

Social media training works best for student-athletes, study shows

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Jimmy Sanderson (middle) discusses social media training and monitoring with a colleague and student at Clemson's Social Media Listening Center. Credit: Craig Mahaffey, Clemson University

"Social media educational sessions are generally mandatory for college athletes, yet little scholarly work to date has investigated how college athletes perceive this training," said Jimmy Sanderson, assistant professor in Clemson's department of communication studies.

Understanding college athletes' social media use and perceptions about social media training will offer important insights for athletic department personnel, coaches and social media consultants to ensure that social media education is fully optimized.

"Student-athletes appear to be willing to receive social media education so long as it is tailored to their actual habits and includes their input," Sanderson said. "There also appears to be a need for more consistent follow-up and less reliance on [monitoring software](#) that may be excessive and overburdensome."

Placing less reliance on monitoring software and modifying new media training to align with student-athletes' habits and input will promote more positive and responsible usage of social networks.

The researchers note that athletic department administrators, coaches and others tasked with social media education need to listen to the voices of college athletes and integrate their feedback into this process.

This is the key finding by researchers from Clemson University, Baylor University and the University of Florida and published in the *International Journal of Sport Communication*.

"If they do so, college athletes will have a more rewarding and meaningful experience with social media education," Sanderson said.

The study explored [college athletes' social media](#) use and their experiences with and attitudes about a rising trend in college athletics: social media education.

More information: *International Journal of Sport Communication*, [journals.humankinetics.com/ijsc...ocial-media-training](http://journals.humankinetics.com/ijsc/social-media-training)

Given the [media coverage](#) that often accompanies college athletes' social media content, the researchers say that athletic department personnel are grappling with how to manage college athletes' use of social media and have turned to outside vendors who provide education as well as social media monitoring services.

Provided by Clemson University

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