

GWTA Safe Practice Guidelines

1. Activities should take place in an **Open and Observable Environment**. An open and observable environment should be maintained for all interactions between adults and athletes. Private or one-on-one situations, should be avoided unless they are open and observable. Common sense should be used to move a meeting with an athlete to an open and observable location if the meeting inadvertently begins in private.
2. All tennis practices should be open to observation by parents.
3. All tennis practices/events should have **Two-deep Leadership**. Once coach member and at least one other adult should be present at all practices and sanctioned events whenever at least one athlete is present.
4. When a coach touches an athlete as part of instruction, the coach should do so in direct view of others and inform the athlete of what s/he is doing prior to the initial contact and ask athlete permission to touch and show. Appropriate interaction would include high fives, fist bumps, side-to-side hugs and handshakes as well as moving of hands, arms, body to show accuracy of grips and strokes.
5. Coaches and other non-athlete adult members should avoid horseplay and roughhousing with athletes.
6. Non-athlete adults should respect the privacy of athletes in situations such as changing of clothes, showering, etc. Non-athlete adults should protect their own privacy in similar situations.
7. Coaches/volunteers should not initiate contact with or accept supervisory responsibility for athletes outside tennis programs and activities.
8. Coaches should not invite nor have athlete(s) to their home without the permission of the athlete's parents (or legal guardian) and should have at least one other adult or parent present.
9. Communications between non-athlete adults and athletes should not include any topic or language that is sexual or inappropriate in nature.
10. Athletes are not permitted to ride in coach's/volunteer's vehicle without another adult present and unless prior parental permission is obtained in writing and signed by parent.
11. Relationships of a peer-to-peer nature with any athletes should be avoided. For example, coaches should avoid sharing their own personal problems with athletes.
12. Coach/Volunteers should not enter restroom when athletes are present in the same facility unless another adult is present.

Electronic Communication Policy of the GWTA

Purpose

The GWTA recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today's world. Many of our athletes use these means as their primary method of communication. While the GWTA acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, the GWTA also realizes that there are associated risks that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with minors.

General Content

All communications between a coach or other adult and an athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about GWTA tennis activities.

For example, as with any communication with an athlete, electronic communication should not contain or relate to any of the following:

- Drugs or alcohol use
- Sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language; sexual activity
- Inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures
- The adult's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems
 - In addition: Any communication concerning an athlete's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible and professional.

Whether one is an athlete, coach, board member, volunteer or parent, the guiding principle to always use in communication is to ask:

- Is this communication something that someone else would find appropriate or acceptable in a face-to-face meeting?
- Is this communication something you would be comfortable saying aloud to the intended recipient of your communication in front of the intended recipient's parents, the coaching staff, the board or other athletes?

With respect to electronic communications, a simple test that can be used in most cases is whether the electronic communication with athletes is Transparent, Accessible and Professional.

- **Transparent:** All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be transparent. Your communication should not only be clear and direct but free of hidden meanings, innuendo and expectations.
- **Accessible:** All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be considered matter of record and part of the GWTA's records. Whenever possible, include another coach or parent in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility.
- **Professional:** All electronic communication between a coach and an athlete should be conducted professionally as a representative of GWTA. This includes word choices, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of the GWTA.

Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and Similar Sites

Coaches may have personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages. It is recommended that they not have any athlete member of GWTA join their personal page as a "friend". A coach should not accept any "friend" request from an athlete without parental permission. In addition, the coach should remind the athlete that it is not recommended. It is recommended that coaches and athletes do not "private message" each other through Facebook or "instant message" each other through Facebook chat or other IM method.

GWTA has an official Facebook page that athletes and their parents can “friend” for information and updates on GWTA related tennis matters.

Coaches are encouraged to set their pages to “private” to prevent athletes from accessing the coach’s personal information.

Texting

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes during the hours of 7 am and 9 pm. Texting shall only be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to GWTA tennis matters. When texting with an athlete, a parent plus another coach or board member must also be copied.

Email

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent, another coach, or a board member must also be copied

Request to Discontinue All Electronic Communications

The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communication.