



Referees Social Media Policy

Policy No: FSCREF-012

Revision No: 2.0

Date: February 2025

Background

Social Media is becoming a more prominent communication tool and is a great way for Clubs to communicate to its players, referees, members, supporters, sponsors and other key stakeholders. Football South Coast (FSC) also uses social media and sees the benefits of this very important tool to engage our Football community.

Whilst there are many positives with the use of social media it can also have a negative impact. Please, we all need to be mindful and aware of what content is delivered in the Social Media space and that the image of FSC, our sport and its stakeholders are not tarnished in anyway.

Our game is about encouraging respect, fair play and a family friendly environment and disparaging comments on social media about other clubs, players, referee's or our key stakeholders are certainly not an appropriate form of communication by either club officials or players.

The purpose of this policy is to outline a consistent and consecutive approach to social media activity which is not deemed to be appropriate and in the best interest of the sport.

Football South Coast Disciplinary and Dispute Regulations ('the Regulations')

In order to protect football and ensure our game and our football community is not exposed to negative impacts of social media, the FSC Disciplinary Regulations (Section 14) stipulate that:

No Member shall make any public statement, including any contribution to television, radio, print or social media (for the avoidance of doubt comments made via social media are regarded as public comment. No person shall publicly comment where such comment:

- Is disparaging or derogatory of a Match Official, opposition team or any Player or Official or Member of FSC.
- Is disparaging or critical of Football South Coast, any Football South Coast Rules, and Regulations, or any FSC policy decision, without reasonable basis or justification.
- Is with respect to a matter the subject of proceedings currently before a Body; or
- Is disparaging of a Determination without reasonable basis or justification.
- No Member shall make any unfair, unreasonable, or excessive public criticism (including via social media) of a decision made by a Body or any other matter touching or concerning a Tribunal.

Any breach of these points will be treated as misconduct under the FSC Disciplinary and Dispute Regulations.

Breaches of the Regulations

In the event of any breaches to the Regulations or the Clubs expectations and Code of Conduct, the following action will be undertaken by the Referee Council and / or Football South Coast:

- A letter of warning will be issued to the referee advising that comments or activity is not appropriate and may have breached the Regulations.
- On the second occurrence of any comments or activity, the individual/s – may be subject to sanctions imposed by the Referee Services Committee and / or a Football South Coast General Purpose Tribunal which may result in sanctions in line with the Regulations.