

FACT SHEET 8 - USING THE MEDIA

Promoting your sport and athletes to the public through the media is an important leadership skill. When promoting women in sport there are a number of hurdles you will need to overcome given that;

- women receive much less media coverage than men (except during Olympic and Commonwealth Games)
- women's sports are often viewed as 'inferior' to their male counterparts
- women's sports are often trivialised by the reporting styles and visual imagery used

Think about your PR/media strategy and develop a plan, particularly if you want publicity and media profile over the length of an event or season. The plan should identify;

- all publicity opportunities
- what you want to cover and what not to cover
- what access you have to athletes, appropriate pictures and profiles to control media information
- the media sources you want to use and the resources and budget required to do so
- which media outlets would be most interested in your stories and how would they like the information presented
- the media contacts that currently cover your sport and those you want to develop and cultivate closer relationships with to help inform and educate them about your sport and organisation
- roles and responsibilities of people with the organisation to implement the plan including an official spokesperson for the organisation

Knowing your media formats will enable you to provide information that is more likely to be used.

1. Newspapers rely heavily on media releases that they can use directly or motivate them to attend an event or match. (30% of newspaper sport articles are based solely on media releases). Constructing media releases is an important skill and includes the "who, what, where, when, why and how" of the story. The release should include the official logo/banner of the organisation to give credibility, have a short catchy headline, be succinct and written in an active language with contact details for further follow up. Send the release early and follow up to find out if they are interested or need more information. Include an active photo to assist them to portray the images you want. Your media release will often be judged on who you are, the headline and the lead story.
2. Print mediums require you to determine where your story best fits or how a number of angles can be used for different print formats. Does your story fit into the news, sports, women's, finance pages or even in letters to the editor. Women's magazines, sport magazines, etc may all require a different treatment of your story, so be flexible and creative.
3. Using the visual medium of TV and the internet requires you to identify the nature of the program. News would want succinct highlights, lifestyle programs want more human interest stories, children's programs would want activity based stories and current affair would look for controversy or feature stories. The new medium of the internet could use YouTube and other formats for specific audiences. Consider whether you have the resources to package footage or whether your story is of sufficient interest for the media to do the production.
4. Radio PR is a good immediate form of PR. It can be used for breaking stories, provide updates and enables you to organise interviews with the key players of your story. It is relatively inexpensive and pre taped stories can be used numerous times.