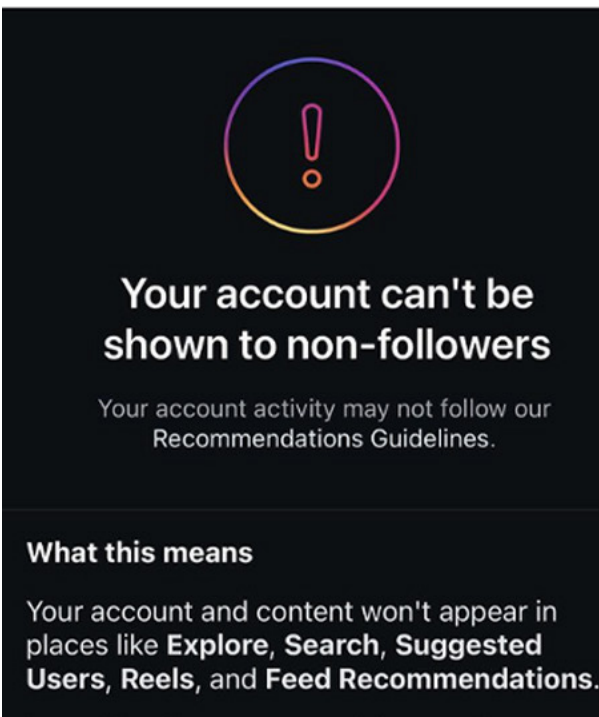


Instagram



kennageer10.9 I have always feared the day the media would censor my sport and speech just because I use firearms.

That day has finally come.

This sport is life-changing because of its ability to unite both able-bodied and disabled athletes, young and old, foreign and domestic. Me and my fellow athletes rely on our social media accounts to spread the word about our sport, firearm safety, build our personal brand, and connect with potential sponsors. Many of us (myself included) are either not paid or paid very little for our involvement in this sport. Our social media presence can often be the avenue that pays for us to continue competing.



## Another Disability for Paralympians

August 2, 2024

The Paralympic Games, being held this year from August 28 to September 8, in Paris, are a “major international sports competition for athletes with disabilities.”

We should cheer their efforts—not undermine them.

Meta’s Instagram apparently disagrees. In mid-July, [Instagram restricted](#) the account of McKenna Geer, member of the American shooting team, so that it could be viewed only by current followers.

The “problem” seemed to be that she had posted photos of herself in competition. With firearms. For similar reasons, Instagram has also censored the accounts of

other athletes. (Skittishness about pics of guns may be why an Olympics.com photo of an Indian athlete “shooting” shows [only head and arm.](#))

When the restrictions were imposed, Geer observed that she and other athletes use social media to spread the word about their sport and firearm safety, “build our personal brand, and connect with potential sponsors.” Her livelihood and ability to continue shooting competitively were thus at stake.

[Geer’s Instagram account](#) is again accessible to non-followers. But the problem has not been resolved permanently. As aaronalvarado asserted at her account, “a bad AI program with no monitoring” may be to blame. “We appeal and the program shadow-bans everything.”

If so, at least a human being is not consciously choosing to censor Geer or other athletes because they shoot competitively. But *somebody* wrote the programming. And Meta must be aware of these problems.

It’s time to remove the “guns bad, context irrelevant” line of code.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.