



THREAT ANALYSIS

White Nationalist “Active Clubs” Maintain an Active Online Presence



MARCH 2024

RESEARCH



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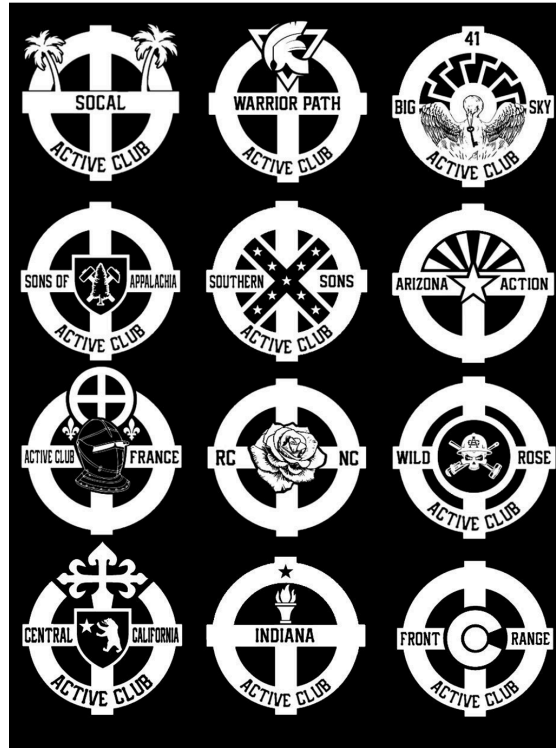


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nisos regularly monitors mainstream and alternative social media platforms as well as other online communities for the activities of various extremist groups, including Active Clubs, to stay abreast of developments in their on- and offline behavior. Active Clubs are a network of locally and regionally affiliated white supremacist and white nationalist workout and mixed martial arts (MMA) training groups that conduct overt political activities such as protests and demonstrations, in-person and online propaganda distribution, and coordinated activities with other extremist groups such as the Patriot Front and White Lives Matter. Active Clubs exist in almost every US state and in numerous Western and Northern European nations.

Active clubs originated with Robert Rundo's Rise Above Movement (RAM), a California-based white supremacist movement, and have gained significant traction in the United States and abroad. Rundo shifted tactics from leading the organized group RAM to promoting a decentralized network of Active Clubs following the sentencing of three RAM members in 2019 for violence related to the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia.¹ Rundo's record—including a recent arrest, release, and re-arrest—raises the question of whether Active Clubs are positioned to participate in future political violence. At surface level, the designator "Active Club" offers an ambiguity that allows such groups to operate under the radar, though their messaging exhibits an extreme white nationalist ideology. Active Clubs' participation in public rallies, particularly counter-protests, combined with members' focus on physicality, poses a risk for public violence. Rundo's recent arrest does not diminish the threat of Active Clubs' political and hate-inspired violence, particularly as this already vast network continues to expand. Monitoring Active Clubs activities to better understand this risk requires an evolving understanding of members' techniques for evading law enforcement scrutiny and familiarity with the alternative online communities in which they congregate.

¹ [https://www.isdglobal\[.\]org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Active-Clubs.pdf](https://www.isdglobal[.]org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Active-Clubs.pdf)



Graphic 1: Local, State, and International Active Club logos compiled by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). Active Club imagery almost always adopts the Celtic Cross symbol. Note the Big Sky (top right) use of the Nazi Black Sun.²

Active Clubs primarily operate on alternative social media platforms such as Telegram and Gab, where the average Club has several hundred subscribers or followers. The groups use these platforms to push propaganda, organize in-person training events, and coordinate with external groups such as Patriot Front and White Lives Matter. Nisos has identified approximately 100 Telegram channels associated with different Active Clubs in North America, along with profiles on alternative and traditional social media platforms such as Gab, Odysee, and X (formerly Twitter).

² <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/active-club-network>



WNChris @YeahIStillTrade
19h · 🌐 · Edited

Active Club definition: Group of White men who train for combat sports and general athletics to compete against other active clubs.

Active Club Manifesto

The main purpose of the Active Club model is to bring White men together to build community and to build health (mental/physical.) We aim to affect the culture by building our own, one that builds a better man through tapping into our competitive nature, not through violence or intimidation of the public. We are an athletic group focused on bettering our people, not meddling with, or hurting other people(s).

Active Club By-laws

- To be a recognized Active Club, you must have at least three members, if you have less than three members you are a probationary club under your closest recognized club. One representative must make it to one of the yearly events.
*Example, Frontier or other W2R sponsored events where more than three clubs gather.
- The club must put athletics before activism and politics. If the individual wishes to do political actions, it should be through one of our allied organizations.
- Promotional materials and videos should be focused on showcasing club growth, community and athletic prowess and should not showcase edgy political symbols from the past. We are a movement that's focused on the future.
- All Active Clubs and their members are forbidden from giving interviews or talking to the media unless it's Media2Rise or another approved outlet by (Appointed people.)
- Membership in Active Club requires a one-year probation period. Upon being accepted into a local Active Club, each full member has one vote on decisions, and majority vote cannot be overturned.

Member commitments to the Club:

- You must be drug free.
- You must be heterosexual.
- You must not commit crimes in the name of the club. The moment a member commits an illegal act their membership is revoked, rather it's made known or not.
- You must lead an honorable lifestyle and have no past of child abuse or sexual crimes.

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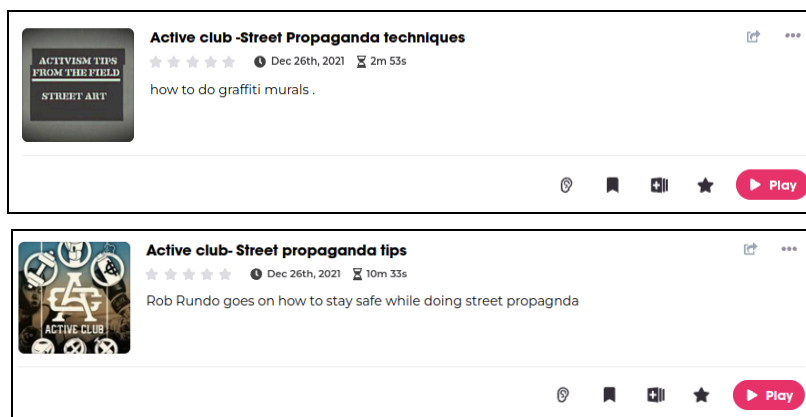
Graphic 2: Post on alternative social media site Gab outlining how and why Active Clubs operate and their requirements.³

³ [https://gab\[.\]com/YeahIStillTrade/posts/112081628593605887](https://gab[.]com/YeahIStillTrade/posts/112081628593605887)



BACKGROUND

Rundo founded RAM in 2017 as a southern California-based white supremacist movement and group focused on street-fighting and MMA with an emphasis on real-world action in support of its ideological goals. It gained notoriety in the aftermath of the 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville.^{4 5} In January 2021, Rundo and German neo-Nazi Denis Kapustin introduced the concept for decentralized, nationwide Active Clubs on the Active Club Podcast. The podcast outlined the Clubs' purpose for training fighters in support of white nationalism and provided instructions on how to spread propaganda.



Graphics 3 and 4: Early Active Club podcasts providing tips and techniques for spreading Active Club propaganda.^{6 7}

Despite Rundo's indictment in 2018 for violent activity, extradition from Romania in 2023, and subsequent re-arrest in February 2024, Active Clubs' decentralized nature allows the groups to operate without significant oversight or direction. The majority of Active Clubs operate independently around a loose framework of physical training and white supremacy/nationalism. Therefore, identifying coordinated activity at the national or international level is a challenge.

Active Club Activities

Local and regional Active Clubs focus on physical activity and training, particularly MMA, and local political activities such as propaganda distribution, protests, and counter-protests. This combination of physical activity focused on violence and counter-protest activity makes Active Clubs a prominent threat to organized protesters as well as local and state law enforcement providing security and peacekeeping at protest sites.

⁴ [https://www.ad\[.\]org/resources/backgrounder/rise-above-movement-ram](https://www.ad[.]org/resources/backgrounder/rise-above-movement-ram)

⁵ [https://www.propublica\[.\]org/article/white-hate-group-campaign-of-menace-rise-above-movement](https://www.propublica[.]org/article/white-hate-group-campaign-of-menace-rise-above-movement)

⁶ [https://www.podchaser\[.\]com/podcasts/active-club-style-on-odysee-5041072/episodes/active-club-street-propaganda-157858104](https://www.podchaser[.]com/podcasts/active-club-style-on-odysee-5041072/episodes/active-club-street-propaganda-157858104)

⁷ [https://www.podchaser\[.\]com/podcasts/active-club-style-on-odysee-5041072/episodes/active-club-street-propaganda-157858109](https://www.podchaser[.]com/podcasts/active-club-style-on-odysee-5041072/episodes/active-club-street-propaganda-157858109)

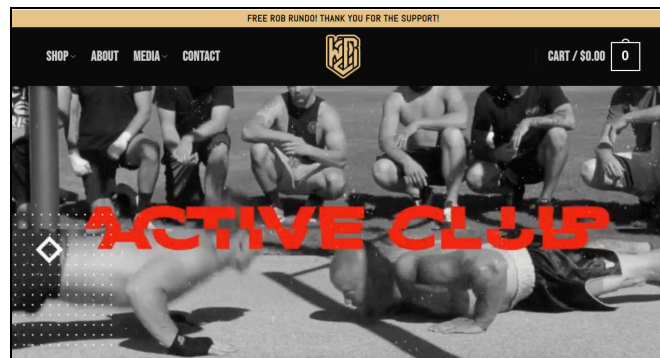


Physical Activities

Much of Active Clubs' propaganda and recruiting material for attracting potential members is focused on the physical training aspect of the groups' activities. This includes photographs and videos of members conducting physical training exercises and sparring. Almost all Active Clubs' images and videos show members working out or highlight their physiques.

Active Club training sessions serve three primary purposes:

- To create comradery amongst existing members through non-political activities that are likely perceived as non-threatening by local law enforcement.
- To cultivate a core membership centered around action and violence.
- To attract potential recruits through less overtly political activities.



Graphic 5: Example imagery highlighting physical activity from the Will2Rise Active Club's website.⁸



Graphic 6: Photograph of Active Clubs members sparring from a local Active Club's Telegram channel.⁹

Political Activities

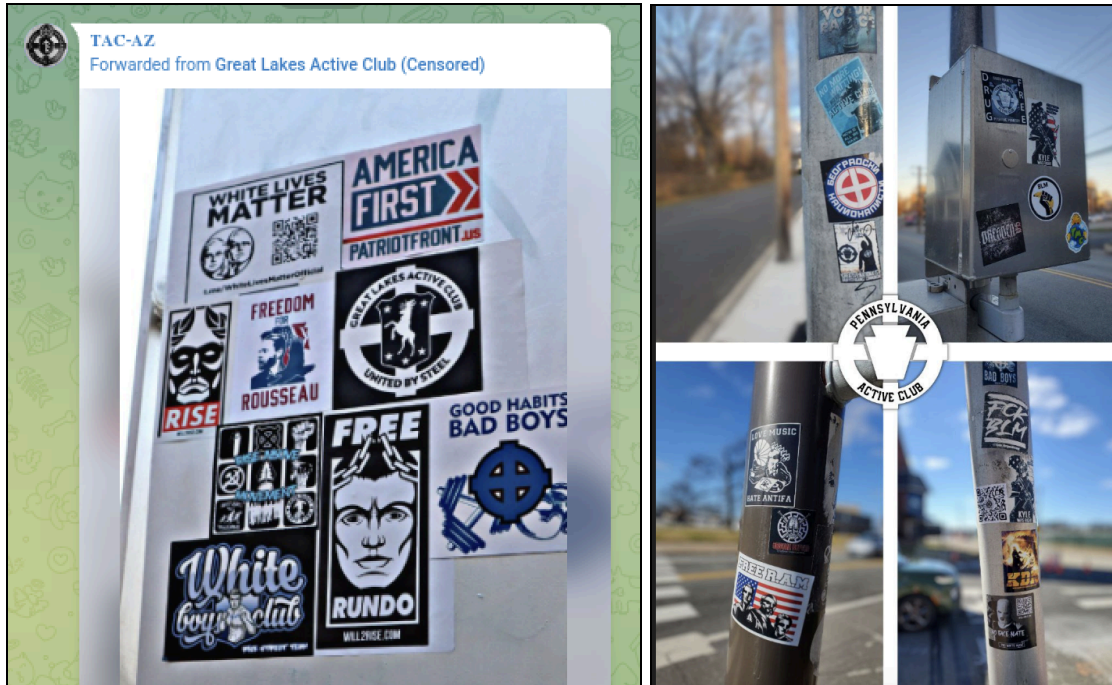
In addition to training, Active Clubs participate in local and regional political activities such as propaganda distribution, protests, and counter-protest agitation.

⁸ Will2rise[.]com

⁹ [https://t\[.\]me/greatlakesactiveclub/1188?single](https://t[.]me/greatlakesactiveclub/1188?single)



Active Club propaganda distribution most commonly involves members distributing flyers, stickers, or posters in public areas. Though Active Clubs share common imagery and rhetoric, these political activities take place at the local and not the national level. This activity frequently overlaps with that of other white supremacist and white nationalist groups, particularly the White Lives Matter movement, with some Active Clubs’ propaganda exhibiting White Lives Matter imagery.



Graphics 7 and 8: (Left) Great Lakes Active Club flyers alongside White Lives Matter and Patriot Front material.¹⁰ (Right) Pennsylvania Active Club stickers on power lines and stop lights.¹¹



Graphic 9: Active Club propaganda at Dixie State University espousing white erasure narratives.¹²

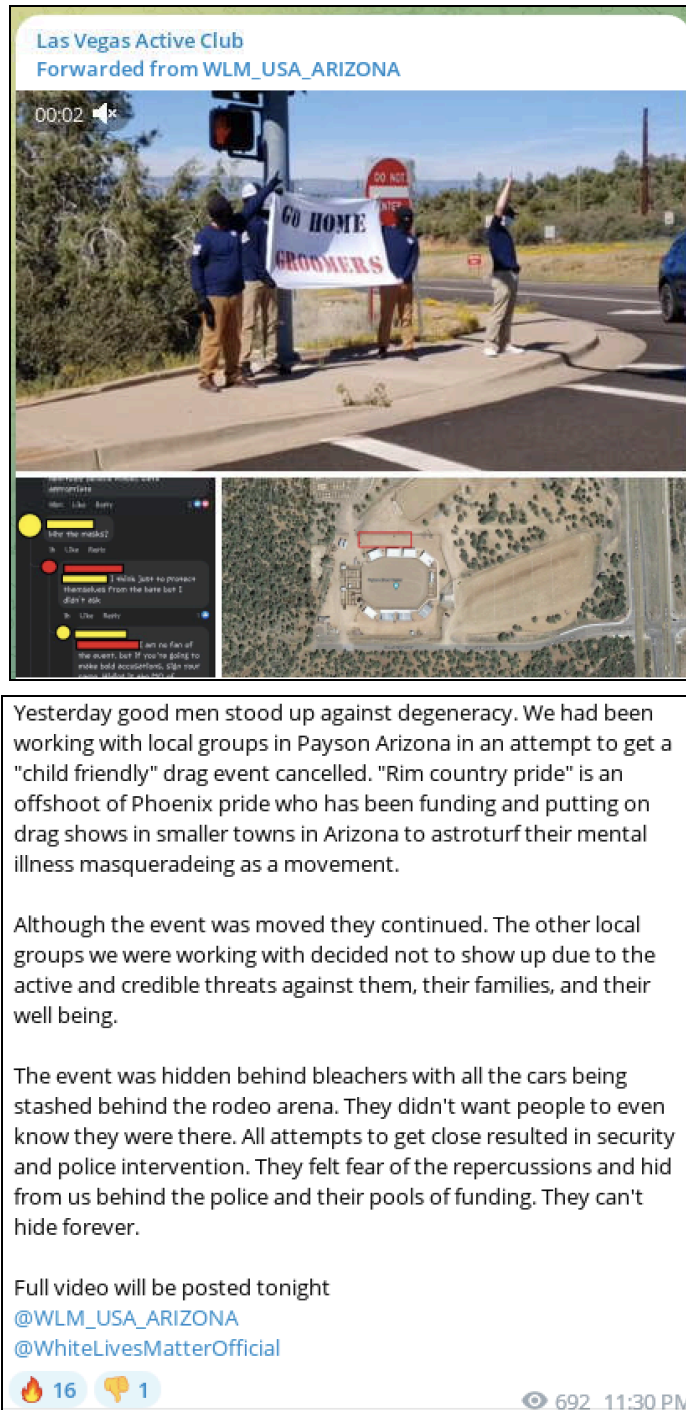
¹⁰ https://t.me/TAC_Arizona_3/804

¹¹ <https://t.me/greatlakesactiveclub/1151>

¹² <https://t.me/greatlakesactiveclub/1164>



Local Active Club chapters frequently conduct public protest activities, particularly alongside other white supremacist and white nationalist groups. Nisos identified their most common protest collaborators as Patriot Front and White Lives Matter.



Graphics 10 and 11: A joint Active Club-White Lives Matter protest against a Pride-affiliated drag event in Arizona.¹³

¹³ <https://t.me/LasVegasActiveClub/124>





In addition to coordinated political activities, Active Clubs have conducted joint training with other white supremacist and white nationalist organizations, most prominently Patriot Front.



Graphic 12: Active Club members conducting joint training with Patriot Front members.¹⁴

Online Presence

Nisos has identified approximately 100 Telegram channels associated with Active Clubs in North America, along with profiles on alternative and traditional social media platforms such as Gab, Odysee, and X. As a decentralized organization, Active Club Telegram channels are locally or regionally aligned, with channels posting content from other chapters' channels.

 <p>Great Lakes Active Club 1,046 subscribers</p>	<p>The Great Lakes Active club is a fraternal organization for young, like minded white men in the lower and upper peninsula of Michigan that is dedicated to physical fitness, self improvement and brotherhood.</p>
 <p>SoCal Active Club 2,321 subscribers</p>	

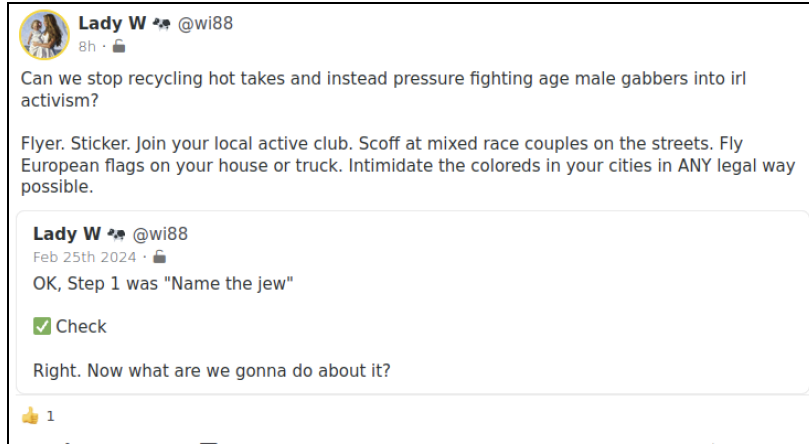
Graphics 13 - 15: (Top) Example regional Active Club Telegram channel for the Great Lakes region with over 1,000 subscribers. (Bottom) Example regional Active Club Telegram channel for Southern California with over 2,300 members. The channels repost content from smaller local chapters.^{15 16}

Content in these channels includes information about Active Club gatherings and activities. While the majority of content features physical training and MMA sparring, many posts exhibit extremist ideological views, Nazi imagery, and hateful white supremacist rhetoric.

¹⁴ [https://gab\[.\]com/TACAZ/posts/111310448300745390/media/1](https://gab[.]com/TACAZ/posts/111310448300745390/media/1)

¹⁵ [https://t\[.\]me/greatlakesactiveclub](https://t[.]me/greatlakesactiveclub)

¹⁶ [https://t\[.\]me/ca_legion_xiv](https://t[.]me/ca_legion_xiv)



Graphic 16: Pro-Active Club user on Gab with over 1,600 followers pushing individuals to join Active Clubs.

Active Clubs frequently use techniques to obfuscate or hide their members’ identities online. Active Club photographs and videos frequently blur or use the Waffen SS Totenkopf death head (a symbol associated with the SS-Totenkopfverbände, the operator of the Nazi concentration camps) to conceal members’ faces.



Graphic 17: Active Club Telegram post using a modified Totenkopf to obscure a baby’s face and promoting the indoctrination of children.¹⁷

In addition to blurring members' faces, Active Club members use Proton Mail, an encrypted email service, to obfuscate their true identities. These precautions as well as the decentralized nature of Active Clubs highlight the network’s emphasis on operational security compared to other prominent white nationalist and white supremacist organizations.

¹⁷ https://t.me/ca_legion_xiv/300



CONCLUSION

Active Clubs likely pose a risk for physical harm and civil disturbances at the local and state level in the United States and parts of Europe due to their emphasis on physical activity, violence, and hateful rhetoric, as well as their organized counter-protest, intimidation, and harassment activities. Active Clubs' decentralization and their use of alternative social media makes law enforcement monitoring costly and time-consuming, particularly when compared to other priorities. Nisos leverages our cross-platform visibility and analytical expertise across the spectrum of violent extremism to help law enforcement partners monitor and protect against threats of violence.

About Nisos

Nisos is the Managed Intelligence Company. We are a trusted digital investigations partner, specializing in unmasking threats to protect people, organizations, and their digital ecosystems in the commercial and public sectors. Our open source intelligence services help security, intelligence, legal, and trust and safety teams make critical decisions, impose real world consequences, and increase adversary costs. For more information, visit: <https://www.nisos.com>.