



**United States Australian**

**Football League** A 501(C)3

*Not-For-Profit Organization*

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## **USAFL SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION POLICY**

### **Introduction**

The USAFL is an independent, unbiased, non-profit amateur sports organization dedicated to the development, enjoyment and participation of Australian Football in the United States. All official social media platforms of the USAFL exist to support the stated purposes of the league. The USAFL embraces social media as a valuable and important tool to engage and connect with its community.

It is important for Applicable Persons to understand that the content posted on social media can have serious ramifications for the USAFL, its members, corporate partners, stakeholders or other related organizations and individuals.

The USAFL does not tolerate hate speech of any kind, derogatory comments related to protected classes, harassment, discrimination, bullying, propaganda, misinformation, disinformation or intimidation in any form – at the league level, amongst its member clubs, or amongst individual players. This extends to all social media platforms. Violations of this standard of behavior on the league's platforms will be addressed in accordance with this policy and the league's code of conduct.

### **List of USAFL social media handles and pages**

This policy applies to all the league's official social media forums, live streams and any official social media forums the league chooses to use in the future. Below is a list of the league's current official social media handles.

- USAFL Twitter X (@usafl1997)
- USAFL Instagram (@usafl1997)
- USAFL YouTube (@usafl1997)
- USAFL Facebook (facebook.com/usafl)
- USAFL Women's Association (@usaflwomen)
- USAFL Umpires Association Facebook (facebook.com/usaflumpires)
- USAFL Umpires Association Twitter X (@usaflumpires)
- USAFL Freedom (@usaflfreedom)
- USAFL Revolution (@usa\_revolution\_)

*All portfolio leads are responsible for monitoring their accounts in accordance with the policy outlined below and take appropriate mitigation as well as report to the USAFL Media Manager & USAFL Executive Board.*



## **Social Media and Official Communications**

The USAFL acknowledges that social media has increasing prevalence in both the professional and private lives of our members. The USAFL recognizes the value in using social media to build more meaningful engagement and relationships with fans, communities and other relevant stakeholders. Social Media offers the opportunity for people to gather in online communities of shared interest and create, share or consume content in ways that can be beneficial for Australian Football.

While the USAFL may share news or updates on its official pages, posts on the social media pages do not constitute official communications to the league's member clubs or players. Most communications initiated by the USAFL, will be directed to club presidents with the expectation that club presidents will disseminate to their players. When vital, or considered appropriate, the USAFL will broadcast official information to all players through email addresses associated with player registration profiles.

## **Established lines of communication**

The USAFL encourages players to initially utilize their Club President where possible, and other club resources prior to initiating contact with a Regional Vice President or the USAFL Executive Director.

It is envisaged that most communications or issues can be resolved or appropriately addressed at this stage without higher levels of involvement.

Should an issue be unresolved or require further attention, the parties will communicate directly with the USAFL Board to seek assistance. A USAFL Board Member may be allocated the task to assist and communicate to resolve the issue.

- a. President - [president@usafl.com](mailto:president@usafl.com)
- b. Operations Director - [operations@usafl.com](mailto:operations@usafl.com)
- c. Eastern Region Vice President - [vpcentral@usafl.com](mailto:vpcentral@usafl.com)
- d. Western Region Vice President - [vpwest@usafl.com](mailto:vpwest@usafl.com)
- e. Central Region Vice President - [vpcentral@usafl.com](mailto:vpcentral@usafl.com)



### **General view on Social Media commentary**

The USAFL welcomes positive engagement in social media commentary and encourages users to engage with discretion. It is important for Applicable Persons to understand that the content posted on social media (page, post, story or live feed) can have serious ramifications for the USAFL, its members, corporate partners, stakeholders or other related organizations and individuals. The USAFL reserves the right to moderate to maintain a safe forum for discussion, sharing of information and resources.

The league cannot guarantee that information posted in comments will be accurate and will not be liable for damages caused by a user's reliance on information in social media comments or posts made by individuals engaging on the league's pages.

- a. **For Individual Members:** When engaging with the USAFL on social media, individual users are subject to the terms of service (TOS) of the league's host site, USAFL.com. If an individual decides to comment on the site, they should keep in mind that the league's platforms are used to engage with its members and the public to grow the game of Australian football in the United States. The USAFL reserves the right to moderate its platforms to maintain a safe forum for discussion and sharing of the game.
- b. **For Clubs:** The league social media platforms are used to engage stakeholders as well as the public at large to grow the game. When engaging with the league through their accounts, clubs should be mindful of their comments or postings. The league reserves the right to moderate engagement between clubs and the league to maintain up to date and accurate information. Communication made on behalf of a club should be representative of the broader views of its members.

When engaging with the USAFL on social media, a user is subject to the terms of service (TOS) of the league's host site, USAFL.com, and of the applicable platform.

### **Discussion of Issues Concerning the League**

The USAFL encourages members – individual players, or club designees - to communicate directly with the league via appropriate established channels (as outlined above).

Communication received via the preferred pathways, will be treated appropriately and the USAFL will seek to address any concerns or questions in an open and constructive manner to ensure the best outcomes for the league and its members.

Any comments or posts made on USAFL social media platforms or referencing the USAFL and/or its operations or constituents must be made in accordance with the USAFL code of conduct. Any such comments must be explicitly stated as opinion with specific identity to ensure preservation of fact versus opinion.



The USAFL reserves the right to moderate to maintain a safe forum for discussion, sharing of information and resources to its community to grow the game of Australian football in the United States.

The league reserves the right to remove the following type of commentary or ask those engaging in such commentary to cease:

- Discriminatory comments
- Comments which threaten, disparages, vilifies or insults another person (the person vilified) on any basis, including but not limited to a person's race, religion, color, descent or national or ethnic origin, special ability/disability or sexual orientation, preference or identity.
- Defamatory assertions of fact – does not include opinions.
  - Statements such as "X person is..." or "Y club does..." or "The league hasn't..." are assertions of fact.
  - Qualifiers such as "I believe...", "It seems...", "I don't know if...", would help distinguish statements as opinions rather than statements of fact.
- Bullying
- Threats
- Propaganda; Misinformation (false or inaccurate statements); Disinformation (false information which is deliberately intended to mislead)
- Promotion of illegal activity
- Political promotion or opposition (candidates or measures) – governmental, not league-related.
- Infringement of ownership rights of another party
- Confidential information
- Personally identifiable information
- Spam
- Links to malware
- Gambling

For questions about our moderation standards, please email [operations@usafl.com](mailto:operations@usafl.com)

### **Failure to Comply**

Individuals, board members, stakeholders and others may issue a formal complaint regarding social media behavior. Complaints should be sent directly to board members in the pathway outlined above (under social media and official communications). Complaints may also be directed to social media managers or portfolio leads via social media channels. Complaints will be addressed in a timely manner and failure to comply with this policy may result in comments being hidden and users and/or clubs blocked from posting temporarily or permanently.



Continued non-compliance or any posts or comments that contain hate speech, harassment, threatening language, or illegal activity of any kind may result in the following, in accordance with the league's code of conduct.

1. Formal warning from the league
2. Suspension from participation in formal league activities.

USAFL Clubs as fundamental constituents of the league, will be held strictly accountable for noncompliance with this policy of their members or club representatives.

Failure of an individual to comply after a formal warning may result directly in suspension from league activity (ability to play in league-sponsored tournaments, ability to play in sanctioned, nationals-qualifying events, etc.). Failure of a club to comply may result in suspension of the club's status as a member club of the league.

The USAFL recognizes that "once removed and/or hidden" communications may be pertinent information in the review of a formal complaint. The USAFL will treat sensitive and/or confidential information appropriately.

The USAFL reserves the right to update this policy at any time to ensure compliance with relevant law and to maintain its digital forums as a safe place for sharing and consuming content in ways that are beneficial to Australian football.

Policy Established August 2023