



Athlete's guide to Twitter



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What is Twitter?

Twitter is a social media platform which lets users post messages of up to 140 characters. Due to these space limitations, Twitter is an easy and quick way to share your views and news with the world. It also lets you find out more about the people and organisations that are of interest to you.

With over **200 million twitter users across the world** who tweet in excess of **65 million tweets per day**, twitter is an extremely useful tool for athletes which lets you connect with people around the world. Although you can block followers if you wish, anyone can follow you, from rival athletes, team mates and coaches to fans, sponsors and media.

Some examples: Cyclist Lance Armstrong has over 3.5 million followers. Younger athletes, such as Tom Daley, the British Olympic diver, has nearly 300,000 followers.

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

- @mcewencurling
- @johnnymocurler
- @JillOfficer
- @chrisplys
- @TeamEdin
- @lindseyvonn
- [@usainbolt](#)
- @IanJamesPoulter

Getting Started

1. First, you need to create an account. Go to <http://twitter.com> and follow the instructions to sign up.
2. Make sure you **use a secure password** so that nobody else can access your account.
3. Here you will have to **select a user name**.

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



Choosing a user name:

It is important to think of a creative and memorable name so that you will stick out from the crowd and people will want to follow you. Here are some tips for choosing your twitter name (examples used are for John Smith):

- Your name could tell followers about your profession or your interests e.g @johncurlingskip
- Don't be afraid to use your real name e.g @johnsmith
- You could incorporate your date of birth e.g @johnsmith77
- Shortened version of your name - @jsmith
- Initials with your name - @jscurler
- Keep your name short - this makes it easier for your followers to retweet your tweets and mention you within their 140 word limit

Twitter Profile:

You can customise your Twitter profile to give it a much more personalised look. Once you have initially set up your profile you can click through to profile settings, where you can upload background images and create a personal biography.

Example:

Biographical information

Background image

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Biography

One of the best ways to reassure your followers that you are authentic is to state on your biography that your profile is the 'Official Twitter of [your name here]'

You should also mention your sporting honours and goals you are working towards, such as the Gold medal in the next Olympic Games for example. It is also a good idea to include a link to a relevant personal website, blog or Facebook page here.

Note: Official Authentication - Verification is currently used to establish authenticity of identities on Twitter. Twitter proactively verifies accounts on an ongoing basis to make it easier for users to find who they're looking for. The blue tick verified badge (you can see this in the example above next to 'World Curling Fed.')

helps users discover high-quality sources of information and trust that a legitimate source is authoring the account's Tweets. You cannot request verification, Twitter will grant you authentication.

For more information visit: <https://support.twitter.com/groups/31-twitter-basics/topics/111-features/articles/119135-about-verified-accounts>

Profile Photo

Upload a good photo of yourself for your twitter 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.

Profile Example:



David Murdoch

@DMurdoch17 FOLLOWS YOU

2x World Champion, 3x European Champion and Olympian. Curling is my life! Training hard for Sochi 2014
Stirling, Scotland

Warning: Recently, some celebrities, including athletes, have had twitter accounts 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 twitter profile has been set up pretending to be you, please visit <https://support.twitter.com/articles/18366-impersonation-policy> for further information.

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Twitter for Beginners

Sending a Tweet

The messages that you post are called tweets, which is where the term 'tweeting' comes from. Once you have set up your own twitter profile you can choose to follow other twitter users and you will then see their tweets in a live feed on your twitter homepage.

Sending your first tweet 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 twitter. 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 the tweet is saying? If not, then perhaps it's not worth posting.

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

Privacy

On Twitter, tweets are publically visible by default. Although you can choose to send your tweets only to your followers, thus keeping it private from the rest of the world, it is recommended that the majority of your tweets should remain public. This means that non-followers can read your tweets and could end up following you, which is useful when trying to build your fan base.

It is also important to remember that anyone could retweet 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 tweets and upsetting one of them could damage not only your profile, but also that of the sport.

Build your fan base

Success on twitter is essentially measured by the number of followers you have. There are ways in which you can try and increase your number of followers:

- **Search for other people who have similar interests to you.** Follow them and look at who they follow.
- It is often the case that **when you follow people, they may choose to follow you back**
- You can also **create lists** of people in groups and you can then follow the group without needing to follow all the individuals. For example you can create a list of athletes who play

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one sport and by monitoring this group you can find out what the trending topics are in the sport.

- **Publicise your twitter address** - make sure people know where to find you by including your Twitter on your website, in your emails, on Facebook, LinkedIn, business cards, blogs and anything else you hand out to people.
- **Be topical** – search for keywords that relate to you and your sport and then retweet the interesting messages, comment on them or reply to the tweeter.
- **Share interesting information.** The better the information you are sharing on twitter the more likely you are to be retweeted and followed by others. The key question to remind yourself of is whether or not you think it's interesting? If it's not, then don't post it.
- **Try and get recommended by other people on twitter.** Getting recommended by someone with a large twitter following (like an athlete or celebrity friend) can help you to reach new followers.

Replies / Mentions '@'

Another useful tool to help you build your twitter following is to engage directly with your fans. One of the best ways to engage with your audience is to reply to one of their posts or mention them in one of yours by using the @symbol followed by their Twitter name. Your reply will appear in your timeline and that of the person you have sent it to.

Example:

The screenshot shows a Twitter thread. The top tweet is from Team De Cruz (@TeamDeCruz) dated 21 Jul. The text of the tweet is: "@teameriksson Jesus... We might play AGAIN at swiss cup Basel! Haha I'm gonna have to make a head to head statistic! #swisscupbasel". Below the text are icons for "Expand", "Reply", "Retweet", and "Favorite". The bottom tweet is from Team Eriksson (@teameriksson) dated 22 Jul. The text of the tweet is: "@TeamDeCruz it's crazy. Yeah, we should, 1-2 last season and 2-1 the season before that. #battle #champions". Below the text are icons for "Hide conversation", "Reply", "Retweet", and "Favorite". At the bottom of the screenshot, it says "4:15 AM - 22 Jul 12 via Twitter for Android · Details".

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Retweeting

A retweet is when you repost someone else's post on your twitter feed. Either just press a 'retweet' button, if you have a device that lets you, or type RT followed by '@' then the original person's twitter address.

Example: PejaSCF's tweet has been retweeted here by TeamEdin



Retweeting tips:

- Always acknowledge the source of information that you post (the tweeter)
- It is always worthwhile adding your own personal comment(s) to retweets
- Try to balance the amount of posts that you retweet with the amount of tweets you post personally

Sharing links

Posting links to interesting videos, pictures, websites and stories for example is another great way to engage your audience. The one potential drawback when posting links however is the length of the website address, which may be over the 140 word twitter limit. A way to get around this is by copying and pasting the link into a web facility which automatically shortens web links. One website is <http://tinyurl.com> but there are many more available online.

Hashtags (#)

Hashtags on twitter identify a topic, for example **#curling** or **#WMCC**. This allows people to search for any tweets which contain this hashtag topic mention. You can either start your own hashtag for an event or topic and encourage others to use it too, or use hashtags that are already in existence.

Hashtags that are most commonly used become **trends**, which can be viewed on your twitter homepage.

Example:



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Direct messages

A direct message is a private message sent via twitter to one of your followers. These messages can only be exchanged by people who are following each other - **you cannot send a direct message to a user who is not following you.**

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.

Share Tweets with Facebook

You can now link your Twitter account to your Facebook page. This will ensure that all your Tweets appear in your Facebook timeline. This is a good way of cross-communicating over both social media outlets, whilst also highlighting your Twitter to your Facebook fans, potentially increasing your fans on both outlets.

To set this up simply go to the 'Settings' tab beneath the face icon in the top right hand corner of your Twitter page and then click on 'Profile' on the left hand side column. There is an option to select 'Post your Tweets to Facebook' if you scroll down. See below:

The screenshot shows the Twitter profile page for 'World Curling'. The left sidebar contains a menu with options: Account, Password, Mobile, Email notifications, Profile (highlighted with a red box), Design, and Apps. The main content area shows the profile information, including the name 'World Curling', location, website 'http://www.worldcurling.org/', and bio 'The official fan feed from the World Curling Federation. Sharing fun and interesting information from the world'. A settings dropdown menu is open, showing options: Direct messages, Lists, Help, Keyboard shortcuts, Settings (highlighted with a red box), and Sign out. A red arrow on the right side of the page points downwards, indicating the location of the Facebook link option in the settings.

When on this page,
scroll down for the
Facebook link option

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Tips for Twitter

Tools to help

Below are some examples of tools which can help you manage your twitter profile:

www.tweetdeck.com

Tweetdeck is one of the most popular programmes for managing twitter. It has the same functions as the twitter website, with additional features enabling you to log, track and respond to your followers.

Photos

There's a number of websites and mobile apps which let you share photos on twitter. They include:

www.twitpic.com

www.tweetphoto.com

www.yfrog.com

Whilst you retain the rights to photos you upload and share on twitter, recent changes mean that twitter also has the right to use and sell your images via third parties.

Again, like anything you post on twitter, assume it will could be viewed by anyone, therefore anything controversial could appear in the media very quickly.

Video

The quickest way to share a video on twitter is simply by uploading it to You Tube and then copying and pasting the link on Twitter.

How often should I be Tweeting?

There are no rules, but if you're trying to establish an online presence **it's worth tweeting 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 Twitter

It's often easier to tweet 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 tweet when you're on the move.

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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/2012/07/26/sports/olympics/twitter-comment-costs-greek-athlete-spot-in-olympics.html>

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