

EDFL MEDIA POLICY



1. Introduction

The media provides an important platform for the Essendon District Football League Football League to promote its achievements and attract revenue for in the form of sponsorship.

“The media” refers to mainstream media such as state and national agencies and local agencies. It also refers to in-house content produced by the league and also its clubs. This document recognises that the media landscape is changing and that the EDFL and its member clubs are prolific in producing media content.

This Media Policy provides a framework for interaction with the media and also the publication of league and club-generated content.

2. Policy Scope

This policy applies to all forms of verbal and written correspondence to the mainstream and local media and also includes club publication on league and club-run websites and social media platforms. It also includes off the record comments, anonymous comments, public speaking engagements and media releases.

Social media platforms includes but is not limited to:

- Discussion forums such as Bigfooty.com
- Any form of blogging or microblogging such as Twitter
- Social networking websites such as Facebook
- Video and photo sharing websites such as Instagram and YouTube
- Shared online spaces such as computer and video gaming
- Shared digital interactive spaces such as Snapchat
- Any newly developed digital technology that the Essendon District Football League believes should fit under the definition of a media or publishing platform

This policy is applicable to all Essendon District Football League employees and volunteers, and Affiliated Club Officials, Members, Players, Staff, and Volunteers who participate in any form of Social Media. It is also applicable to any persons who publish or represent in any manner content representative or recognisable as relating to the Essendon District Football League, its employees or playing and non-playing participants.

3. Policy Intent

This policy provides a framework for comments, statements, and media releases by the Essendon District Football League and the participating Clubs of the Essendon District Football League, that have the potential to reach the larger community either via media outlets or via publication.

The General Manager of the Essendon District Football League is the nominated authorised person to speak to media outlets on behalf of the Essendon District Football League. Essendon District Football League Board may authorise other persons from time to time to speak to media outlets on behalf of the Essendon District Football League.

Essendon District Football League stakeholders are actively encouraged to liaise with media outlets to promote their achievements be it a club, player, official, volunteer, or umpire related matter. In doing so, it is imperative to maintain an appropriate spirit and tone to the communication. The Essendon District Football League is to be advised of any such dealings and where possible, provided with a copy of the intended release.

This policy is designed to protect both the league's and its participants and supporters interests and reputation.

4. Media Enquires

Anytime the media makes enquires to stakeholders or the Essendon District Football League about matters which may have a negative impact on the Essendon District Football League operations, those enquires are to be directed to the League's Media Officer, who will then determine if it is necessary to pass the enquiry to the General Manager. As the Essendon District Football League's nominated spokesperson, the General Manager will respond directly or designate another party to serve as spokesperson for such requests. If the General Manager is not available, enquires should be referred to the Essendon District Football League media officer and/or Essendon District Football League Chairman.

4a. EDFL Public Comment

The only individuals qualified to speak on behalf of the Essendon District Football League are its General Manager, Media Officer, Chairman and any individual given the explicit consent of the three aforementioned figures.

Individuals, groups and clubs are not to comment publicly on behalf of the EDFL or in any way pass themselves off as an authority on the EDFL's operations, conduct, rules, policies or any other league-operated matter.

5. Essential supporting documents

Any comments or statements made to the media, either written or verbal, should be done in the context of the Essendon District Football League's Rules, By-Laws and Schedules.

These include:

EDFL Laws No.34 – Bringing the game into disrepute (below)

34 CONDUCT UNBECOMING, PREJUDICIAL OR LIKELY TO BRING GAME INTO DISREPUTE

34.1 Where the Board of Management is of the opinion that an affiliated Club or any Official, player or Member thereof, or Member or any other person has contravened the Statement of Purposes, Rules or By-Laws of the League or has been involved in conduct which is unbecoming or likely to prejudice the reputation, or interests of the League, or to bring the game of Australian Football into disrepute, the Board of Management may deal with any such matter in any manner as the Board of Management in their absolute discretion thinks fit and without limiting their power, they may;

34.1.1 appoint any person to enquire into any matter;

34.1.2 conduct their own enquiry into any matter;

34.1.3 refer any matter to the Tribunal;

34.1.4 impose any penalty that it deems fit including but not limited to, imposing a monetary penalty or bond, a suspension, a disqualification or providing for the loss of or forfeiture of or Premiership points or other privileges, benefits or entitlements.

6. Engaging the Media

The League through the General Manager will endeavour to foster a positive relationship with the media by assigning the Media Officer a broad range of promotional news stories, including but not limited to identifying positive stories and publishing them on the EDFL's digital platforms, tipping off media when appropriate.

7. Conduct in Social Media Activity

- Individuals are not to represent themselves, the Essendon District Football League or its affiliated Clubs in a false or misleading way.
- No Individual is to start, operate or endorse any publication or digital platform that uses any material that represents or is recognisable as relating to the Essendon District Football League, its employees or playing and non-playing participants without the express written consent of the Essendon District Football League General Manager. This broad definition is necessary to make it absolutely clear that it is against league policy to bully, misrepresent, defame or parody the Essendon District Football League, its employees or playing and non-playing participants.

8. Photography and Privacy

All clubs acknowledge that any minor they select to play in their open-age senior team may be subject to photography, video taping and live radio broadcast. The player's consent is implied by their selection.

All clubs acknowledge that participation in Essendon District Football League junior finals may be subject to photography and video taping. The players' consent is implied by their selection.

9. Suitable Use Guidelines

The Essendon District Football League encourages the use of media and associated services in an appropriate manner as a means of providing an efficient and effective means of communication to the public on the operations of the competition.

For a general guide please see the appendix to this document – Suitable Use Guidelines

10. Breaches

Any individual, group of people or club suspected or alleged to be in breach of the media policy will be subject to any and all of the following;

- Investigation of their conduct by EDFL staff or any investigating officer of the league's determination
- Notice to appear before the EDFL tribunal
- Notice to appear before the EDFL board
- Scrutiny of their actions as they relate to other league rules

Penalties for substantiated breaches can include fines, suspensions, de-registration, loss of competition points, expulsion from competition, any other penalty deemed suitable, and where necessary, referral to the relevant authorities (ie instances of cyber stalking, criminal harassment, et al).

APPENDIX 1 – Suitable Use Guidelines

1. Interacting with mainstream media

- Response to media inquiries related to EDFL related issues

All Media inquiries regarding EDFL related issues must be referred to the EDFL.

Please take the details of the Media contact, the reason for the call (if notified) and indicate that they will be called back by the EDFL representative as soon as possible. Please provide these details to the relevant EDFL representative when you advise them of the Media inquiry.

All Media inquiries should be dealt with efficiently and courteously with due regard to the fact that the Media may be working to deadlines which require a prompt response.

- 'big picture' approach

It is important to recognise that in any dispute between EDFL clubs and parties that the nuances and differences between the clubs are rarely, if ever, relevant to mainstream media. While clubs in a dispute may be framed by the media as “perpetrator” and “victim” it is important to remember that being portrayed as a sympathetic victim is not necessarily of any benefit to the club. Negative media coverage affects the sport of football, and the perception of community football as a whole.

2. Use of club social media accounts

- Official vehicle of your club

The EDFL recommends using any social media platform the same way the club would put out an official press release or correspond with its members, junior parents or sponsors.

- Promotion of club events

The EDFL encourages clubs to use social media to promote any and all club social events, club sporting events and other club events.

- Other club promotional activities

The EDFL encourages clubs to use social media to promote club achievements, individual achievements, milestones, historical references or anything that may assist in promoting the club in a positive light or generating productive discussion between club members

- Banter

While the EDFL does not expressly forbid banter between club accounts, it is not something the league recommends. Many professional clubs with full-time staff operating their accounts have bought controversy and needless negative attention to their clubs with poorly executed humour.

At a community level, the capacity of misunderstanding and offence, and the lack of appropriate staffing of social media accounts, means the EDFL would recommend its clubs not engage in banter and instead ‘play it straight’.

Breaches

Any person, group of people or club found to be in breach of the EDFL’s media policy (as outlined in full in Section 10 of the EDFL’s Media Policy) may be subject to penalties, including fines, suspensions de-registration, loss of competition points, expulsion from competition or any other penalty deemed suitable.