

# Athlete's guide to Facebook



## **Contents:**

Why should you use Facebook?	(p2)
Good examples & Getting Started:	(p3)
Choosing a cover photos:	(p4)
Creating content	(p5)
Building a successful page:	(p5-11)
Things you shouldn't do and case studies:	(p12)



## Why Facebook?

Facebook pages can be extremely useful to sports teams and athletes. Facebook now has almost 1 billion 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 privacy 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.



## 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/TeamGushue>

**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 (Curler)** - <http://www.facebook.com/officialjohnmorris>

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

**Rory McIlroy (Golfer)** - <http://www.facebook.com/RoryMcIlroyOfficial>

## 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.

If you have a Twitter account, there is an option to link both your Twitter and Facebook accounts so that whenever you post something on Twitter, it can appear automatically in your Facebook timeline. Read our **Athlete's Guide to Twitter** for more information.

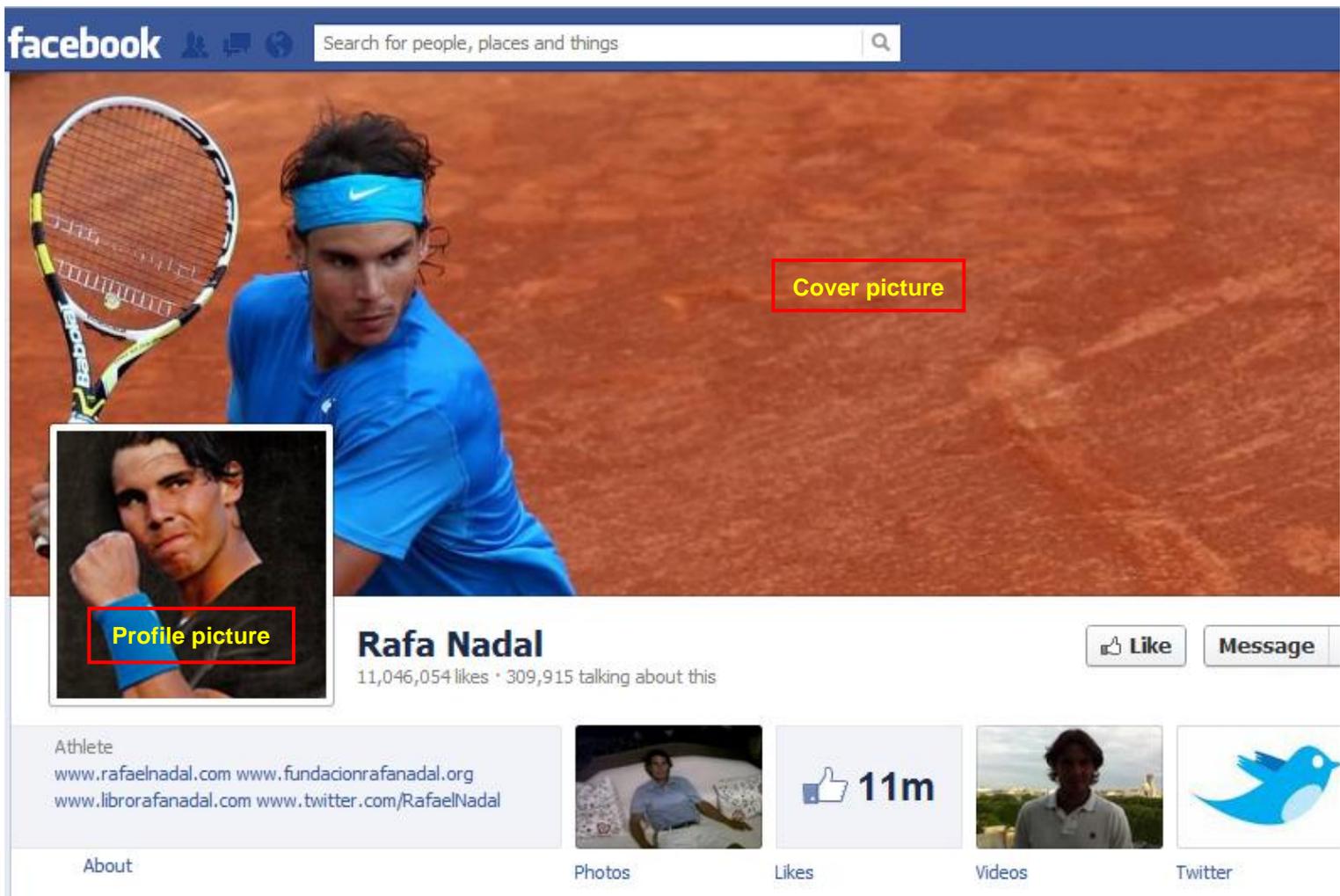
### Profile Photo

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.

## Cover Photo

Rather than a portrait profile picture, the 'Cover' picture is a landscape format widescreen image. This is a good location to include an image of you performing. Many action shots, especially in the sport of curling, are taken in landscape format, therefore this is a great place to show you or your team in action. In this example below, without knowing the athletes name, you immediately know he is a tennis player due to his Cover image.

## Profile Example:



The screenshot shows a Facebook profile for Rafa Nadal. The cover photo is a large landscape image of Nadal in a blue shirt on a tennis court, with a red box labeled "Cover picture" overlaid. The profile picture is a smaller portrait of Nadal, with a red box labeled "Profile picture" overlaid. The profile name is "Rafa Nadal" with 11,046,054 likes and 309,915 people talking about this. The "About" section lists his website and social media links. The "Photos" section shows a photo of Nadal sitting at a table. The "Likes" section shows a thumbs-up icon and "11m". The "Videos" section shows a video thumbnail of Nadal. The "Twitter" section shows the Twitter logo.

**Warning:** 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>

*If you ever have any questions about Facebook please contact **Joanna Kelly** or **Danny Parker** from the WCF Media Team via [media@worldcurling.org](mailto:media@worldcurling.org) - we would be happy to help you*

## 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.

### 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.

### 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.**
- **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 – 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 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.

### **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 interactive wall – encourage people to leave comments, ask questions and make sure you reply to people every so often.

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.

### **Increase Interactivity**

**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.

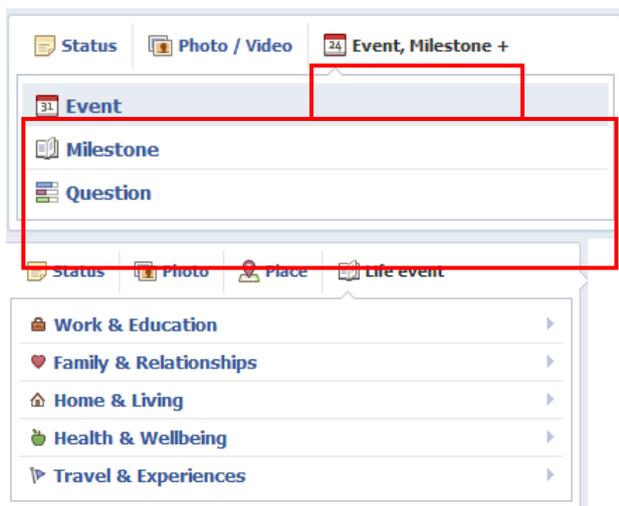
The tagged post also goes on your profile (timeline). If you'd like, you can turn on Profile (Timeline) Review to review and approve each tagged post before it goes on your profile (timeline) or exclude some people from seeing tagged posts of you on your Wall (timeline).

**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.

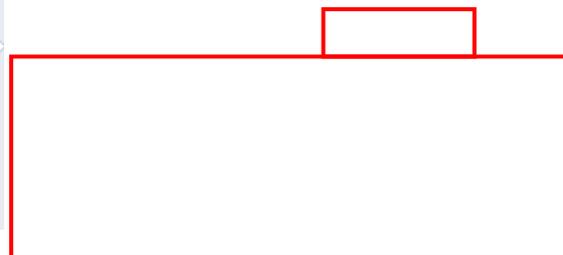
*If you ever have any questions about Facebook please contact **Joanna Kelly** or **Danny Parker** from the WCF Media Team via [media@worldcurling.org](mailto:media@worldcurling.org) - we would be happy to help you*

**Event/Milestone:** This allows you to add an important event, from the past or in the future, to your timeline – for example when you or your team took part in a major event, such as the Olympic Winter Games, or the first time you won a medal for example. This function will depend on whether you have a Team page or an Athlete page. You can see the different options available to both below:

**Team Page:**



**Athlete Page:**



**Warning:** Remember not to give away too much personal information using this function, such as home address for example.

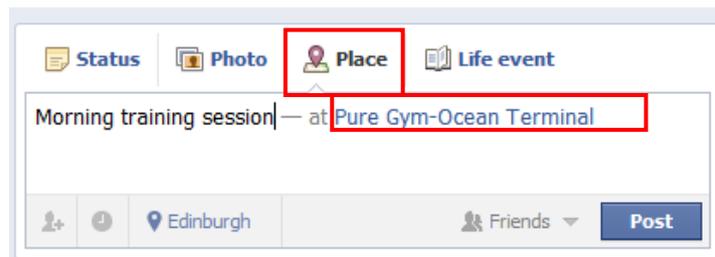
**Events:** Putting events on your Facebook Page can be a great way to promote events you will be participating in and potentially help boost attendances. You can provide all the information for the event including the time, date and even tag the location and others who will be attending.

**Highlight:** Another relatively new function for the Facebook timeline. This allows a certain post to be highlighted – instead of your post appearing in the left hand side 'Timeline' column, it expands across the entire Facebook page, horizontally, giving it more prominence on the page. This should only really be used to make important announcements, not for every post you make.

**Question:** A great way to engage with your fans is to run a poll using the 'Question' function. 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.

**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:**



**Warning:** Never share your home location with people you do not know. Always think about who you're sharing your location with and any potential problems that may arise from sharing this information.

**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 go directly to your main Messages folder, and everything else goes to the Other folder within your Messages. If you'd like to modify who can send you Facebook messages and email visit:

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

**Warning:** 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:**



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### 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 white arrow on the top right hand side of your Facebook page (next to the 'Home' tab – see red box in image below), this will bring up an option for your Page's 'Account' and 'Privacy' settings. 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.

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 can adjust who can access your page under the 'Privacy settings' page which is located using the white arrow in the top right hand side of your Facebook page, next to the 'Home' tab. There are a number of other privacy settings you can adjust here as well.



**Subscribers:** This new function allows users to follow the public updates of non-friends. For example, someone could subscribe to your Facebook page but they don't have to be friends with you. Unless they are also friends with you, subscribers cannot post on your Facebook page.

When using this function, all of the messages that you make 'Public' will be viewable to those who subscribe to you which means that you can post select information for your 'Friends' only, restricting subscribers from seeing it. However, as is recommended, most posts on your official athlete or team page should be for the public to read and access, therefore it is worthwhile turning on the subscriber function so that as many people as people can keep up to date with everything you post. This can be selected in the 'Account settings' tab.

**Posting Ability:** This is also under the 'Privacy settings' 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. Allowing your fans to post content is another great way of increasing interactivity, you should always monitor the content in case it is inappropriate.

**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.

## Things you shouldn't do:



Posts relating to race, faith, disability, sexual orientation or which are interpreted as inappropriate comments directed towards Technical Officials, athletes or coaches, risk punishment and possible exclusion from competition.

All athletes and coaches are responsible for content posted on their accounts regardless if they are run by third parties. Sharing posts that include inappropriate content also incur such penalties.

Please click on the following links from the New York Times to read about two examples of athletes reprimanded for such offences during the London 2012 Olympic Games:

[http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/31/sports/olympics/swiss-soccer-player-michel-morganella-sent-home-for-twitter-remark.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/31/sports/olympics/swiss-soccer-player-michel-morganella-sent-home-for-twitter-remark.html?_r=0)