

## TEAM MANITOBA MEDIA TRAINING GUIDE

Welcome to Team Manitoba!

Our team is represented by the bison. A symbol of our province, the bison is resourceful and dedicated to the pursuit of success, a social creature that travels in herds, is highly intelligent and playful, and is proud, fast, and strong. We share these characteristics within our Herd and strive to:

- create an inspiring and supportive environment for all participants to perform at their best
- treat all Games participants with respect and dignity
- respect the Games' code of conduct

Members of Team Manitoba are expected to conduct themselves at all times in the spirit of fair play and in a responsible manner – this includes any opportunity the participant has to interact with the media.

During the Games, you will compete against some of the best teams from across the country. As hundreds of thousands of Canadians will be watching, the Canada Games represent a golden opportunity for young athletes like yourself to enhance your social profile and become a spokesperson not only for your team, but also for your sport and your province.

As you represent Team Manitoba and our home province, you can expect that our local media will pay more attention to you and your performance. Media will want to profile athletes before, during, and after the Games. Team Manitoba has created this simple guide to help you get ready to interact with the media and participate in media interviews.

If you have any questions regarding media relations or social media, contact your Team Manitoba Communications Lead:

Sarah Tone

431-778-5796

[sarah.tone@sportmanitoba.ca](mailto:sarah.tone@sportmanitoba.ca)

## **YOUR SUPPORT TEAM**

As a member of Team Manitoba, you will have a support team to assist with media relations. A member of Team Manitoba's mission staff will be assigned to your team and the communications mission staff will also be available. Your coach will have all of their contact information at the Games.

The Team Manitoba Communications Lead is responsible for all communications strategies, including media relations, eNewsletters, social media, and the website. They are the link between media and Games participants. They will arrange interviews by coordinating the timing and location, and ensuring athletes and coaches are ready by providing media training before the interview.

## **USING SOCIAL MEDIA**

No matter which platform, social media plays a big role in how your followers – family, friends, teammates, sponsors, local media etc. – keep up with you during the Games.

Representing your province on the national stage is a big deal and with that comes a big responsibility. It's important to remember that the image, content, and persona you post online are there forever. Be sure to use your best judgment before posting and keep things positive whenever possible. Team Manitoba (Sport Manitoba) has a social media policy that will help guide you through posting to your accounts. This policy is in the Code of Conduct. Be sure to follow it at all times.

Your audience will grow during a national competition. Followers of the sport or event, teammates, other athletes and teams, potential sponsors, colleges, and universities may all show interest in you more than ever before.

Before posting to social media, ask yourself:

- Would I be comfortable with this being on TV or on the front page of a newspaper, e-newsletter, or blog?
- Would I say this to a coach, a friend, or a reporter?
- Would I be comfortable with the content being attributed to me in five years' time?

Whether your account is private or not, anything you post to social media becomes public domain – that means anyone can access it at any time, and directly associate it with you. This will reflect on you as an athlete and a person.

### **Team Toba Tips:**

- Ask yourself if what you're about to post is good for you, your team, your sport, and/or your province
- Create a positive story and have respectful conversations
- Create posts that showcase your personality and your journey for people to like, comment on, or share
- Do not make disrespectful, defamatory or dishonest comments
- Do not share confidential or personal information

### **Team Manitoba – Social Media**

Team Manitoba posts stories, results, medal counts, photos and so much more on social media to highlight our team during the Games. We encourage you to follow the Herd and share what we post! Find Team Manitoba on:

- [Instagram](#) - @teamtoba
- [Twitter](#) - @teamtoba
- [Facebook](#) – Team Manitoba

Use our hashtags #HerdofUs and #TeamToba

## **MEDIA RELATIONS**

### **Who is the media?**

**Print** media include newspapers, journals, and magazines. A reporter will take written or voice notes to record your interview and will use quotes and soundbites of the interview to create the story. All stories require a photo so the reporter may ask to take one. Local print media includes the Winnipeg Free Press, Winnipeg Sun, and you may also see the story in the host local media, or nationally in The Globe and Mail or National Post.

**Broadcast** media are TV and radio stations. If you are doing an interview for TV, there will be a camera person filming the interview using a video camera or phone. Radio reporters typically use a combination of phones, microphones attached to recorders, or paper notes to record interviews. In either case, the reporter will use soundbites for the story. The interview might be live or recorded and broadcast at a later time. TSN/RDS are the host broadcasters for the Canada Games. Local broadcast media includes CTV, CBC, APTN, etc.

**Online / Multimedia** Most print and broadcast news outlets have an online presence, and some create podcasts and webcasts too. Most also use social media to increase the audience for their content. Online media includes the Canadian Press and ChrisD.

### **Where will the media be at the Games?**

Accredited media have access to all of the Games venues except the Athletes' Village. Most media want to interview athletes or coaches at the venue either before or after your competition. Some media, like TSN/RDS, may want to arrange an interview at a studio.

### **How will the media arrange interviews?**

Media will talk to the Team Manitoba communications staff to request an interview and the communications staff will talk to your mission staff or coach to figure out the best time and location for an interview. Sometimes, the interview request is extremely last minute and must be done quickly, and other times you will have a couple hours or days' notice.

### **What do I do if a media representative approaches me?**

Make sure to talk to your mission staff or coach right away to let them know about the request. This isn't an official request to participate in an interview, this is the media showing interest in speaking to you. Either way, remember, you're never off the record. Take note of the reporter's name, which organization they work for, and what they'd like to talk about. You can also ask for questions in advance, to help you prepare.

### **If you feel comfortable talking to the media:**

Let your mission staff or coach know about the interview request. With your mission staff or coach, choose a time and place that is convenient for you and the media. Your mission staff will take care of letting the communications staff know about this request.

### **If you don't feel comfortable talking to the media:**

It's OK to politely direct the interview request to your mission staff or coach, who will then direct them to the communications staff.

### **What do the media want?**

Media attend the Games to tell the stories of the teams and athletes. Stories may be fact or results based or have a human interest angle. In either case, the media want to hear about you, your team, and your journey to the Games.

### **Preparing for your interview**

While most interviews happen during the Games, following your competition, the media may want to speak to you before you depart for the Games, during a Team Manitoba media conference or at team activities – like a practice or meeting. When agreeing to do an interview, it is important you work with your mission staff or coach to select a time and place that doesn't interfere with your training, team events, or your school schedule that also works within the reporter's deadline. Team Manitoba communications staff can assist with scheduling interviews pre, during, and post- Games. Here are some examples of questions media might ask:

#### **Pre-Games Interview**

- How is your training going?
- What is your training schedule?
- How are you preparing for the Canada Games?
- What is your biggest challenge so far?
- How do you feel knowing you'll represent your province at the Canada Games?

#### **Competition-Day Interview**

- How are you feeling?
- What is your goal today?
- How did you prepare?
- What will your biggest challenge be today?
- What's been our favourite moment at the Canada Games so far?

#### **Post-Competition Interview**

- How do you feel about your competition?
- Are you happy with the results?
- What went well today?
- What went wrong today?
- What was the key to your success today?
- How will you prepare for the next competition?
- If you could change one thing about your performance today, what would it be?

## **Feature Interview**

You might also have the opportunity to sit down with a reporter for a longer interview. Feature interviews often profile one person and highlight their accomplishments. Some questions you might get asked in a feature interview include:

- Who is your mentor or role model?
- What motivates you?
- What are your goals?
- What originally attracted you to the sport?
- What's next for you?
- Who helped you along the way?
- What are your athletic career goals?

## **Practicing your Interview**

It is important to take the time to think about these sample questions and how you would answer them in a real-life media interview.

### **Team Toba Tips**

- Review the sample questions and write down your answers
- Write your answers one sentence at a time, keep them short
- This is your chance to show us your personality – let it shine!
- The more you practice, the more comfortable and confident you'll be

## **Sound Good**

Key messages are the main ideas you want to talk about during the interview, and having a couple of them will help you answer all sorts of questions.

### **Team Toba Tips**

- Key messages are complete thoughts broken into short, simple sentences
- This is what you want people to know and remember about you
- Use simple language; no slang or technical mumbo jumbo
- Always tell the truth and be positive

EXAMPLE:

You are doing a pre-game interview and participating in the Games is the topic.

Think about what you want to say and what you want the people who will hear the interview to know about you.

- You have trained really hard and you feel prepared to compete at the Games
- You want to thank your coach and family, trainers, and team for their support
- You want people to know you are excited about participating in the Games

Now, expand on these ideas to create your story - what do you bring to the team, how long have you participated in your sport, what's the most important thing you're working on etc. Jot down your notes, practice, and you'll find you're more confident and capable of participating in a media interview than ever before!

### **Team Manitoba Key Messages**

- I am proud to be representing Team Manitoba and competing at the Canada Games.
- I am grateful for the support from my coaches, parents, teammates, mission staff and everyone who helped me get to this level.
- I want to thank the Host Society and volunteers for organizing an incredible event.

### **Soundbites**

Soundbites are short sentences that capture complete thoughts that reporters can use in their stories.

EXAMPLE:

A reporter asks, "Stefan, how did you prepare for this competition?"

A great sound bite could be: "I prepared for this competition training really hard over the past year with the help of my coach. I learned new techniques, and worked on my power, speed, and agility to get to where I am today."

Feel free to expand on this thought, but know the reporter has a great clip that can easily be included in a print story, TV, or radio interview.

### **Issues and crisis situations**

Sometimes things don't go according to plan. You might experience or be a part of:

- An emergency such as a serious injury
- A crisis situation such as a security issue
- A Games-related situation such as a dispute of a result or drug testing

If media contacts you about a questionable or controversial situation:

- Inform your mission staff who will contact communications staff and Chef de Mission
- Do not participate in interviews or post any related information to social media
- Wait for further instructions from your mission staff

If a reporter asks you to comment on someone's poor performance, always remember you should speak positively about your teammates and competitors. You might answer this question with, "What I can tell you is, we worked really hard as a team to get to where we are today, and we're all proud of that." This keeps the reporter focused on you and your team, and keeps the conversation going in a positive direction.

If a reporter asks you to talk about a negative or controversial topic, such as the use of performance enhancing drugs, direct the reporter to Team Manitoba Communications staff or mission staff.

### **Team Toba Tips:**

- Do not lie to the reporter
- Do not use profanity, inappropriate language, or slang
- Do not make disrespectful, defamatory, and/or dishonest comments
- Do not share confidential and personal information
- Do not say or think that anything is “off the record”

Don't ever feel as though you need to respond to a reporter's question. If you aren't comfortable speaking to the media, or have been directed not to, you might answer a question with “I can't answer that for you right now, but if you follow up with our Communications staff, they can help you.” This is better than saying “no comment”, which we recommend you avoid.

### **Team Toba Tips for winning interviews**

- Be an active listener and focus on the reporter's questions
- Practice, practice, practice
- Have a conversation with the reporter
- Pause, and ask for clarification if you don't understand the question
- Speak clearly and slowly
- Keep your answers short and to the point
- Make every effort to be cooperative and pleasant with the media
- Provide positive comments about your competition, the Host Society and volunteers

### **Look Good**

It's important to make sure you look presentable and professional – even for radio! Reporters will take photos or videos to go with the story so make sure to look your best.

### **Team Toba Tips**

- Wear your Team Manitoba uniform
- Keep a piece of your walkout uniform with you, a t-shirt or long sleeve, just in case
- Take a minute to drink some water, clear your throat and find your focus

## **Body Language**

The reporter and more importantly your audience may not be able to focus on your words if you're doing something with your voice or body that is distracting. They won't hear you if you don't maintain eye contact, bounce your legs, look down, or lack energy.

Take time to practice your interviews with someone that can watch for these behaviours and give you some positive feedback, or record yourself, or practice in front of the mirror.

### **Team Toba Tips**

- Sit or stand straight and tall, don't slouch
- Make eye contact with and focus on the reporter
- Have a conversation, stay relaxed
- Keep your arms and legs relaxed and uncrossed
- Don't sway from side to side
- Smile!

## **Feel Good**

Participating in an interview gives you an opportunity to talk about yourself, your journey, and your sport, and maybe profile your community or even score a sponsorship.

Remember to:

- Be on time
- Be friendly
- Show off your personality
- Look the part