

Sports Media Relations

Lehigh's intercollegiate teams generate a high level of public interest and media attention. The Department of Athletics is aware that its image affects the reputation of the entire University and urges you to exercise care when making statements to the media.

You have a responsibility to the University, your coaches, and teammates to cooperate with the media whenever possible. Lehigh University fans, your hometown fans, as well as fans from across the country are interested in our athletic program.

You should never agree to a telephone interview unless the arrangements are coordinated through the Media Relations Office. If you receive an interview request by telephone or via e-mail, ask that the media representative make arrangements through the Media Relations Office. If someone shows up at your door in the dorm, as politely as possible explain that it is not correct protocol to do an interview under such circumstances and then refer the person to the Sports Media Relations Office. In the case of interviews with the school newspaper, The Brown and White, it is not necessary to have arrangements made through the Sports Media Relations Office. No interviews may be conducted during a game with ANY media organization.

View the media as friends, not adversaries. However, do organize your thoughts before a scheduled interview. Often a verbal comment that seems innocent looks different when it appears in print. The longer you are on a team, the more likely you might develop a personal relationship with some of the media representatives regularly covering your team. While we encourage these relationships, remember that, regardless of what is said, a reporter's first obligation is to report the news. **Don't say it if you don't want to see it in print.**

On rare occasions, the general tone of an interview is such that you may not be comfortable continuing the interview. Should this occur, please notify the Sports Media Relations Office.

In general, when speaking to the media, be confident, courteous, and prompt. Always remember when dealing with the media to present an image that is consistent with the ideals and high standards of Lehigh University.

It is felt that interviews can be a very valuable part of a student-athlete's life at Lehigh University and it can serve as a great learning and growing experience for you. As an entering freshman, you may be nervous about speaking to media representatives. By the time you graduate, however, you will have become relaxed, confident and articulate. This growth and personal confidence can be carried with you into your vocation of choice.

Again, you should never receive calls or visits from the media that have not been arranged by the Sports Media Relations Office.

Specific Tips for Dealing with the Media

Because media interviews may be a new area of responsibility for many student-athletes, the following tips may help you when dealing with the media:

1. Always be on time for interviews. Should the interview be set for a time on the phone make sure you are available and your phone is free at the agreed time. Absence from class for media interviews is not permitted.
2. Organize your thoughts before a scheduled interview so that you are sure about the points you want to communicate. Treat all interviews the same whether it be for The Brown and White or one of the local papers.
3. Be sure to understand the reporter's question before answering it. Ask for clarification if the question is not understood.
4. Be wary of an "off the record" situation. It is usually not in your best interest to do interviews in this manner as it may be left open to interpretation as to what is or is not "off the record."
5. If possible, try not to be evasive or to answer "no comment", as it raises suspicions. It is better to answer, "I am not familiar enough with that issue to give a fair answer."
6. Do not become overly sensitive about a particular question or a particular story. With very few exceptions, reporters who cover our athletics program are fair and are not out to "get somebody."
7. Do not criticize your teammates or your coaches in the media. If you have concerns, share them with your teammates and your coach, not the public.
8. Be yourself. Do not be afraid to talk about things of importance to you outside of athletics. "Conversations" make better interviews than "interrogations."

If you approach an interview with poise and courtesy, you are off to a good start. Remember, the image you project not only reflects upon you, but upon your team and your University as well. You are encouraged to contact the Sports Media Relations Office for assistance if you feel you need help with the proper techniques for handling interviews.

Special Media Events

Weekly press conferences are held during the football season on Wednesdays from 11:30 am until 1:00 pm. If you are a football player, you may be asked to be available during these conferences provided your attendance does not conflict with your class schedule.

Organized press conferences are also held periodically throughout the year for the men's and women's basketball and wrestling teams, and occasionally for other teams. Members of all teams are expected to be available to the media following their games if needed.

Student-athletes may be asked to appear locally on ESPN radio, the radio partner of Lehigh Athletics. You are asked to cooperate with this request from your coach or the Media Relations office, provided it does not conflict with your class schedule.

In addition, a weekly television show is broadcast locally, regionally, and nationally on Lehigh athletic teams throughout the school year. Athletes are asked to dress appropriately if they appear on the show. Your coach or a member of the Sports Media Relations staff will advise individuals as to appearances.