



Community Guidelines

Standards of behaviour expected of all users on The Sporting Network.

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The short version

These are the rules for SportNet, in short. The full guidelines below have the detail and are what we actually enforce.

What SportNet is for

Getting noticed for your sport. Showing what you can do. Connecting with coaches, clubs and teammates. That is it.

Do

- Be honest about your age, your club, your position and your stats.
- Post content that is about sport.
- Treat other people the way you would in a changing room with a coach standing there.
- Report anything that worries you, even if you are not sure.
- Ask before posting video that features someone else, especially if they are under 18.

Do not

- Bully, harass, threaten or humiliate anyone.
- Post anything sexual, and never anything sexual involving someone under 18.
- Ask a young person for photos, for secrecy, or to move the conversation to another app.
- Offer a trial, a place, sponsorship or contact with a club in exchange for anything.
- Pretend to be someone you are not, including pretending to be a coach or a scout.
- Post violent, hateful or discriminatory content.
- Post anything illegal, or share other people's private information.
- Spam, scam, or try to sell things to other users.

Special rules where under-18s are involved

Adults contacting young athletes	Keep it about sport, keep it on the platform, and keep it appropriate. Our Adult-to-Minor Contact Policy has the detail.
Secrecy	Asking a young person to keep contact secret is never acceptable, whatever the reason given.
Meeting in person	Any trial or meeting should go through a club, a school or a parent. Not arranged privately in messages.
Content involving under-18s	Sporting content only. No content that focuses on a young person's body.

What happens if you break the rules

Minor issues	We remove the content and tell you why.
Repeated or serious issues	We ban the account.
Anything involving the sexual exploitation of a child	Immediate permanent ban, and we report it to the National Crime Agency. There is no appeal.
If you think we got it wrong	Appeal. We look again.

Reporting

Use the report button on any profile, post, comment or message. Or email main@thesportingnetwork.com. You can report anonymously, and you will not get in trouble for reporting someone, even if it turns out to be nothing.

We aim to review reports within 72 hours, and the same day where a young person may be at risk.

4.1 Purpose

These Community Guidelines set out the standards of behaviour expected of all users of The Sporting Network platform. They are designed to maintain a safe, respectful, and professional environment for athletes, coaches, clubs, scouts, and sports enthusiasts.

These Guidelines form part of our Terms and Conditions. Violation may result in content removal, account suspension, or permanent ban. Our Content Reporting and Removal Policy explains how to report a breach and how to appeal a decision.

4.2 Respectful Behaviour

All users must treat others with courtesy, dignity, and respect. The following conduct is strictly prohibited:

- Harassment, bullying, or intimidation in any form
- Threats of violence, harm, or abuse
- Hate speech, discrimination, or prejudice based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, nationality, or any other protected characteristic
- Abusive, offensive, or derogatory language
- Targeted harassment of individuals or groups, including pile-on behaviour
- Doxxing (publishing private or identifying information about another person)

Repeated violations will result in escalating enforcement action, up to and including permanent account removal.

4.3 Authentic Profiles and Information

Users must provide accurate and truthful information. The following are prohibited:

- Impersonating another person, athlete, coach, or organisation

- Creating fake or misleading profiles
- Fabricating or materially misrepresenting sporting achievements, statistics, records, or qualifications
- Using misleading profile information, including deceptive profile photographs
- Operating multiple accounts for deceptive purposes

Maintaining authenticity is essential to the trust and credibility of the sporting community.

4.4 Appropriate Content

All content shared on the Platform must be appropriate for a professional sports community. The following content is prohibited:

- Sexually explicit, suggestive, or pornographic material
- Graphic or gratuitous violence
- Content promoting illegal activities, including drug use, doping, or match-fixing
- Content glorifying self-harm or suicide
- Spam, chain messages, or mass unsolicited promotional content
- Scams, fraudulent schemes, or pyramid/multi-level marketing promotions
- Misinformation that could cause harm to individuals or the public

4.5 Safe Communication

Users must not:

- Send abusive, threatening, or harassing messages
- Send repeated unwanted messages after being asked to stop
- Attempt to scam, defraud, or phish other users
- Share malicious links, malware, or harmful software
- Solicit personal information (e.g. financial details, passwords) from other users
- Use messaging for commercial solicitation unless explicitly permitted

Messages from users you are not connected with arrive in a request inbox. You are never obliged to accept a request, and you can decline or ignore any message.

All messages sent on the Platform pass through automated checks before they are delivered, as described in clause 3.7 of our Terms and Conditions. These checks are automated and no person reads your messages as part of them. We do not routinely read private messages; the circumstances in which a member of our team will read message content are set out in that clause.

4.6 Protection of Young Athletes and Safeguarding

The Platform permits users aged 13 and over. Accounts belonging to users under 18 receive additional protections, which are set out in full in our Safeguarding Policy and our Privacy Policy, and include:

- **Accounts are private by default.** An account held by a user aged 13–17 is private from the moment it is created. It becomes visible to the wider Platform only if the young person chooses to make it public, and they can make it private again at any time. Accounts held by users aged 18 and over are public by default.
- **A private account cannot be seen, found or visited.** It is not visible to anyone the account holder has not accepted as a connection, it does not appear in any search including scout search, and it cannot be opened by following a link. No account type can bypass this — a verified coach or scout sees exactly what any other non-connection sees, which is nothing.
- **Under-18 profiles cannot be shared outside the Platform.** An account held by a user aged 13–17 cannot generate or share a profile link at all, whether the account is private or public, and there is no setting that enables it. An under-18 profile exists only inside SportNet and cannot be sent, posted, embedded or circulated anywhere else.
- **Field-level privacy, available to every user.** Any user, of any age, can set individual parts of their profile to private — physical metrics, posts, achievements, academic grades and others — without making their whole account private. These controls cannot be bypassed by any account type.
- **Request inbox.** Messages from users they are not connected with go to a request inbox rather than direct to their conversations.
- **Verification gates.** A coach or scout must complete identity verification before they can use scout search — the filtered search of athletes, including by location — or start any new conversation on the Platform.
- **No advertising identifiers and no analytics.** We do not collect advertising identifiers from accounts held by users under 18, and in-app analytics are switched off entirely for those accounts.
- **Date of birth is never displayed publicly,** and location is optional and coarse.

All users must behave responsibly, particularly when interacting with younger members of the community. The following behaviours are strictly prohibited and may result in immediate account termination and referral to law enforcement:

- Grooming behaviour of any kind
- Sexual exploitation or abuse of younger users
- Inappropriate messaging directed at younger users
- Attempting to move conversations with younger users onto other platforms to avoid our safeguarding measures
- Requesting personal meetings with younger users without appropriate safeguards
- Any conduct that puts a young person at risk of harm

Adults who work with young athletes (coaches, scouts, team staff) are expected to hold themselves to the highest standard of conduct. We take safeguarding extremely seriously, may proactively review interactions involving younger users where we have reason to believe there is a risk of harm, and will cooperate fully with law enforcement and relevant safeguarding authorities.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is Charles Heffron, contactable at main@thesportingnetwork.com. If you are worried about a young person, tell us. If someone is in immediate danger, contact the police on 999.

4.7 Enforcement

Violations may result in:

- Removal of offending content
- Deletion of offending comments
- Formal written warning
- Permanent account termination
- Referral to law enforcement where appropriate

More than one of these may apply. Where a breach is serious — in particular any conduct that puts a young person at risk — we may terminate an account immediately and without prior warning.

Users may appeal moderation decisions in accordance with our Content Reporting and Removal Policy.

Version history

VERSION	DATE	CHANGE
2.0	1 April 2026	Previous version.
2.1	26 August 2026	Plain-English summary added at the top of the document. Section 4.6 updated to record that under-18 accounts are private by default, what a private account means, that under-18 profiles cannot be shared outside the Platform, and the field-level privacy controls available to all users; the verification gate is corrected to cover starting a new conversation as well as scout search. Section 4.5 updated to cross-refer to the automated message checks described in Terms clause 3.7.

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