



## **Social Media Policy for Athletics**

### **Introduction**

Athletics is an integral part of Montreat College. Because of the centrality of athletics to both the student experience and the public perception of the college, it is important for Montreat College Athletics to project a clear and consistent athletic brand to players, prospective students, supporters, and community members.

Social media is a tool that can be used to communicate valuable information to athletic team members, as well as their family and fans. It can also be used to provide news and updates to fans and supporters. And it can be a valuable tool for recruiting new student athletes. Through all of these uses, social media should be leveraged to create, sustain, and improve the brand image of Montreat College Athletics.

### **Approved Social Media Accounts**

In order to accomplish the goals, two types of social media accounts have been approved by the college.

The first type are the public-facing social media accounts which provide Montreat College students, prospective students, faculty, staff, alumni, and other supporters with news and updates, from game recaps to coach hirings to athletic facilities improvements. These accounts are administered by the college's sports information director, in conjunction with the athletic director and Marketing and Communications Office. The two accounts that fall under this type are:

- Facebook: Montreat College Cavaliers: <https://www.facebook.com/MontreatCollegeCavaliers/>
- Twitter: Montreat College Cavaliers: <https://twitter.com/MontreatCavs>

No other athletic-related Facebook pages or Twitter accounts have been approved by the college or are authorized for use.



The second type of social media accounts approved by the college are those which provide players, their families and fans of a particular sport with sport-specific information, including scheduling updates, travel updates, real-time score updates, photos, and messages of encouragement for players and fans. These accounts are administered by individual coaches, in conjunction and their assistant coaches and graduate assistants, with oversight from the sports information director. The two types of accounts that fall under this type are:

- Facebook “groups” (NOT “pages”). Public groups are preferred to private groups. An excellent example is the Montreat College Volleyball Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1556355664583828/>
- Instagram accounts. An excellent example is the Montreat College Cross Country and Track and Field Instagram account: <https://www.instagram.com/montreatxctf/>

Coaches are not required to create and maintain these types of accounts, but they are encouraged as time permits. All Facebook groups and Instagram accounts must be approved by the sports information director and the Marketing and Communications Office **PRIOR TO** creation and activation.

#### **Policies for all Montreat College affiliated social media accounts**

- **Protect confidential and proprietary information:** Do not post confidential or proprietary information about Montreat College, students, employees, or alumni following federal requirements of FERPA and HIPAA. The college’s email system must be used when communicating about an issue involving a specific student. Any information that can be used to locate someone offline such as phone numbers, addresses, birth dates, and email addresses may not be posted.
- **Respect copyright and fair use:** When posting, you must have written permission prior to using any copyrighted or proprietary materials such as music, art, logos, photographs, videos, or text.
- **Content posting and frequency:** All official posting should reflect the Montreat College mission statement and values. Social media accounts which are not updated regularly are ineffective and reflect poorly on the



Montreat College brand, and the Marketing and Communications Office reserves the right to request that an admin be replaced due to lack of activity.

- **Content Acceptability:** Inappropriate, offensive, injurious, illegal, or questionable content may be removed by Montreat College at the direction of the sports information director or Marketing and Communications Office.
- **Management:** All admins of Montreat College social media pages must be approved by the sports information director and Marketing and Communications Office. The college's sports information director must be one of the admins for all Facebook groups and Instagram accounts.
- **Brand Standards:** All college policies and brand guidelines, including logos, apply to social media sites.

### Best Practices

- **Post engaging content:** The goal of social media is to communicate something of value to our audiences. So before each and every post, ask yourself "Who is the audience for this post?" and "Will this be post be of value to them?"
- **Engage with your audience:** When someone comments on one of your posts, be sure to like that person's comment and, if appropriate, post a reply. This kind of direct engagement helps build a bond between the audience and the college.
- **Think twice before posting:** True privacy does not exist in the world of social media. Posts can turn up years after the publication date, and archival systems save information even if a post is deleted. If you would not say something aloud at a conference or to a member of the media, refrain from posting it online.
- **Strive for accuracy:** Confirm any facts before posting and review content for grammatical and spelling errors. If you make an error, correct it quickly. Use the APA style manual for any text used.
- **Be professional:** Do not use low resolution photos, heavy filtering, or cheesy fonts.
- **Be respectful:** Understand that posted content could lead to comments or discussion of opposing ideas. Responses should be polite and constructive.
- **Link back:** You are welcome and encouraged to provide a link to [www.montreat.edu](http://www.montreat.edu) (or any other official Montreat College sites) from your social media platform.