



ATHLETE MEDIA TRAINING



WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF YOUR OPPORTUNITIES



OBJECTIVES

- Media is an OPPORTUNITY
- Allows us to promote our ATHLETES and our SPORT
- Media interview techniques – how to tell YOUR STORY
- Tips & best practices
- Recognizing sponsors
- How we can help



THE MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

OPPORTUNITY

- Media can be a potential distraction for athletes at a competition – it is important to practice/rehearse addressing members of the media

RAISING YOUR PROFILE

- Media are our partners. They will help raise our profile and the profile of our athletes

PLAN

- Effective media management is planned, rehearsed and practiced in advance, just like training for competition





ADDRESSING THE MEDIA

The media are storytellers.
They share our stories with all Canadians.
Let's help them tell OUR STORY.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- An organization looking to attract fans, viewers, sponsors and participants needs to get its message out
- Athletes are the most credible spokespeople. Media are genuinely interested in your stories.
- Don't see it as a distraction. See it as an opportunity to tell your story to your fans





THE MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

REPORTERS ARE STORYTELLERS

- They will make you feel comfortable, but can jump quickly to turn the story in another direction
- Keep the story on track the way YOU want to tell it – stick to your key messages. Help them tell YOUR story
- Develop your key messages ahead of time and practice using them in conversations with family, friends, teammates, and anyone who asks you about your journey
- Your key messages should be **POSITIVE** about Cycling Canada, its programs and your experiences with them
- Treat the media as **PARTNERS**, they are the vehicle who will share your story to the public. Be cooperative and grateful for the opportunity

KEY MESSAGES

- Individual and Team Performance Objectives
 - Preparation, training, season, competition and life goals
- Cycling Canada Objectives
 - Become a leading cycling nation
 - Inspiring Canadians to cycle

REMEMBER TO

- Answer questions **directly** and **honestly**
- Use key messages in context or when you need them
- Share your key messages within your circle (family/friends); you want them to share the same messages



KEY MESSAGES

BE READY TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT THESE TOPICS WITH KEY MESSAGING:

- Tokyo 2020 postponement
 - Focus on you and your experience
 - You are allowed to feel negative emotions, but should not make those a point of focus
 - “I am proud to be part of a nation that took such a strong stance. This situation is bigger than sport and at the moment, all I can do is focus on staying safe & healthy.”
- What if the Games are cancelled/should they be cancelled?
 - “I trust the health authorities & the leadership in place to make the right decision that is in the best interest of athletes and the public.”
 - “For the moment, I am focusing on trying to stay safe & healthy and working on my short term goals.”
- Season resuming in late summer
 - If you are competing, focus on the fact that Cycling Canada and the UCI have put measures in place to make sure that all athletes are competing in a safe environment
 - If you are not competing, focus on the fact that this season does not affect your long-term goals and you support all the measures that are being taken to manage the global health crisis

TRANSITIONING

Once you know your key messages, think of ways of transitioning to them when you need to

- Transition from your answer to your key messages
- Give a simple answer to the question like “yes”, “no”, “I do”, “I don’t”... and THEN transition to your key messages

Transitioning words:

- “Actually...”
- “The real issue here is...”
- “That speaks to a bigger point...”
- “Let’s look at that another way...”
- “If I understand correctly, the issue is...”
- “On the contrary...”



NEGATIVE QUESTIONS

Do not avoid negative questions.

When answering a negative question, do not repeat the negative phrase. Respond with a positive statement that can start with “In fact...” or “Actually...”

- For example: “Wow... Transportation is a disaster”
- **Bad Answer:** “It’s not a disaster”
- **Good Answer:** “Actually, our team has not had any issues getting to our competitions on time.”

Why is that a bad answer? Sometimes reporters will take what you say and use it out of context. Example: A swimmer is late for competition and attributes it to transportation issues, the reporter publishes: “But according to Canadian cycling athletes, transportation is not a disaster.”



GRIEVANCES & COMPLAINTS

- Internal disputes should NEVER be played out in the media. It hurts you, your organization and the sport, and it makes potential partners stay away
- The media will focus on this negative story and ignore the wonderful positive stories that you, your teammates or Cycling Canada could be sharing
- If you have an issue, there is always a way to **discuss** it. Reach out to your coach, program manager or your athlete representative and discuss potential ways to resolve the situation
- If you need to, take a minute to compose yourself before addressing the media





MEDIA TIPS #1

RELAX AND PAUSE

- Don't feel rushed, take your time to think, and answer

BE PATIENT & PREPARED

- Some won't know sport or even the top athletes. Be patient with basic questions, as some media may not have a firm grasp on our sport; many cover all sports and may need your help clarifying simple cycling terms
- Be prepared: think about what you want to say beforehand. Take a few moments to collect your thoughts



MEDIA TIPS #2

BE PROFESSIONAL

- When receiving a media request, make sure to respond to their email or return their call within a maximum of 24 hours
- Always show up on time to an interview & don't cancel at the last minute

SHOW PERSONALITY

- Media love working with athletes and spokespeople who are friendly
- Don't treat the interview like a chore, even if you've answered the same question before
- Be engaging – give thoughtful answers and give more than one word answers



MEDIA TIPS #3

“NO COMMENT”

- Avoid using the term “no comment”, the term implies that you are hiding something
- You can simply say this is not something you would like to talk about
- “Off the record” comments do not exist. If you say something casually to a journalist in a non-working environment (restaurant, bar, etc.) they can still use it

BRING THEM INTO YOUR WORLD

- Transition the question to take them into your world. Example: If a question is asked about how you feel after a bad race, tell them it was a great learning experience and that you are focused on making adjustments to improve for your next race





MEDIA TIPS #4

NEVER SPECULATE

- Don't speculate or answer hypothetical questions
- Tell the reporter what is going on instead: "I can't speculate, but what I can tell you is..."
- If you think a question is better to be answered by someone else, i.e. a coach, Cycling Canada, a teammate, the COC, etc., don't try to guess an answer

SILENT SPOTS

- Avoid trying to fill the silent spots
- Natural tendencies are to try and "fill in" and keep talking – don't do this, say what you have to say, then stop
- Silent spots are typically when things you don't want to say will slip out because your brain is not thinking of what is about to come out of your mouth. Use the pause to collect your thoughts

MEDIA TIPS #5

THERE ARE NO BAD QUESTIONS

- Questions are **opportunities**, not threats
- Avoid confrontation
- Don't repeat negative comments
- Expect surprises
- Tell your story: you have a goal, see it through
- If you dread it, expect it

WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW

- It is much better to admit that you don't know the answer than making one up
- "I don't know the answer, but I'm sure you can speak to Karine at Cycling Canada about that."



MEDIA TIPS #6

CHERISH THE OPPORTUNITY

- Dealing with the media can be stressful but you should never treat it like a chore. Use the opportunity to talk about yourself, the team, the event and the organization

BE A GOOD INTERVIEWEE

- Speak in short sentences (sound bites), especially with broadcast media
- Look at the interviewer and not at the camera
- Practice having good body language. Posture, eye contact, & gestures can make a big difference
- Wear official kit for TV interviews and photo opps



TIME TO PRACTICE!

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SAY ABOUT YOURSELF?

Sometimes, media ask you questions, but you wish they'd ask you something else...

- List five things you would like media to ask you; you're in control of the interview!
- What are the top 5 things fans should know about you?
- When and how did you start competing?
- Who was your sport idol growing up and why?
- What was the biggest obstacle you overcame in your career? Etc.

This becomes **your narrative**. Know your story well, tell it over and over again. That will become your core messaging, your personal brand messaging and it will make it easier to “sell” yourself!

MARKETING & SPONSORS

RECOGNIZING THOSE WHO HAVE SUPPORTED YOU





PARTNER/SPONSOR RECOGNITION

IT'S EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE EVERYONE WHO
HAS INVESTED IN YOUR JOURNEY

- **Cycling Canada President, Board of Directors and Staff:**
You may not cross paths with them very often, but they make a lot of decisions and support your path behind the scenes
- **Sport Canada:** Provides funding to all National Sport Organizations such as Cycling Canada to fund Long-Term Athlete Development programs and athletes
- **Canadian Olympic Committee / Own the Podium:**
Provides funding and services to Olympic sports to ensure our athletes perform at their very best





CYCLING CANADA PARTNERS

Lexus Canada

- Official Automotive Partner
- Since 2016



AFEX

- Official Foreign Payments/Foreign Exchange Partner
- Since 2020



Global Relay

- Official Technology Partner
- Since 2014





CYCLING CANADA PARTNERS

Garneau

- Official Cycling Apparel Partner
- Since 1984

GARNEAU®

Argon 18

- Official Road & Track Bike Partner
- Since 2017



The full list of Cycling Canada partners can be found [here](#).



PERSONAL SPONSORS

WE ARE ALSO AWARE THAT MOST OF YOU HAVE YOUR OWN PERSONAL SPONSORS AND ENCOURAGE YOU TO THANK THEM TOO.

A few notes about personal sponsors:

- Cycling Canada's sponsors offer equipment, products and services that vary from program to program. Full-time National Team athletes are allowed to have personal sponsors, so long as they are not in conflict with Cycling Canada exclusive partners
- If you have a personal sponsorship, you cannot use Cycling Canada logos to promote products from competing sponsors
- Personal sponsors sponsor YOU, not Cycling Canada
- To consult Cycling Canada's Personal Sponsorship guidelines, [click here](#).

CYCLING CANADA CONTACT

For any questions you may have about interacting with the media, using social media or marketing issues, please contact:

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Karine will be the Canadian Olympic Committee's
Media Attaché for Cycling in Tokyo.