the contents of the message, describe the issue and actions to a limited number of interested parties such as government, sponsors, individuals or media if it is deemed in the interest of protecting the reputation of NA or to avoid harmful liability.

NA reserves the right to issue a private or public notice distancing itself from any individuals or groups which directly, or by implication, associate with or create controversial or defamatory social media communication.