



The MEDIA and MSU SPORTS INFORMATION

The following material is furnished to assist you in becoming more familiar with local media outlets and obligations, the MSU Sports Information Office, and how to deal with the demands that might be placed upon you during your time at MSU.

MISSION AND POLICIES OF MSU SPORTS INFORMATION

At Montana State, the primary purpose of the Sports Information Department is to facilitate media coverage of MSU's athletics teams, events, student-athletes, and coaches. Student-athletes that are able to compete and succeed at Montana State are typically excellent representatives of the school. For that reason, you are encouraged to be available to members of the news media.

It is Montana State's policy that **ALL INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENT-ATHLETES BE HANDLED THROUGH THE SPORTS INFORMATION OFFICE. DO NOT TAKE PHONE INTERVIEWS WITHOUT THE EXPRESS APPROVAL OF THE SPORTS INFORMATION OFFICE.** This policy is for your protection and convenience, and it is important that it is followed. An effort will always be made to arrange interviews around practice schedules.

INTERVIEWS

WHEN YOU'LL BE ASKED TO DO INTERVIEWS

Practice – You will occasionally be asked to do interviews before or after practice, usually with television stations or the local newspaper. Each coach has his/her own guidelines, but basically, interviews are acceptable before any organized part of practice begins, and after players are dismissed by the head coach following practice. A member of the Sports Information Department should be present during the interview.

Post-Game – The most common interview type will be the post-game interview. You will be asked to meet with the media at a convenient location following your team obligations. Remember to be honest, clear, and positive in answering these questions regardless of the outcome of the game. If you choose not to answer questions, you will be requested to make that statement to the media members who have requested you.

Away from Campus – You are never obligated to do media interviews away from MSU's campus. If the only time you are available is at home because of other obligations (such as class), a phone interview at home may be arranged. **Every single interview you do at home should be arranged beforehand by MSU Sports Information.** If a media member calls you at home and you are not expecting the call, please tell that person you'd be glad to do the interview but he/she needs to call a Sports Information contact first.

TIPS FOR INTERVIEWS

Much of the demand on a particular student-athlete for interviews is linked to the success of you and your team. Regardless of the number of interviews you're asked to do, please:

- **Be Prompt.** If you agree to do an interview and the date, time, and site are arranged, please show up on time. If you have problems or if you change your mind about doing the interview, always contact the Sports Information staff.
- **Be Courteous.** Remember, the person interviewing you is doing his/her job.
- **Relax and Be Positive.** Typically, doing interviews is easy and not threatening. If you learn to know and enjoy the people doing the interview, it can even be fun. A typical newspaper interview will last 10-15 minutes, while television interviews will be more like 2-3 minutes and will consist primarily of questions about recent or upcoming games. Be as relaxed and prepared as possible. Consider the interview a simple conversation and you'll do fine. A positive attitude is crucial.
- **Anticipate.** The line of questioning will sometimes be obvious. When it isn't, don't be afraid to ask the Sports Information representative what questions you should be ready for. Remember that your coaches, teammates, and friends on campus and in the community will likely see your answers in print or on the air.
- **It's OK to Say No.** If a situation arises that you're not comfortable answering questions about, just say so. Be positive and pleasant, but saying, "I'd rather not answer that question," is perfectly acceptable. Always try to reflect positively on your teammates and school. If you have problems or questions regarding this area, or just want to talk about it, contact a Sports Information representative.
- **Appearance is Important.** Be calm while the interview is in progress. Maintain eye contact with the interviewer. Try to stand still when on camera, but don't be rigid. Consider your answers before you give them, and speak slowly and clearly. You will be asked to remove or cover items of clothing promoting other schools. Remember that you're representing your teammates and MSU. Remember, too, that MSU strongly encourages you to wear only MSU apparel, not attire that promotes other schools!
- **Set Limits.** If you have only a brief time, communicate that. Sports Information representatives are glad to enforce those limits, and most of the time media members are happy to abide by them. Always assume you are "on the record" with your comments and be aware whether a television interview is live or taped.

You're representing each of your teammates and MSU. By interviewing you, a media member is covering your team and school. Be personable, but don't be negative, particularly regarding your coaches, teammates, or opponents.

THE MEDIA

CAMPUS

The primary source for information on the MSU Campus is the Exponent. The twice-a-week paper is staffed and operated by MSU students. Typically, two or

three persons are assigned to sports at any time, but the sports staff often changes during a school year.

LOCAL NEWSPAPER

The Bozeman Daily Chronicle covers MSU Athletics in a fairly thorough manner. Jeff Welsch is the sports editor, while other reporters cover sports as assigned. You will probably become familiar with at least one of these reporters. We try to arrange all interviews after practice or around the policy established by each sport's coach.

STATE AND REGIONAL MEDIA

The Great Falls Tribune (Scott Mansch and George Geise) and Billings Gazette (Joe Kusek and Fritz Neighbor) each cover some MSU home contests. Occasionally, a television reporter from a Montana station will request a student-athlete, usually one that is from that town, which presents a great opportunity both for you and the department. If there are media outlets in your hometown or home area, feel free to recommend that we send them information on you.

LOCAL TELEVISION AND RADIO

A representative from the two local television stations, KBZK and KTVM, will frequently interview in-season student-athletes.

STATE, REGIONAL, AND CONFERENCE

Occasionally, a media representative from an opposing school's market – usually a conference opponent, will request a student-athlete interview during the week of a contest. Otherwise, your contact with out-of-town media will be following games, particularly on the road.

USING YOUR NAME: BE CAREFUL!!

Because of your status and visibility as an MSU student-athlete, you may receive requests – often from people in your hometown or from boosters – to use your name and/or photo to endorse or promote a product or event. You might also be asked to attend a function that promotes a particular product or business. **Before you agree to anything along these lines, you must consult the MSU Compliance Office.** This office needs to be aware of any arrangement in which your name is used in association with an event, public appearance, or product. When it comes to NCAA rules, it pays to be safe rather than sorry!