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## FootGolf South Africa (FGSA) Communication Policy and Protocol

### Preamble

FootGolf South Africa (FGSA) recognises that clear, consistent, and values-driven communication is essential to the growth, credibility, and long-term sustainability of the sport. As the national governing body, FGSA carries the responsibility of ensuring that all information shared internally and externally reflects the organisation's commitment to integrity, transparency, inclusivity, and professionalism.

This Communication Policy and Protocol establishes the standards, structures, and expectations that guide how FGSA representatives engage with members (*in accordance with the FGSA Membership Policy*), partners, the media, and the public. It provides a unified framework that supports effective decision-making, protects organisational reputation, and ensures that communication across all platforms is accurate, timely, and aligned with FGSA's strategic objectives.

Through this policy, FGSA affirms its dedication to fostering trust, strengthening relationships, and promoting FootGolf as a respected and accessible sport throughout South Africa.

### 1. Definitions

- **FGSA:** FootGolf South Africa, the national governing body for FootGolf in South Africa.
- **Administration:** The office responsible for managing all incoming and outgoing communications at the relevant level.
- **Official Languages:** For FGSA communication, English and South African Sign Language (SASL), as designated by the FGSA Language Policy.
- **Tee-Time Magazine:** FGSA's official publication, serving as a channel for external communication, storytelling, and promotion of the sport.
- **Knowledge Hub:** FGSA's official digital platform for education, governance resources, and the central repository of official communication.

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## 2. Contextual and Policy Framework

This Communication Policy is situated within FGSA's broader governance framework. Communication is recognised not as an auxiliary function but as a strategic activity central to governance, organisational identity, and stakeholder trust. In line with the federation's mission to grow the sport of FootGolf across South Africa, communication must balance efficiency with inclusivity, ensuring that messages are accurate, accessible, and consistent. The policy is framed within South Africa's constitutional obligations, particularly section 6, which recognises twelve official languages, and the Eighteenth Constitutional Amendment, which elevated SASL to official status. FGSA acknowledges that communication is not only a matter of information sharing but also a demonstration of values, accountability, and inclusivity.

By integrating the official platforms of Tee-Time magazine and the Knowledge Hub into its communication strategy, FGSA ensures that its messages are not only formally disseminated but also publicly archived and made accessible to its stakeholders, thereby reinforcing transparency and organisational memory.

## 3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a comprehensive framework for all FGSA communications. Its intent is to create a structured and professional environment in which messages are crafted, authorised, and delivered in a way that supports the growth of the sport, enhances the federation's credibility, and fosters trust among members, partners, and the wider public. Communication under this framework is understood as a continuous process that builds identity, advances strategy, and ensures accountability.

## 4. Scope

This policy applies to all levels of FGSA, including the national executive, provincial structures, and affiliated regional clubs, and any individuals or entities acting on behalf of the federation. It covers all forms of communication, verbal, written, signed, digital, broadcast, and printed, whether directed internally to members or externally to stakeholders, government bodies, partners, sponsors, and the public.

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## 5. Guiding Principles

The principles of transparency, professionalism, efficiency, inclusivity, and participation shall always guide FGSA communication.

- **Transparency** demands that all communication be accurate, verifiable, and accessible to those entitled to receive it.
- **Professionalism** demands that communication maintain a respectful and non-inflammatory tone, while employing language that is clear, culturally appropriate, and audience-sensitive.
- **Efficiency** requires that information be shared promptly through the proper channels so as not to delay decision-making or service delivery.
- **Inclusivity** requires deliberate measures to make communication accessible to persons with disabilities, to users of SASL, and to communities whose preferred language differs from English.
- **Participation** requires that communication be conceived not merely as top-down dissemination, but as an exchange in which members and stakeholders are given space to engage, respond, and contribute to the federation's life.

## 6. Official Communication Channels

All communication within FGSA shall flow through the Administration Office at the appropriate operational level. The Administration bears responsibility for receiving messages, vetting their accuracy and appropriateness, and directing them to the relevant structures or officials for action. Once authorised, messages may then be distributed internally or externally as needed.

Direct approaches to the President, NEC members, or committee officials are not permitted unless prior authorisation has been obtained through the Administration. Social media and other public communication activities must be approved in advance by the designated communication officer. Any attempt to bypass these authorised channels will be considered a breach of this policy.

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## **7. Roles and Responsibilities**

The President of FGSA serves as the federation's Chief Spokesperson and has overall responsibility for strategic messaging. The President may delegate this responsibility where necessary, but no statement may be made on behalf of FGSA without presidential authority.

- The NEC and committee members are required to respect the integrity of official channels, responding only to communications routed through the Administration.
- The Administration is tasked with managing the daily flow of communication, maintaining records, and ensuring that the provisions of this policy are consistently applied.
- Provincial and regional leaders are responsible for aligning local communication with the federation's national strategy and reporting regularly on communication activities.
- All members are expected to comply with official protocols, uphold confidentiality, and respond promptly to official messages.

## **8. Communication Best Practices**

FGSA communication must always be factually accurate, relevant, and concise, while still sufficiently detailed to allow proper understanding. Messages should be crafted in plain language wherever possible, though technical terminology may be employed where it is necessary for clarity with specialist audiences. Submissions for communication must be accompanied by all relevant supporting documents. Confidentiality must be strictly respected, and intellectual property rights must be protected.

Acknowledgement of official communications must take place within forty-eight hours. Members and officials may not make unauthorised comments to the media or on social platforms that imply an official FGSA position.

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## **9. Media and External Communication**

Only the President or an appointed spokesperson may communicate FGSA positions to external stakeholders or the media. Media enquiries shall be directed to the Administration, which will ensure that they are handled by the appropriate spokesperson. External communications must always be consistent with FGSA's mission and values and must safeguard the federation's reputation. Tee-Time magazine will be used as a key platform for external communication, providing an official narrative of FGSA's activities and perspectives.

## **10. Online Communication and Social Media**

FGSA's online platforms, including social media channels and the official website, must present a consistent and professional identity. Posts and updates will be vetted by the designated communication officer before publication. Personal social media use by members or officials must not bring FGSA into disrepute, disclose confidential information, or misrepresent personal opinions as FGSA's official stance. The Knowledge Hub will serve as the central digital archive for communication, ensuring consistency and long-term access to authoritative materials.

## **11. Crisis Communication**

When incidents occur that may impact FGSA's reputation, member safety, or operational stability, the President assumes primary responsibility for public messaging. A Crisis Communication Plan will be activated, setting out immediate steps for internal alerts, media engagement, and stakeholder communication. During crises, all external communication will be centralised to ensure accuracy and prevent conflicting messages.

## **12. Language and Accessibility in Communication**

FGSA recognises all twelve official languages of South Africa and affirms its commitment to multilingualism as part of its constitutional duty. English shall serve as the principal language for written and spoken communication, while SASL shall serve as a principal medium for signed communication, visual interpretation, and inclusive engagement with the Deaf community.

FGSA will, where practical and appropriate, accommodate additional languages for outreach, especially in contexts where a local language is dominant.

FGSA commits to progressive development of SASL interpretation capacity at national events, translation of selected materials, and the provision of accessible formats for publications and online content. Tee-Time magazine and the Knowledge Hub will showcase and document the organisation's efforts to uphold linguistic diversity and accessibility.

### **13. Safeguarding and Reporting**

All communication must uphold the principles of FGSA's Safeguarding Policy. Any suspected instance of harassment, abuse, discrimination, or misconduct must be reported through official safeguarding channels. Reports will be treated confidentially, and whistleblowers will be protected from retaliation.

### **14. Compliance and Enforcement**

This policy is binding on all members, officials, participants and affiliates of FGSA. Compliance will be monitored by the NEC, and any breaches will be subject to corrective action, which may include warnings, suspension of privileges, or formal disciplinary measures. Every member will be required to sign an acknowledgement confirming that they have read and understood this policy.

### **15. Review and Amendments**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the NEC to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness. Amendments may be made in response to organisational needs, sectoral developments, or legislative changes, and will take effect immediately upon adoption by the NEC.

### **Approval and Adoption**

Issued under the authority of the FootGolf South Africa Executive Committee.

Name: Norman Mphake

Position: President, FGSA

Signature:  Date: 14 July 2025