



REFEREE SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTISES



*A guide to supporting professionalism,
impartiality, and positive engagement.*



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USA TAEKWONDO
usatkd.org

USA TAEKWONDO REFEREE SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES

USA Taekwondo recognizes that referees are passionate members of the taekwondo community and often wish to celebrate the achievements of athletes, coaches, clubs, and events through social media.

As our referees continue to progress to national and international assignments, even well-intentioned social media interactions can occasionally be misunderstood or mischaracterized. These best practices are intended to protect our referees while preserving public confidence in the impartiality of officiating.

These best practices are not intended to discourage positive engagement with our sport, nor do they suggest that referees have acted inappropriately in the past.

Our objective is not to limit positive engagement with the taekwondo community, but to help ensure that our referees' professionalism and impartiality are never unnecessarily called into question.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Referees should conduct themselves on social media in a manner that maintains both the reality and the appearance of impartiality.

When considering a post or comment, referees should ask themselves:

"Could a reasonable observer interpret this as showing favoritism toward a particular athlete, coach, club, or team?"

If there is any doubt, a more general comment is usually the better approach.

APPROPRIATE SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY

Referees are encouraged to:

- Congratulate athletes, coaches, clubs, and teams in broad, general terms.
- Celebrate participation, achievement, and sportsmanship.
- Share official USA Taekwondo communications and event content.
- Promote the positive values of taekwondo and officiating.
- Support the growth of the sport through positive, respectful engagement.

Examples include:

- *"Congratulations to everyone who competed this weekend."*
- *"Great event and fantastic performances throughout the day."*
- *"Congratulations on your medal."*
- *"Congratulations on a great tournament."*
- *"Another outstanding USA Taekwondo event."*

ACTIVITY TO AVOID

To help protect both referees and the integrity of officiating, referees should avoid:

- Publicly evaluating, analyzing, or commenting on the competitive performance of individual athletes or coaches.
- Commenting on officiating decisions or specific matches.
- Expressing support for one competitor over another.
- Engaging in online debates regarding competition outcomes or officiating.
- Posting content that could reasonably be perceived as demonstrating bias or preferential treatment.

Instead of:

“Your footwork today was outstanding.”

Consider:

“Congratulations on a great tournament.”

Similarly, rather than commenting on why an athlete won, why an athlete should have won, or what distinguished one competitor from another, simply recognizing the athlete's accomplishment is generally the more appropriate approach.

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Referees are ambassadors for USA Taekwondo both on and off the competition floor. Maintaining a professional online presence helps protect not only individual referees but also the credibility of officiating.

These best practices are intended to support referees by reducing the possibility that well-intentioned comments may later be taken out of context or used to question their impartiality.

QUESTIONS

If a referee is uncertain whether a post or comment is appropriate, they are encouraged to seek guidance from USA Taekwondo Referee Leadership before posting.

OUR COMMITMENT

USA Taekwondo believes our referees are among the finest officials in the world.

These best practices are intended to support that reputation by helping ensure that our officials can continue to engage positively with our community while maintaining the highest standards of professionalism.