

Advice from a Regional Adviser:

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SOCIAL MEDIA----A FRIEND OR AN ENEMY

The use of social media, whether it is Facebook, Instagram, My Space, Pinterest, Twitter, or even the professional site LinkedIn, is becoming a part of the way we communicate. It is extremely important to be diligent about what we post. In many respects, privacy does not exist on the web.

How social media impacts college baseball umpires is quickly becoming an intricate part of "The Game". We all need to be aware of potential dangers in using social media on a regular basis with any regard to officiating college baseball. Every college official is a professional and that professionalism should be apparent both on and off the field.

Privacy does not exist on the web, and the potential pitfalls of even "commenting," "liking," "sharing," or "posting," photos or information on the web are great. My understanding was that whatever was communicated to "my friends or followers" would only be seen by those individuals. Wrong!

Here is an example: Recently I observed a presentation to a high school Leadership Class that quickly showed me a different side of the phrase, "my friends/followers". The presenter asked for a volunteer to stand up and represent the class in her presentation. She then asked anyone in the Leadership Class (approximately 70 students) who was a "friend or follower" of that student to stand up. Seven students stood up as a "friend or follower" of the first student. She then asked anyone in the room that was a "friend or follower" with any of those seven to stand up. I was amazed to see the remainder of the 70 students all stand up. This simple example of networking opened my eyes to how quickly something that was meant for "my friends and followers" could quickly become much larger. In addition, even if a person is not in that chain of friends, someone can send a screen shot of the page or picture to that person and the spreading of information multiplies.

As intercollegiate umpires, we are given a very important role in preserving the integrity of college baseball. The following advice was presented by the presenter: "if you share it, someone will read it, so it's important to protect and even cultivate your online legacy. Share---or don't---accordingly".