

NGFFL Toolkit Module: Communications & Social Media	Original Issue Date: 2012	Most Recent Version Issue Date: 03/15/2018
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National Gay Flag Football League (NGFFL)



Local League Toolkit

Module VII: Communications & Social Media



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1.0 Overview and Purpose

The National Gay Flag Football League (“**NGFFL**”) is committed to proudly fostering community, comradery and inclusivity by providing opportunities to engage in competition through flag football. As part of this vision, the NGFFL has a supporting agenda which includes driving local membership growth and development.

The purpose of the Local League Toolkit (“**Toolkit**”) is to provide lessons learned and resources that can help start or strengthen a local flag football league. Each city and league will be different, but there are common elements that will make this Toolkit useful to local leaders and other stakeholders who organize and run local leagues. This Toolkit is meant to share best practices, examples and lessons learned, all in an attempt to make organization and execution as efficient and as high of quality as possible.

The purpose of this module is to discuss recommended strategies for executing a successful communications and social media campaign.

2.0 Approach

The importance of communication for the success of your local league cannot be emphasized enough. Players and supporters want to hear clearly from the local league leadership about critical logistical details such as game times, locations, fees, and equipment requirements. But they would also want to hear about opportunities to get involved and connect to other players off the field too. They also want glimpses into why your local league makes the decisions it does – about fields, team sizes, officiating, and everything else that impacts their league experience.

Finally, because we live in the age of social media, players and supporters will want to interact with others in the online platforms where they congregate: Facebook and Instagram. You’ll need to structure your league with a commitment to vigorous communication across multiple channels, and divvy up your available volunteer hours and commitments accordingly.

3.0 Mailing List/Database

The local league needs an accurate, up-to-date list of the contact information of all current players, and should also have separate lists of prospective recruits and former players. That list can be housed in a number of ways, depending upon your local league’s needs. A Google drive document, a shared Excel file, or other platforms such as Constant Contact® and MailChimp® that have cost implications but are highly functional and very easy to use once learned.



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Choose the one right for your league and budget. Then, importantly, make sure someone is tasked with keeping it up to date as peoples' email addresses and phone numbers change. Finally, whatever database you choose, be sure it is redundant – meaning, that multiple people in league leadership have access to the up-to-date version.

4.0 Email

Email is the logical foundation of a local league's communication with players, prospects and other audiences. Your local league might generate an email to all players and recruits whenever critical news and information becomes available. Or your local league might choose to gather news and distribute it every other week, or weekly, or monthly, as a more formal email newsletter (*See Section 5.0 below*).

There is no right answer – the path your league likely will depend on budget, available volunteer time, time of year, etc.

Ensure that you craft emails that deliver pertinent information in a brief, clear, succinct fashion. Journalists use the rule of thumb “who-what-where-when-why” to create text that people will actually take time from their busy day to read. Consider following that rule of thumb to deliver email communications to your players and other audiences that will be appreciated because it shares needed information briefly, without being burdensome.

5.0 Newsletter

As your league advances, consider developing a simple email newsletter that can be distributed monthly, or even weekly during playing season. It can contain critical logistical details such as game times and social-event locations. It also can include a variety of content to advance the sense of community that your league creates. That could include highlights of blog posts about weekend games, or even links to YouTube videos posted by enterprising league players or supporters.

Refer to the monthly Two Minute Drill from the NGFFL for ideas.

6.0 Facebook

Facebook has become a primary way in which many of us interact around our extracurricular lives. The local league should establish a Facebook presence, a “Page” that league players and supporters can like or friend.

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Then local league leadership can use the page to augment email communications, pushing out pertinent information such as the opening of player registration, or even spreading the word quickly about day-of weather delays. Importantly, Facebook is a great place to highlight photos and videos of players in action, as well as to publicize the more social aspects of the league – so more people feel ownership and excitement about the league and the experience.

As a local league leader, you may consider “friending” other local leagues’ Facebook pages to stay current on what other leagues are doing. It’s another great way to leverage ideas and work other leagues are doing.

7.0 League Website

You may decide to have a dedicated local league website that could be used as an easy one-stop place to find schedules, key locations and dates, how to get involved, and other critical information. It also should feature information about your local league that would appeal to prospective local sponsors, as well as highlight and enthusiastically thank sponsors already in the fold.

Another way to make the website dynamic and relevant is to incorporate a blog that is regularly updated and featured on the local league’s other social media locations. The blog could feature game results, highlights of key players, and other stories illuminating the “culture” of your league.

8.0 League Videos

Chances are, your local league has at least one aspiring amateur moviemaker – a player or supporter who lives with a go pro and loves to use it. YouTube videos, from game highlights to fun-filled short movies featuring league players and activities, can be placed on your league’s website and Facebook page. They are a great way to highlight the people in your league and the fun they are having. There are many examples of video being used by local leagues around the country in support of broader goals.

9.0 Privacy Considerations

Your league needs to be sensitive to the realities of life for some LGBT people. Despite progress made on the equality front, many LGBT community members fear job security should their sexuality be widely known. You don’t want your league to inadvertently be an agent for outing its players and causing disruption to their professional lives. Include language in your legal waiver granting permission from players to photograph and video them (*See Toolkit*

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Module III: Tax & Legal Implications). If they decline, honor their wishes without exception. Be sure league photographers, website administrators, Facebook facilitators, and anyone else who might inadvertently post a photo or video of those individuals knows not to do so.

10.0 Traditional Media

Media outlets in your local area, particularly those serving the local LGBT population, can be helpful in getting the word out about your league, opportunities to play ball, and opportunities to sponsor the league. There are multiple ways to go about pursuing and securing news coverage. First identify logical outlets by asking around and by doing a basic internet search. That probably includes local LGBT newspapers and local LGBT-focused blogs. If it's not clear who at those outlets to contact, call the main desk and ask who might be interested in something new and interesting in the local LGBT community.

You can always email them a formal "press release" about your league's founding or the start of a new season, for instance. But a personal email with a follow-up phone call often works better. ("Hey Jane Blogger, here's something you might find interesting. I'd love to call you and tell you a bit more about it..."). Or do both.

Have something you believe might be newsworthy to local media outlets beyond just the local LGBT media and blogosphere? An event, perhaps, that will include lots of visually interesting things (e.g., a colorful float at Gay Pride)? Don't hesitate to email and call the assignment desks at the local TV news stations. That contact info can usually be found on the stations' websites. Contact them the night before, then again the morning of, which is when they decide what news they will cover that day.

Finally, consider asking the editor of your local LGBT newspaper to publish an op-ed or byline article by a league leader about the league, its contribution to the local community, and how to get involved.

11.0 Sponsor Communications

An easily overlooked but important area of communications is staying in close touch with local league sponsors. For instance, that can include ensuring they receive your league's twice-monthly e-newsletter and invites to all social events. But it might also include monthly touch-base phone calls from their designated point of contact within the league. That can hold particularly true for sponsors such as local bars and restaurants that likely expect patronage from league players in exchange for their generosity. Ask them how they perceive the league is doing in fulfilling its obligation as a beneficiary of their generosity. Find every possible way to

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show sponsors that the league is thinking about them, wants them to be included, and – most importantly – wants to fulfill any obligations it has taken on. Done successfully, this form of communication will make all the difference in the world when it comes time for renewal.

12.0 Revision History

Version	Version Issue Date	Description of Changes:
1	2012	Initial version
2	03/15/201	Restructured Toolkit into module format and made required edits to content to account for new format and content

13.0 Appendices

N/A