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# Athlete's guide to Facebook

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## Why Facebook?

Facebook pages can be extremely useful to sports teams and athletes. Facebook now has almost 800 million active users worldwide and provides you with a great way to connect with members and fans, as well as potentially providing information for the media and securing further sponsorship opportunities.

A Facebook page is extremely simple to manage and a great way to keep everyone up to date with what's going on in your or your teams 'sporting' life.

A Facebook page allows you to include everything that relates to you as an athlete, or your team, in one place, including:

- Overview of you / your team's activity
- Website and contact info
- Match reports
- Comment on sporting issues
- Videos
- Photos

### Personal page v Athlete page

Many athletes already have personal Facebook pages but it is recommended that you keep your personal profile private and only accessible to close friends and family. This can be arranged through Facebook settings.

Unlike other professions, many athletes live in the public eye. As a result, your actions can be heavily scrutinised regardless of whether it's in public or online. Any inappropriate comments or content posted on your personal Facebook site could be read by the media, potential sponsors or governing bodies, and the results could be devastating for you and your sport.

For this reason, the WCF is suggesting that athletes should set up an 'Athlete' or 'Team' Facebook page, accessible to anyone. This will help you build up your fan base, advertise yourself to potential sponsors and use it as an information resource for the public.

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## Examples

Before setting up your own profile, you should take a look at some of these examples by searching for them on Facebook:

### **Teams:**

**Team Gushue** - <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Team-Gushue/226449247382938>

**Official Team Bernard** - <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Official-Team-Bernard/101637599904036>

**Team Muirhead** - <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Team-Muirhead/208062015922107>

### **Athletes:**

**John Morris** - <http://www.facebook.com/officialjohnmorris>

**Michael Phelps** - <http://www.facebook.com/michaelphelps>

**Lance Armstrong** - <http://www.facebook.com/lancearmstrong>

## Getting Started

### **Biography**

One of the best ways to reassure your followers that you are authentic is to state in your biography that your profile is the 'Official Facebook page of [your name here]'.

You should also mention your sporting honours and goals you are working towards, such as winning the Gold medal in the next Olympic Games.

You can also include a link to a relevant personal website, blog or twitter account here.

### **Profile Photo**

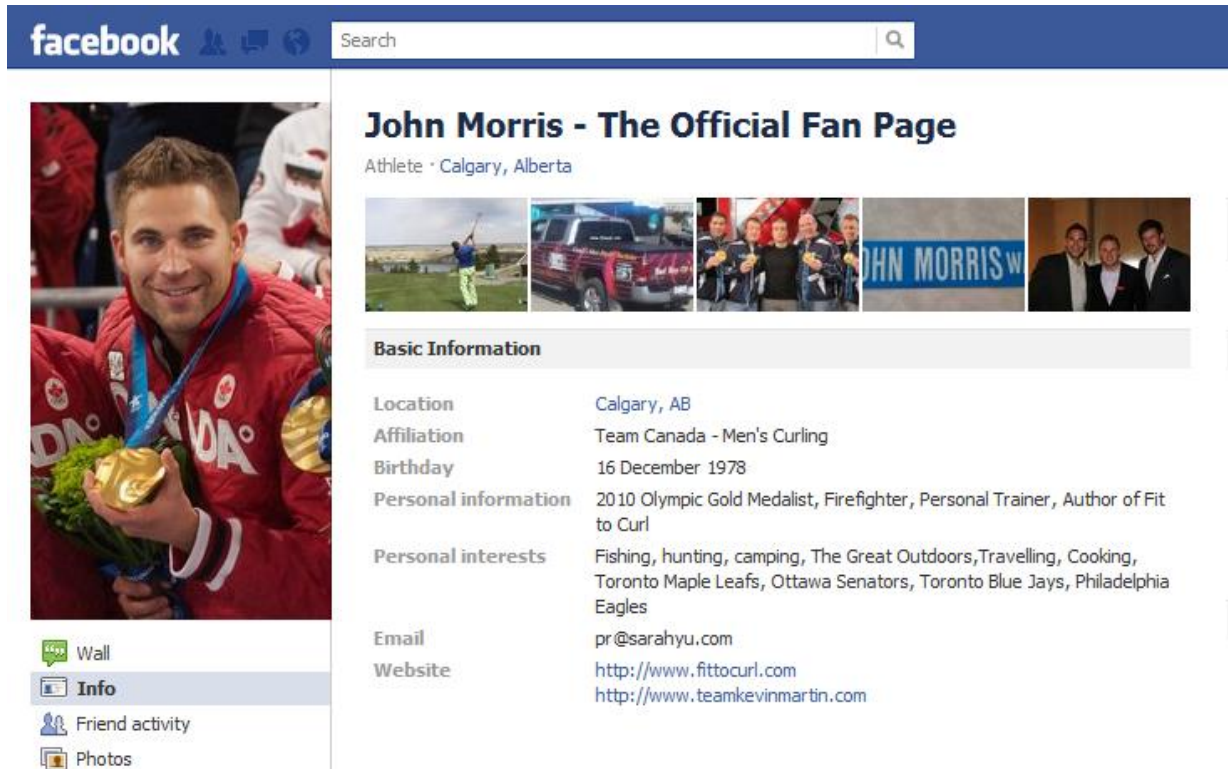
Upload a good photo of yourself for your Facebook profile which followers will be able to relate to.

It's always good to use a photo which links to your sport, so perhaps a photo of you participating or on the podium for example.

It is also recommended that you refrain from changing your profile picture too often so that your followers can become familiar with your account.

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### Profile Example:



The screenshot shows a Facebook profile for "John Morris - The Official Fan Page". The profile picture is a man in a red Team Canada jacket holding a gold medal. The cover photo is a collage of images including a curling rink, a red pickup truck, and a group of people. The "Basic Information" section lists the following details:

<b>Location</b>	Calgary, AB
<b>Affiliation</b>	Team Canada - Men's Curling
<b>Birthday</b>	16 December 1978
<b>Personal information</b>	2010 Olympic Gold Medalist, Firefighter, Personal Trainer, Author of Fit to Curl
<b>Personal interests</b>	Fishing, hunting, camping, The Great Outdoors, Travelling, Cooking, Toronto Maple Leafs, Ottawa Senators, Toronto Blue Jays, Philadelphia Eagles
<b>Email</b>	pr@sarahyu.com
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.fittocurl.com">http://www.fittocurl.com</a> <a href="http://www.teamkevinmartin.com">http://www.teamkevinmartin.com</a>

On the left side of the profile, there are navigation tabs for "Wall", "Info", "Friend activity", and "Photos".

**Caution:** Recently, some celebrities, including athletes, have had Facebook pages set up in their name. This can be a problem as the individual(s) running the account can post inappropriate content which could potentially damage the reputation of the individual, their team or the sport.

If you discover a Facebook page has been set up impersonating you then follow the instructions on this link: <http://www.facebook.com/help/search/?q=Impersonation>

## Creating Page Content

When writing content for your page it's important to look at it from the perspective of athletes, fans and volunteers. You should think about why people 'Like' your page, what content do they want to see, what information do they want to read about you, your team or the sport?

Now you have your basic page and bio information set-up, the next step is to make your page engaging. This can be done in various ways. By default your page has an info tab for you to share information about you or your team, and a wall, where you can interact with your fans and share content.

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### **Updating your status:**

Posting your first update on Facebook can be a scary thought. What should you say? Who is listening? Who will actually care?

What you say and how you say it is extremely important on Facebook. It is essentially a platform to speak to the world so pick your words carefully. Take a second to think before posting – would you read it and be interested in what you are saying? If not, then perhaps it's not worth posting.

Try to be yourself but refrain from being offensive. Think about who might be reading your Facebook page and what tone of voice you should use. Try to post updates that may be of interest to other people and make it sound interesting.

## **Building a successful Facebook page**

Once you've created your page, managing it is an on-going process. Especially if you want to get the most out of Facebook and make your page successful. You may have to dedicate a little bit of time to adding content (photo's, video's, match reports etc), but you'll quickly appreciate how valuable it is to be connected to people interested and involved in the sport.

Here are a few top tips for building a successful Facebook page:

### **Build your fan base**

Conversation and interaction are key to successful and engaging Facebook pages. If people feel there is a sense of community around your page they will keep coming back.

Conversation can also help to grow your presence on Facebook, when someone interacts with your page (writes on your wall, posts an image etc) this will appear on their profile and their friend's news feeds, giving your page exposure.

Success on Facebook is essentially measured by the interactivity between yourself and fans on your Facebook page, in the form of comments and 'Like's'. Having more friends means that there's likely to be more interactivity on your Facebook page, and there are several ways in which you can try and increase your fan base:

- **Search for other people who have similar interests to you.** 'Like' them and look at who they 'Like' and who 'Likes' them.
- **When you ask to be friends with someone on Facebook, if they choose to accept you, you will become friends of each other's pages.**

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- **Publicise your Facebook page** - make sure people know where to find you by including your Facebook link on your website, in your emails, in your Twitter profile, LinkedIn, business cards, blogs and anything else you hand out to people. **EXTRA TIP** – once you have more than 25 people ‘Liking’ your page – you can create a shortened URL for the page. You can do this in the ‘edit info’ section under ‘username’. That’s how we have the URL [www.facebook.com/WorldCurlingFederation](http://www.facebook.com/WorldCurlingFederation) and not something long-winded like <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Worldcurlingfederation/3489256697677>
- **Be topical** – search for keywords that relate to you and your sport and then post interesting messages, start conversations, run polls etc to engage with your friends and fans.
- **Share interesting information.** The better the information you are sharing on Facebook the more interactivity there will be on your page. The key question to remind yourself of is: ‘Is it interesting?’ If it’s not, then don’t post it.

### **Use multimedia content**

Uploading photos and videos of the team, recent games, training sessions etc. is a great way to keep people involved in your page. Photos and videos also spark a lot of comments and conversation, and they’re also a great way to share what you’ve been doing. Tagging multimedia content within your page is also a great promotional activity. When you tag someone on a photo their friends can see it and the photo will also link to the relevant album on your page.

**Photos: a world of warning** - whilst you retain the rights to photos you upload and share on Facebook, recent changes mean that Facebook also has the right to use and sell your images via third parties.

Again, like anything you post on Facebook, assume it will could be viewed by anyone, therefore anything controversial could appear in the media very quickly. Think about the image you would like to give to potential sponsors or your fans.

You can of course change your privacy settings but images are a great way to interact, especially with online audiences.

**Video:** The quickest way to share a video on Facebook is simply by using the video tab on your profile page and then directly uploading the video.

Alternatively you can upload your video to You Tube then copy the link onto your page.

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### **Build an active community**

Community is a key aspect of social media in general and isn't just limited to Facebook. In order to keep people coming back and paying attention to your page you'll need to create an active community. One of the best ways to do this is by building an active wall – encourage people to leave comments, ask questions and reply to people.

Make your page a resource and people will keep coming back to it. If people want information about you or your team, give it to them. On a daily basis your fellow players, fans, sponsors are far more likely to visit Facebook than your club website, by giving them the info they want on Facebook and then linking this back to your site you're likely to increase traffic to your own website too.

### **Here's some other ways to increase interactivity on your page:**

**Like:** "Like" is a way to give positive feedback or to connect with things you care about on Facebook. You or your fans can like content and give feedback or like a page that you want to connect with.

**Tagging:** A tag links a person, page, or place to something you post, like a status update or a photo. For example, you can tag a photo to say who's in the photo or post a status update and say who you're with.

Tagging people, pages and places in your posts lets others know more about who you're with, what's on your mind and where you are.

When you tag someone, they'll be notified unless you post to an audience of 'Only Me.' Also, if you or a friend tags someone in your post and it's set to Friends or more, the post is visible to the audience you selected plus friends of the tagged person. When someone adds a tag of you to a post, your friends may see what you're tagged in on Facebook.

The tagged post also goes on your profile (timeline). If you'd like, you can turn on Profile (Timeline) Review to review and approve each tagged post before it goes on your profile (timeline) or exclude some people from seeing tagged posts of you on your Wall (timeline).

**Note:** To restrict unwanted photos of you appearing on your wall through tags, you can adjust your privacy settings so that you can either approve each post you are tagged in, or remove them in all instances.

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**Polls:** A great way to engage with your fans is to run a poll. This seeks out their opinion on something and often results in a lot of comments. Do your research and investigate what the hot topics are in the sport and run a poll on it.

**Events:** Putting events on your Facebook Page can be a great way to promote events you will be participating in and potentially help boost attendances. You can provide all the information for the event including the time, date and even tag the location and others who will be attending.

**Checking in:** This is a location based service used predominantly for mobile devices to let you notify people where you are. You can also tag other people you're with. People can then view your location on a map, add comment or like.

**Example:**



**Direct messages:**

By default, anyone on Facebook can send you a message, and if you set up a Facebook email address, anyone outside of Facebook can send you email. Email from friends and their friends goes directly to your main Messages folder, and everything else goes to the Other folder within your Messages. If an email appears to be from someone you know but we are unable to confirm the sender's address, you will still receive the message, but it will include a warning.

If you'd like to modify who can send you Facebook messages and email visit:

<http://www.facebook.com/help/search/?q=Facebook+messages>

Only emails from people that fall within the message privacy setting you choose will be delivered to your Facebook Messages. For example, if you select the "Friends Only" setting, you will not receive messages from email addresses that Facebook can't confirm as belonging to one of your friends. Instead, those senders will receive automatic bounce-back replies.

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**Caution:** Even though you may intend your message to be considered private, it is important to remember that you should treat everything you write as if it could be reproduced and made visible to the public.

### Sharing links

Posting links to interesting videos, pictures, websites and stories for example is another great way to engage your audience. When sharing links, try to add comment on it. Make sure it is never more than a couple of sentences. If it's too long then people won't read it.

### Example:



### Keep it fun

Sport is fun and your Facebook page should reflect this. Try to encourage a bit of friendly banter amongst the team and people who follow you on Facebook and they will be sure to keep checking out your page.

### Managing your Page

If you click on the 'Edit Info' button, underneath your page title, this will bring up your Page's settings menu. From here you can really control your page.

On Facebook, updates are publically visible by default. Although you can adjust your privacy settings to your liking (which we would recommend for your personal Facebook page), it is recommended that the majority of your Facebook updates should remain public. This means that non-followers can read your updates and could end up 'Liking' you or adding you as a friend, which is useful when trying to build your fan base.

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It is also important to remember that anyone could read one of your messages, so be careful with what you are saying as anyone, including potential sponsors, the media or governing bodies can read your updates and upsetting one of them could prove troublesome.

Some of the key settings you may want to change on your Facebook settings include:

**Page visibility:** You will find this setting under the 'Manager permissions' tab and if you would like to keep you page private whilst you're working on it you can select 'Only admins can see this page'.

**Default Landing tab:** Again, this is under the 'Manage permissions' tab. The default landing tab will be the first thing a new potential fan will see when they click on your Facebook page. Think carefully about what first impression you would like to have on the viewer. We'd recommend selecting either your Wall, or Info page as your landing tab. The Info tab will provide the viewers with a quick overview of your club, whilst the Wall will show your recent activity and comments.

**Posting Ability:** This is also under the 'Manager permissions' tab and is a key setting – this controls whether or not you want to allow your fans to post photos, videos and links to your wall – we'd recommend.

**Team Logins:** If you're setting up a team website you can share the responsibility of updating your Facebook page. Simply share the login details with trusted members of your team and they can update from anywhere in the world.

## Other useful information

### How often should you be updating your status?

There are no rules, but if you're trying to establish an online presence **it's worth updating at least once a day, if not twice.**

When doing so it's better to spread them throughout the day rather than doing them all at one time. This helps keep followers engaged.

### Mobile Facebook

It's often easier to update your Facebook status on the go with one of the many apps for iPhones, Android and other mobile devices. These often come with built in image uploaders which can make it quicker and easier to update your status when you're on the move.

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