

MEDIA TRAINING 909

DEPARTMENT OF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS



The Cal Poly Pomona athletics communications office serves as a resource for department staff, coaches and student-athletes who are asked upon by members of the media to represent CPP athletics through media interviews. If you are contacted directly by a member of the media (newspaper, TV, radio, etc.), please use this document as a guide to participating in a successful interview. If you need assistance preparing for an interview, or any general questions or concerns about media interviews, contact **Assistant AD for Communications Tyler Lobe** at tlobe@cpp.edu.

WHY TALK TO THE MEDIA?

Media coverage helps improve the athletic department's reputation and enhance its standing within the campus community. Specifically, it can let your peers know what you are up to, which can lead to great relationships with fellow students, professors, and other campus constituents.

UNDERSTANDING THE MEDIA

DEADLINES - The media generally works under extremely tight deadlines. It is not uncommon for a reporter to contact you and arrange an interview the same day a story is due. Do not panic if such a media request occurs. Always ask what the reporter's deadline is. Your respect for their deadlines will leave a lasting impression.

INTERVIEW METHOD - Our suggested method of initial contact will be through your CPP email account. Once a reporter makes contact with you, work with the reporter to arrange the method in which the interview will be conducted. Typically, the preferred method for reporters will be a in-person interview. If that is not possible, a Zoom meeting or phone call often serves as a backup plan. The reporter will only resort to an interview via email if all else fails.

PERSONAL INFO - You are not required to give out your personal cell phone for purposes of an interview. Suggest a Zoom meeting, as Zoom allows for video conferencing and/or a telephone option with a "call-in" feature. The CPP athletics communications office can assist with setting up a Zoom meeting, if needed.

DECLINING AN INTERVIEW - It is **OKAY** to decline a media interview request. Often times, you may not be as knowledgeable with a particular topic, or you just aren't comfortable being interviewed.

YOU ARE THE EXPERT - In most cases, YOU are the expert on the topic a reporter is contacting you about. They will usually have a limited working knowledge of the story, so they will look to you to be the expert voice in their story.

PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

UNDERSTAND THE TOPIC - It is **OKAY** to ask the reporter what the topic of their story is about so you can prepare and understand the topic prior to the interview. If the topic is something you are not comfortable with or knowledgeable about, it is **OKAY** to refer them to someone else who might know (or better understand) the topic.

QUESTIONS IN ADVANCE - While it is appropriate to discuss the topic with the reporter prior to the interview so you are better prepared, many reporters are not likely to offer their questions ahead of time. Most experienced reporters treat interviews like a natural conversation, so there may not be a concrete set of questions. The CPP athletics communications office can help you anticipate what questions might be asked.

DELIVER YOUR MESSAGE - Practice being clear and concise. Short answers provide better quotes for print and better sound bites for radio and television.

CONFIDENCE AND COMPOSURE - It is normal to be nervous. Remember that an interview is really just a conversation with another individual. Act as if you are talking to a teammate, co-worker or friend.

DURING AN INTERVIEW

BE HONEST - Always tell the truth. You don't always have to tell ALL of the truth, but make sure everything you say is the honest truth.

POSITIVITY - Regardless of the topic, focus on delivering a positive message. However, there will be times you may find yourself angry or frustrated about a particular topic. That is **OKAY**. What is NOT okay is publicly smearing teammates, coaches, officials, the opposing team, and/or department or university personnel.

BE A GOOD LISTENER - Pay full attention to the interview and the questions asked. Use the interviewer's name. Never hesitate in asking the reporter to repeat or clarify a question.

NEVER RESPOND WITH "NO COMMENT" - The reporter will assume you are trying to hide something and probe deeper into the subject. It is absolutely okay to not answer a question, just respond with "I do not know the answer, but I'd be glad to find out and get back to you," or "that's not my area of expertise" and refer them to someone who might have the answer.

NOTHING IS "OFF THE RECORD" - Assume that nothing is "off the record." No matter how informal the setting, reporters will take for granted that everything said to them is on the record and quotable. Although many reporters may honor this request, not all of them will adhere to it. If you do not want people to know about something, do not say it.

IF EVER YOU FEEL HARASSED, INTIMIDATED OR THREATENED BEFORE, DURING OR AFTER AN INTERVIEW, CEASE ALL COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE REPORTER AND SEND A DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE INTERACTION VIA EMAIL TO TYLER LOBE AT TLOBE@CPP.EDU SO THAT IT CAN BE ADDRESSED APPROPRIATELY.