

AMATEUR

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

Athlete Weekly



Canada Games Council

www.canadagames.ca



**ARE YOU READY
TO TALK TO THE**

MEDIA?

IN THIS ISSUE:

Training Tips:

How to be in control of your body language...p.10

Coach's corner:

Will your interview make the cut? Find out on.....p.6

Do's and don'ts:

Tips to score a perfect interview.....p.12

And much more...

Everything you need to know to deal with the media at the '2013 Canada Games' in Sherbrooke, Quebec!

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Editor's Note	2
Ask the Athlete	3
The 411 on the Q & A.....	5
Coach's Corner	6-7
Food for Thought.....	8
Profiling the Media	9
Body Training Tips.....	10-11
Interview Do's and Don'ts....	12

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EDITORS NOTE



Dear Readers,

As you are all preparing to compete at the upcoming Canada Games you may be asking yourself what to expect. You probably already know that you will have the opportunity to come face-to-face with some of the best athletes, coaches, and managers from across the country. You probably know that you will have the opportunity to challenge your athletic potential, while meeting new people and having fun! But did you know that the Canada Games is also the perfect opportunity for you to raise your athletic profile and become a spokesperson for both your Team and for your sport? Since the Canada Games started in 1967, millions of people have watched their favorite hometown athletes on television. Some might even remember the first time they saw Sidney Crosby, Steve Nash, or Catriona Le May Doan give an interview. Scoring the winning goal or achieving a personal best is challenging, but so is talking about it in front of millions of people. That's why we have created this special manual. We have provided many simple and helpful tips that will help you communicate effectively with local and national media.

- Learn how to convey confidence and a positive attitude through body language.
- Familiarize yourself with common questions asked by reporters, by practicing answering them with a teammate.
- Learn what key messages are, and how to prepare soundbites, so that you can increase your chance of earning publicity for yourself and your team.

Scoring that winning goal might award you with a medal. However, scoring that perfect interview in the upcoming Games might result in a sponsorship or an endorsement deal. Let your audience see more of who you are as a person. The best athletes are not only the ones who win the most medals; they are also the ones who win the most hearts.

Good luck to everyone!

—JEUX DU—
CANADA
—GAMES—

ASK THE ATHLETE

Q: **Should I have my answers for the media memorized before I participate in an interview?**

A: While practicing interview scenarios with a family member or teammate to help you prepare for an interview is an excellent way to build your confidence, memorizing your responses is not. Chances are that you will be trying so hard to remember your "lines" that you won't be paying attention to the questions. You won't have the opportunity to tailor your response to the question, and your personality will fail to shine through. In sport, you often devise several different plays, all to achieve the same goal. Practice answering the same types of questions in different ways to increase your confidence. Remember that practice makes perfect, both on and off the playing field.



Q: **How can being prepared for interviews increase my chance of getting a sponsorship?**

A: It is important that when you have the opportunity to portray your image to potential sponsors through the media, you feel confident doing so. Sponsors, when looking to offer financial assistance to an athlete, are often looking to be associated with a winner. Winners have goals, dreams, and a plan. Those athletes who perform well, are associated with a sport that suits their image, and can communicate their challenges and triumphs in a personable way are more likely to be considered for sponsorship.

Q: **What should I do when the media asks me to comment?**

A: You should never speak to the media about anything that makes you uncomfortable. If the media approaches you and asks you to comment on someone else's poor performance, another team's losses, or a suspected crisis, remember that it is always important to try and reflect positively on your competitors. If you choose not to offer your opinion, simply be pleasant and say "I would rather not comment on that." Never say anything during an interview that you don't want to be publicly aired. If you are asked to comment on controversial topics such as performance-enhancing drug use, or the termination of players or coaches, contact your mission staff before committing to the interview.

THE 411 ON THE Q&A

There are several different scenarios where you might find yourself face-to-face with a microphone. At the finish line, on a podium, at a press conference, or in the Mix Zone where there are many other athletes being interviewed at the same time. But the good news is that most of the questions will be the same, and with a little practice, your interview can be flawless in any situation. We have included some of the most common interview questions you will face. Take the time to sit down and think about the questions. Develop your key messages and practice with a friend or family member until you feel confident that you are getting your messages across. Always remember that you are in control of the interview.

You've just finished your event. Your adrenaline is going, your mind is racing. Suddenly, you're wanted for an interview. Are you prepared?

Pre-Game Interviews

- How have you prepared for today's competition? Who do you think some of your most challenging competitors will be?
- What are some of your strengths and weaknesses?
- Have you competed at the Canada Games before, and if so, is there anything you hope to accomplish this year that you haven't in the past?

Post-Game Interview

- How do you feel about today's results?
- What was the key to your success?
- How will you prepare for the next event?
- What went wrong today?
- If you could change one thing about your performance today, what would it be?
- Who do you think did especially well, and why?
- What makes the Canada Games different from any other event you have competed at?



Feature Interview

- What's your focus or what are your goals?
- What has been your most memorable game/race/event?
- What attracted you to the sport?
- What are your chances of winning a medal?
- Who helped you along the way?
- How do you think competing at the Canada Games will help your athletic career?
- What are your plans after the Canada Games?

COACHES CORNER

Step 1: Understanding key messages

It's important to think about what messages you want to send to your audience (your family members, friends, supporters, competitors, and potential sponsors). What do you want them to remember after the interview is over, and how do you want them to see you as an athlete and as a person? Key messages are a bridge between what your audience knows and what you are trying to teach them.

Key messages should be:

- Short and to the point.
- Simple sentences that can stand on their own.
- Everyday language that everyone can understand.

Step 2: Communicating external key messages

The opportunity to participate in the Canada Games is an accomplishment that you should be proud of. As a participant, it is important to always act as a representative for both your team and the Games. Communicating key messages will help reinforce the significance of the event, make you a credible source, as well as leave a lasting impression with reporters and your audience.



Step 3: Communicating your personal key messages

A memorable interview can set you apart from thousands of competitors from other sports or events at the Canada Games. Not only can a good interview raise your athletic profile by highlighting your achievements in sport, it can also raise your public image by highlighting your community involvement, your team spirit, and any challenges you have overcome.

One of your responsibilities as a Canada Games participant is to be a role-model for young aspiring athletes. Being open and honest with the media, while reinforcing your personal key messages, will help establish your reputation as both a person and an athlete.

Every good coach devises a game plan for his or her athletes. The same idea can also be applied when it comes to preparing for interviews.



Some important key messages about the Canada Games to remember are:

- The Canada Games are one of the largest multi-sport events in the world with an over 40-year tradition.
- Past Canada Games athletes have gone on to National and International success.
- The Canada Games are a stepping stone for Canada's Olympians and Paralympians.
- The Canada Games inspire young athletes to participate in sport and help them achieve their ultimate goals.
- The Canada Games are also a celebration of culture, youth, and community that unites our country.
- The Canada Games are important because they help communities create new sport programs and facilities.

Some important personal key messages to remember are:

- Your feelings about competing at the Canada Games and representing your Province or Territory.
- Your personal and team successes.
- How you overcame any challenges in sport and in life.
- What your short and long-term goals are in sport and in life.
- Who has helped you achieve your goals.
- What motivates and inspires you?

Setting guidelines and establishing some key messages to be communicated during your interview ahead of time can help you stay ahead of the game.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

As an athlete you know that in order to fuel your body for training and competition, you have to eat right. Eating right means choosing nutritious foods with substance that are high in vitamins and minerals. Eating right can lay the foundation for a championship performance. To fuel a great interview, you also need to stock up on quality bites – soundbites that is. Soundbites are what good interviews are made of. They stand out because they either have very important information or because they really grab the audience's attention. By using specific examples in response to questions, the interview has more interesting information to work with, thus increasing your chance of obtaining publicity.

Recipe for catchy soundbites

- Start with a brief and memorable sentence.
- Add a pinch of spice
- Add 1 tsp of vividness
- 100% whole truth
- Add 1/2 cup of emotion

Add a pinch of Voila! You now have a soundbite that will feed thousands!

Profiling: The Media

Taking a closer look at some of the media's major players.

Types of media:

- Print, Broadcast and New Media

Who are the print media?

Daily and community newspapers and periodicals (consumer magazines, sport publications, etc.).

Who you might see at the Games:

Canadian Press (Canada), 24 Hours (Canada), TSN / RDS (Canada), Radio Canada (Quebec)

Who are the broadcast media?

Television and radio stations.

Who you might see at the Games:

Radio-Canada, TSN, APTN, RDS, CBC

What is new media?

Social media, internet radio, internet television, podcasts, and Webcasts. Many print and broadcast media have their own websites.



TRAINING TIPS

Do you know what message your body language is sending?

Everyone has probably heard the saying it's not what you say but how you say it. Saying how happy you were with your team's performance while frowning and crossing your arms might make it hard for people to believe you. It's important to be aware of the physical ways in which we often communicate. Match the gestures in the left-hand column with the secret signals in the right-hand column.



Match the gestures in the left-hand column with the secret signals in the right-hand column.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| A. Crossed arms | 1. Impatience |
| B. Eye rubbing | 2. Insecurity |
| C. Hand to cheek | 3. Apprehension |
| D. Ear pulling | 4. Indecision |
| E. Open palm | 5. Interest |
| F. Tilted head | 6. Negative evaluation |
| G Seated with legs apart | 7. Doubt, disbelief |
| H. Pinching nose | 8. Evaluation, thinking |
| I. Locked ankles | 9. Sincerity, honesty |
| J. Patting hair | 10. Relaxed, open |
| K. Tapping fingers | 11. Defensive |

Score:



9 or more correct - Congratulations! You're a master in detecting secret signals. Chances are that not only can you recognize what signals others are sending through their body language, but you are also aware of how you present yourself.



4-8 correct - Not bad. With a little practice, you may have what it takes to become an expert in reading others. The more you observe the signals that others send out, the more self-aware you will become and the easier it will be to effectively communicate your messages.



3 or less correct - Uh-oh! You have some work to do. If you have trouble recognizing what these gestures symbolize, you may be sending mixed signals when you communicate with others.

A = 11, B = 7, C = 8, D = 4, E = 9, F = 5, G = 10, H = 6, I = 3, J = 2, K = 1

Banishing Bad Body Language Behaviour

When people are nervous, tired, or in unfamiliar settings, they often make gestures without even realizing it. You may play with your hair when you're feeling uncomfortable or you may cross your arms when you feel like you're being challenged. You might not notice these behaviours until you come face-to-face with them on camera- and by then it's too late! You may have felt as though you sounded cool and confident while giving an interview, only to discover that gestures such as these can give away any feelings of insecurity. When you practice interview scenarios, its best to videotape them, practice in front of a mirror, or have someone critique your performance, to identify which of the secret signals listed above might be habit for you. Even simple gestures, such as nodding to acknowledge an interviewer's questions, could be misinterpreted in a way that you never intended.

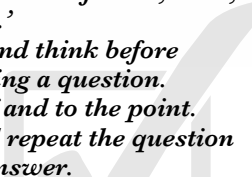
Simple ways to score BIG on your interview

One of the most important things to remember when doing an interview is to try to appear calm, open, and confident. While certain gestures can make you appear nervous or disinterested, there are many others that can help project a positive attitude.

- Lean forward in your seat to show your enthusiasm for what you are doing
- Keep your legs relaxed and uncrossed to appear more open.
- Use open-palm hand gestures naturally to show your sincerity.
- Always remember to maintain eye contact and smile! Studies show that people can usually tell whether the person on the other end of the phone is smiling or not by the sound of their voice.
- Do not fidget or sway from side to side. If you're standing, put one foot slightly in front of the other to avoid swaying.



INTERVIEW DO'S...

- *Be friendly towards the interviewer. Express an interest in their work.*
 - *Be on time and look presentable.*
 - *Initiate a handshake.*
 - *Ask for clarification if you do not understand the question.*
 - *Do speak clearly and slowly. Avoid the use of 'ums, ahhs, like, ect.'*
 - *Pause and think before answering a question.*
 - *Be brief and to the point.*
 - *Try and repeat the question in the answer.*
- 

INTERVIEW DON'TS...

- *Don't criticize teammates, coaches, or officials.*
 - *Don't say anything 'off the Record' or 'just between you and me.'*
 - *Don't lie or mislead the person interviewing you.*
 - *Don't use clichés or sports jargon that no one will understand.*
 - *Don't be intimidated by the microphone. It is ok to sit in silence once you are satisfied with your response.*
 - *Don't provide locker room material.*
- 