

## Social Media Reveals the REAL You ... Are You Down With That?



*(helpful advice from La Jolla Volleyball club)*

Your current and future coaches WILL check your social media. This includes your high school, club and college coaches. Bottom line: it's about your character and reputation. Right or wrong, people will judge you based upon what they see on social media.

If a coach is considering you for a spot on their team, they WILL look at your social media and it will affect what they think of you: how coachable they think you will be and what kind of attitude you will likely bring to their team (will you add positivity & good work ethic, or will everything be "all about you").

Social media is not just somewhere to post selfies... it is one of the most effective and powerful methods to share WHO you really are. Your online persona should be consistent with your real-life persona.

Did you know: Based on some applicants' social media posts, Harvard rescinded their admission offers to 10 students this Spring? Yes, AFTER they were accepted.

As for college sports, college coaches want to recruit quality athletes with good character to represent their school and enhance their teams. Your online presence will help or hurt your ambitions.

### **Questions to Ask Yourself:**

- Is my online persona (image) consistent with my interactions and conversations with potential club, high school, or college coaches?
- Does my online persona portray a well-rounded picture of who I really am?
- Do I appear to be a happy, hard-working, dedicated, ambitious, determined athlete and a good teammate?
- Am I real, or am I trying to portray something other than my true self?
- Would I want my grandparent to see my posts? If not, don't post it.

### **Coaches look for:**

- Differences in your online persona vs. their personal interaction with you; do things match up?
- WHO you are: an athlete, teammate, family member, community member, hard-working, your maturity, a good fit for their team/program
- How you represent your school, sport, club, coach, family, teammates
- Your interests, adventures, insights into who you are off the court

### **What NOT to post online:**

- Offensive material, foul language, sexual content or poses/situations
- Anything illegal: underage drinking, drugs, violence
- Negative comments or material, especially about your sports teams, coaches, teachers, friends or parents
- Be thoughtful and respectful with topics such as race, religion, and sexual orientation

## **URGENT advice to High School athletes NOW:**

Scroll through your social media accounts and think about each post and the related comments/posts from your followers. What impression does this give a potential coach? Who do you follow and support? Do you think a college coach will be hesitant about “taking a gamble” on you, or will they be even more pleased with the prospect of recruiting you, based on what they find on your social media accounts?

Additionally, check the comments that are posted by your friends in response to your posts. You can be judged by the friends you keep, at least online. Make sure you don't have inappropriate comments on your wholesome posts 😊

Coaches are looking for the best athletes & students they can find; your stats & grades will get you noticed. After that, YOU have a lot of influence in how desirable you are, based on how you communicate with coaches and your online presence. Coaches are not looking for the most photogenic players; they want to recruit the best athletes, the best teammates, and they want to win games with minimal social drama.

Coaches want to be able to focus on their sport and the success of their team, rather than dealing with emotional or social issues. So... coaches will try to find out as much as they can before investing in you.

Be true to yourself. If you are all about selfies and not your team or your sport or others, then you either need to modify your approach or reconsider whether the next level of sports are for you. Playing a sport at the next level takes even more focus and effort than in high school.

If you are unsure about your social media posts, discuss it openly with a trusted adult for advice: a teacher, coach, counselor, athletic director or club director. All online posts are public, regardless of perceived privacy settings.

Social media is a powerful tool, so be sure to use it to your advantage to help enhance your image, your community, your school, your teams.

Good luck and help yourself to be the best that you can be!

Barbara Birnbaum  
Club Director  
La Jolla Volleyball club  
[www.LaJollaVolleyball.com](http://www.LaJollaVolleyball.com)

