

## **UNIVERSITY OF MARY ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES**

### **Statement of Care**

The University of Mary takes seriously the responsibility to care for the growth, development, and success of our student-athletes. The formation of personal virtue and strong character is fundamental to the mission of Marauders Athletics and is a shared responsibility of coaches, student-athletes, and administration. *Our student-athletes bring honor to the University and our community.* It is a privilege and a serious calling to accompany and guide young hearts and minds as they embrace adulthood and the ideals of Christian maturity.

Hardship, disappointment, and frustration happen in every human life, and dealing with them well is a hallmark of adulthood. An adult takes responsibility for his or her life, surroundings, and community. The temptation to complain or murmur is sometimes strong, but the adult chooses to act (if there is something that can be done) or to endure (if the circumstances are out of his or her control). *The Rule of Saint Benedict identifies murmuring as the most serious and destructive sin against the value of community.* More than anything, the everyday difficulties of life are meant to be overwhelmed by interior habits of gratitude for the many blessings and opportunities each of us has been given. The University of Mary fails if we are unsuccessful in assisting our students – especially our student-athletes – to live in this way.

When student-athletes mimic a broader culture that takes to social media to express concerns or frustrations, this mission of the Athletics Department and the University of Mary is damaged in several ways, including the following:

- Third parties—including the media, faculty, future employers, and NCAA officials – can easily access social media profiles, including personal information. This access includes pictures, videos, comments, and posts. Inappropriate material found by third parties can have long-lasting effects upon a student-athlete, even while it damages the reputation and public perception of the University of Mary.
- Marauders Athletics is heavily funded by the enrollment success (recruitment of new students and retention of existing students) of the University and by generous donors from the general public. *Irresponsible use of social media effectively undermines the University's ability to fund athletic scholarships, equipment, and team travel, as well as salaries and benefits for coaches and their families.*

Coaches and university administration have a responsibility to provide appropriate channels for student-athletes to articulate frustrations and grievances and likewise participate in the development and growth of the campus community.

### **Statement of Policy**

University of Mary student-athletes are representatives of the University and the community. By nature of their participation in NCAA Division II athletics, University of Mary student-athletes are public figures. Because student-athlete conduct directly affects the University's good name, the Athletics Department requires student-athletes to exercise good judgment in their use of social media websites and to conduct these activities in a responsible and respectful manner.

Student-athletes are thus prohibited from making any social media posts or public statements on personal accounts or anonymously that reflect negatively upon the university. Student-athletes found to be in

violation, as determined by athletic or university administration, will be subject to disciplinary action, including temporary or permanent suspension from the team and scholarship funding, as well as possible expulsion from the University.

Certain actions are specifically prohibited by the NCAA, as follows:

- Student-athletes are required to abide by all team policies, athletic department policies, and NSIC and NCAA rules when utilizing social media websites.
- Student-athletes are not permitted to initiate communication with a prospective student athlete as a result of the prospective student-athlete's recruitment by University of Mary.
- It is not permissible to comment on injuries, officiating, or team matters that could reasonably be expected to be confidential to team members.

### **Best Practices and Reminders for Student-Athletes**

- Think twice before posting. If the post would reflect poorly on the University of Mary – which is affording you numerous benefits and opportunities – don't post. If you wouldn't want your coach, parents, or future employer to see your post, don't post.
- Respect the dignity of every human person, and strive to do what is right and good.
- Remember that many different audiences view your posts, including fans, alumni, kids, local authorities, parents, faculty, etc. Even adjusting your permissions cannot entirely prevent your posts from being accessed by unintended audiences.
- Remember that even anonymous accounts online are easily traced back to individuals, who will then be held accountable for the content and damage done by that anonymous account. Every digital action leaves a trail.
- The internet is permanent. Even if you delete something, a digital record of that post remains.

If you are ever in doubt about whether your activity online or on social media is appropriate, consider carefully whether it upholds and positively reflects the University of Mary's values, as well as those of the Athletics Department and your personal values. You are encouraged to approach your coach(es), Athletics Department administration, or the University Chaplain if you are struggling with or have questions about the appropriate use of social media.

As a student-athlete, you are a valued member of the University of Mary community, and you are encouraged to follow appropriate channels to express your concerns. Should you have a concern that you would like to discuss, the appropriate channel for this communication is as follows:

*Team Captain → Coach → Faculty Athletic Representative [FAR] → Director of Intercollegiate Athletics → Executive Vice President*

### **Website for the Concerns of Student-Athletes**

A webform to receive concerns, contact information for the individuals in the communication flow (above), as well as other resources can be found at [www.umary.edu/athleteconcerns](http://www.umary.edu/athleteconcerns).

Participation in NCAA Division II athletics at the University of Mary demonstrates your commitment to adhering by this and all policies and regulations included in the Student Athlete Handbook, the Student Handbook, and all other University policies.

### **Approved**

July 2018 by the President's Council

August 2018 by the Executive Committee of the University of Mary Board of Trustees

**SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT**

**Student-Athlete Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

I acknowledge that I have received and fully read the University of Mary Athletics Department Social Media Policy and Guidelines for Student-Athletes.

I have been instructed in this policy by the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics and/or my coach such that I understand the document and the consequences of any violation, including temporary or permanent suspension from my team and any scholarship funding I may be receiving, and up to and including expulsion from the University.

I understand that as a University of Mary student-athlete, I am a representative of the University and a public figure with responsibility for the good name and reputation of the University. As such, I pledge to exercise good judgment in my use of social media, to refrain from participation in anonymous online activity, and to conduct myself in a responsible and respectful manner both online and in my personal behavior.

I appreciate that Marauders Athletics and the University value my opinion and concerns, and I have been provided with the url [www.umary.edu/athleteconcerns](http://www.umary.edu/athleteconcerns) as an appropriate platform to access resources and manifest grievances.

I have carefully read and agree to this Acknowledgement of Receipt.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_