



## NEBRASKA SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION “WORKING WITH THE MEDIA” FOR ACTIVITIES ADMINISTRATORS

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### A. VALUE OF WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Positive exposure in the news media is not simply a by-product of having a winning program. It is often the result of preparation, good communication and providing the media with information necessary to cover your school programs. The following information and templates should serve as a basic guide to assist with media relations.

When an interscholastic activities program or event site has positive interaction with the media, the value is immeasurable, both in terms of “positive press” and building lasting relationships with the media. It also plays an integral role in influencing public opinion.

Nebraska is fortunate to not only have a rich tradition of successful and talented interscholastic activities programs, but also a large media following. While media coverage continues to evolve, it has not changed the need to know the basics of working with the media and strive to create positive working relationships for the benefit of all.

The following information and suggestions may better equip you, your coaches and staff to build positive relationships with the media which will inevitably assist in the promotion and coverage of your program, teams and students.

### B. TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE MEDIA RELATIONS

Cooperation and a positive attitude are essential in developing relationships with the media and receiving good exposure for your respective activities. Basic needs of good communication, promptness, following through on scheduled interview times, providing statistics or access to student-participants all go a long way to having a positive relationship with the media. In return, that should result in cooperation from the media when their help is needed for making public announcements or getting exposure for a good story.

- **Media Needs** - Timely reporting of contest results, highlights, available statistics and any important information such as game time changes, site changes etc. are essential for basic coverage.
- **Consistency in Results Reporting** - Event Administrators, Coaches, Team Managers should promptly report event results after each contest – win or lose.
- **Schedules/Stats** - When schedules are finalized, alert your local media or let them know it is posted on school web site especially those that are not currently posted through the NSAA web site. Rosters and statistics can be a tremendous help. If you keep stats for your teams, this information can be extremely valuable in providing further excitement around your teams.
- **Site Accommodations** - Facilities across the state vary in what amenities and space are available for media use. Making intentional efforts to create a proper work space goes a long way in attracting more media to cover and promote your school events. When reviewing your facility it is important to inventory what IS available and to communicate those specifics to media members.
- **Availability** - Eliminate some problems by simply letting media know when you are available and how best to communicate with you (email, phone, etc.)
- **Negative News** - Sometimes there will be negative news about an activities program. During these times it is best to communicate the position of your school with all parties involved and

designate a main point of contact. In addition, assume that everything you say will be quoted. At no time is any statement “off the record.”

- **Additional Information** – If your school, team, coaches communicate valuable information via social media, create a list of Twitter handles, facebook pages for them to follow. It must also be noted that if social media is utilized for fan, parent communication, a social media policy should be reviewed within you school.

### C. EXPECTATIONS FOR WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

- If possible, assign a Media Coordinator at your events to help answer questions and assist with logistics.
- **Seating** at your events should be reserved in the press box/row for members of the working media. If needed, assign seats and other available amenities. **Signage/labels can be useful.** Your space availability will determine how many seats can be given to each media outlet. Have your Media Coordinator assist in monitoring professional courtesy and conduct between fans, media members or any others working within the same space.
- Working phone lines are appreciated by many radio stations. If you have lines available, labeling the lines with the proper dialing information can eliminate broadcast delays and confusion.
- Be sure that electrical outlets are available. Set out power strips, if needed.
- Explain what wireless internet signals are available and be prepared with the password. Wireless internet access is increasingly important for media, especially for those required to provide updates during the contest. Have Network/Password information readily available.
- Provide media with teams rosters, and if possible, programs, statistics, and any other information available prior to the game. These additional details elevate the quality of broadcasts or stories.
- When providing additional opportunities for radio and television stations covering events on either a live or tape-delay basis. Communicate set-up time and contact information for the onsite personnel to allow for adequate set-up time. Prior communication and planning should be requested by all parties.
- Explain to photographers where they may shoot from. These specifics vary from facility to facility and across the board depending on the activity. Having a printout detailing these areas that photographers can refer to throughout the year may be helpful.
- Explain postgame interview procedures to coaches and media before the game. When possible and applicable, a specific area should be set aside for post-game interviews with coaches and athletes.
- Depending on the contest, site and game time, some media members appreciate the opportunity to continue working after the contest to finalize their work and to transmit stories back to the newspaper/television station. Communicating how long the press area will be available and also what alternate sites are available for media use if the press box/row is not available after an event is helpful.

### D. OVERVIEW

The media are professionals who have a job to do. They are guests of your school and also the NSAA. Treating media members as professionals and finding ways to assist them with the coverage of your program will benefit your school, your teams and students.

