

A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping circles in various shades of blue (dark, medium, and light) and thin blue lines that intersect to form a triangular shape on the right side of the page.

Chelsea in America Bulletin Board

Usage Guidelines and Rules

This document presents the rules and guidelines for the Chelsea In America bulletin board, describing what is considered appropriate and inappropriate for posting, the appeal and review process, and what graduated steps should be taken for offenders.

13th December, 2007

Contents

- Overview..... 3
 - Where to Post 4
 - What is Acceptable and Unacceptable 4
 - Moderators 6
 - Infringement of the Rules 6
 - Edit With no Feedback 6
 - Edit With Feedback 6
 - Warning..... 7
 - Suspension 7
 - Review and Appeal 7
- Contact Us..... 7

Overview

The Chelsea in America (CIA) bulletin board has become a popular method for Chelsea supporters not only in North America but around the globe to stay in touch, chat about current issues, plan get-togethers and trips, and reminisce about the old days.

As the board has gained more and more users, it has become apparent that, in the interest of maintaining the spirit and core values we believe Chelsea in America represent, we need to outline a set of guidelines and rules for the use of the bulletin board so that everybody understands what is and is not acceptable, as well as what the appeals process is and what action will be taken against offenders.

Further to this, we know that we are “being watched,” and that as a key fledgling market for Chelsea FC, they will hold us to a higher level than other groups they don’t have as much interest in.

It has always been the intent of Chelsea in America to allow fair but free and unfettered speech as much as possible, but as different people have different understandings of what falls within what bounds, it is hoped that this guide will remove any ambiguity and provide a guide for people posting.

It is not our intention to limit any of our members’ outside interests or hobbies. However, these guidelines are set up as a structure for what is and is not appropriate for discussion on a site related to Chelsea Football Club. As with any public forum, there are subjects, beliefs and attitudes that might be appropriate in other places but not at the one at hand. Taking this into account, we have made these guidelines as a basis for mutual respect and consideration for all members of this bulletin board.

Please remember that the moderators are not just moderating to keep things clean and friendly, but to protect our affiliation with Chelsea FC. We do not want to be an outcast or freelance group just so we can post whatever we feel like, but an example of how a true supporters group should operate with respect and intelligence.

Where to Post

For all discussions of a football/soccer nature, please use the “Football” forum. Any threads not about football (whether Chelsea or other) will be moved to the non-football forum. The non-football forum is for pretty much anything you want to chat about, but as discussed later, topics such as politics, religion, etc. are off limits. There are a series of other forums on the board to accommodate other specific topics, so please try and pick accordingly before posting. We also have forums for specific supporters clubs around the US for discussions about local issues or meet-ups that others might not be interested in.

We also discourage multiple postings of the same post. We understand that you sometimes want to get your message out with a passion, but multiple threads of the same topic lead to confusion and frustration, so duplicate posts may be deleted.

Lastly, if you have an idea or suggestion for a forum that you don't see then please contact us (moderators@ChelseaInAmerica.com).

What is Acceptable and Unacceptable

Acceptable content (both in posts, avatars, tag lines or any visual media on the board) is basically considered anything that is tasteful and not offensive to other posters. Consideration must be taken to understand that this board is primarily North American, but is frequented by people from a diverse list of cultures, nationalities, religions, political beliefs and moral values. The US, while having a lot in common with the UK, also has a number of subtle but significant cultural differences. We are all part of the Chelsea family here, so please respect other people's opinions or feelings even if they are not your own, and the golden rule you should consider before submitting a post or reply is, If there is any reasonable chance your post could deeply offend somebody then don't post it.

Please remember that while Chelsea has a rich and colorful “English, working class” history, many visitors to this board have not lived it or maybe don't understand some aspects of that lifestyle. One of the primary objectives of this board is to further the support of Chelsea in North America, and to do that we have to be sensitive to and position ourselves according to a combination of the traditional Chelsea/English culture, the North American culture and the objectives and views of Chelsea FC.

While acceptable on many boards based in the UK or aimed primarily at the English culture, this board may be considered by some to be a little tamer. Behavior and language considered acceptable on some boards is not considered so here, and anybody not respecting that will be asked not to post.

Finally, we need to remember that we are in the process of trying to legitimize a lot of what we do here (not just the BB), and as such, Chelsea are likely watching us more closely than other boards.

The above reasoning leads us to the following rules and guidelines for what is and is not acceptable:

Foul or Abusive Language – Some words or expressions considered acceptable in a pub on the Fulham Road on a Saturday are not appropriate here. Furthermore, the masking of words with extended

characters such as '@', '*' etc. while acceptable for some words will not be enough for others. This means that some words, however well masked, will not be allowed. Clearly we can't list the "banned" words here but hopefully common sense will prevail. If you do use a word the moderators deem inappropriate the word will be edited and you may be contacted by a moderator. It is unlikely innocuous mistakes or slips will lead to any more than edits, but if you ignore the guidance of a moderator then that is considered abuse of these rules and therefore subjects you to suspension or banning.

Derogatory or Insulting Posts – We all understand that emotions run high in football but extreme insulting or derogatory comments to anybody on the board are not permitted.

Avatars and Signatures – The same rules of appropriateness will be applied to avatars, signatures and any links or imbedded graphics in either your posts or your signatures.

Non-Chelsea supporters – Supporters of all clubs are welcome, as long as they remember this is a Chelsea board and don't engage in Chelsea-bashing or overtly grandstanding of their team. Likewise, if they show us respect, members of the board should show them respect in kind. If you feel a non-Chelsea supporter is overstepping their welcome, please bring it to the attention of the board moderators instead of starting a public flame-war.

Religious and Political Content – While this can be stimulating and lively conversation, it also has the highest potential to get tempers flared or to be misunderstood. For this reason, please refrain from any political or religious discussions. These would include discussions ranging from abortion rights, gun control, strong political affiliations, support of illegal substances, and other topics that create a clear divide.

Religious and Cultural Sensitivity – North America is a melting pot of cultures, religions and ethnic backgrounds. The use of some slang names or expressions that are to some deemed acceptable in football culture in the UK are not acceptable here. Furthermore, while there are some commonly held stereotypical beliefs openly shared, whether in the UK or US, they must not be openly used here. For example, aggressive anti-French, Irish etc. (UK) or anti-Mexican (US) expressions are not acceptable. This also includes cultural groups outside of religious or geographical areas, i.e., gays, vegans, etc.

Alcohol or drug use to excess – As with all the topics in this guide it is understood that there will be discussion about adult recreational activities, and some may be illegal in some countries, but the glorification of excessive use is to be avoided on our BB. Many on the board like to have a drink, and many like to drink a lot (which leads to some entertaining stories), but the blatant bragging of, for example, getting excessively drunk just for sake of it is best left to private messages and not public messages.

Violence – It is understood that Chelsea's history, along with the history of the game in Europe in general, goes hand in hand with excessive violence. Fortunately, much of that excessive violence has disappeared from the game, and while it is still there and will still be experienced by some, the glorification of violence is not acceptable on this board. Undoubtedly there will be stories from people

on the board who saw or were even involved in violence, and it is quite OK to discuss the stories or the emotions that went with them, but advocating or glorifying violence on this board, in this fashion is not. If anyone is found to be using this board to organize or participate in hooligan-like or firm-like activities, they will be banned immediately and indefinitely.

Club Confidentiality – There are a number of people who post on the board who have access to sometimes confidential information about Chelsea FC or the players. Furthermore, some people come across information, perhaps on other boards, through contacts or in the less-reputable press. We ask you to respect the nature of confidential information you may have access to, especially when it pertains to the security or privacy of Chelsea FC or their players and staff. It is always exciting to feel you are the first to know something, but sometimes information is held back from the official sources for a reason, so we ask you to give that consideration before posting.

Moderators

To help monitor the board and keep it within the bounds deemed appropriate a selection of members will be given moderator permissions. With this permission will come guidelines that further help them apply the rules of the board. Understand they are not looking to stifle free speech or expression, or judge your opinions, they are just here to ensure this board is fun for everybody. They will have two roles. The first is to correct minor indiscretions such as curse words. Typically these will simply be edited in a post and that is it. Do not expect every indiscretion to be brought back to the attention of the poster as this would add to the workload of the moderators. Where posts are felt to be significantly or repeatedly in breach of the rules above the moderator has the power to:

- Request the poster edits / deletes their post
- Bring the post / thread to the attention of the other moderators if they are unsure how to act
- Edit / delete the post or thread immediately

Moderators will self-police each other to ensure the rules are being applied consistently.

Infringement of the Rules

Edit With no Feedback

For most minor infringements, the moderator will simply make the edit but not provide feedback to the poster. If you believe your post has been edited inappropriately, then please contact the moderators (see “contact us” section) and don’t raise the issue publicly on the board.

Edit With Feedback

In the event that an infringement is more excessive, or is being repeated regularly, a moderator may either unilaterally or after consultation with other moderators send you a polite note explaining your deviation from the rules, help you understand how you can correct the offending post, and ask you to be more attentive to the issue in further posting.

Warning

If a poster continues to break the rules, even after repeated polite requests not to do so, they will be given a formal warning. If a member has to be reprimanded more than twice on a specific infringement, they will then be given a formal warning. The warning will consist of nothing more than an e-mail to the board member letting them know that they have been officially warned, why they are being warned, and a disclaimer that future warnings may lead to suspension and/or termination of their account.

Suspension

If a poster, after two formal warnings, continues to break rules their account will be suspended and/or deleted.

Review and Appeal

Moderators will use their best judgment when applying these rules so please give them a break if they make a judgment call you don't necessarily agree with. If you believe you have been unfairly treated by a moderator, then either discuss it civilly with them or contact one of the other moderators with details in private. Please do not air your grievances publically. It becomes an uncomfortable situation for all if we are forced to "take sides."

However, this said, after appropriate appeals and discussion, the moderator's opinions and decisions are final.

These rules, as well as the way they are applied, will be constantly reviewed. If you have a suggestion or feel that a rule is unfair, please send a note to moderators@chelseainamerica.com. Moderators will treat all communication fairly, impartially and confidentially.

Contact Us

For questions or complaints about posts, please contact the moderators at moderators@ChelseainAmerica.com

For general questions or suggestions about the bulletin board please contact bbAdmin@ChelseainAmerica.com