

Winning Strategies During Tough Times

First, things first . . . Celebrate the good news, address your challenges.

We are proud of our coaches here in Montgomery County. (Besides teaching children the mastery of a particular sport, you are teaching them life lessons...how to win and lose with grace, the value of teamwork and the importance of strategy. In addition, we all know that people are not only watching how our students play their chosen sports, they are also watching how they handle the pressure associated with competition.) The truth is our coaches and student athletes are under scrutiny not just from parents and other fans, but from the media as well.



The vast majority of time the news that results from secondary school sports is positive. And in those cases, we want our coaches to have the opportunity to speak with the media. Montgomery County residents love sports news and want to read and watch the accomplishments of MCPS athletes. They want to hear your perspective as a coach—how you develop your student athletes, what you think about the big game ahead,

how you plan to recover from a loss and what you think about the talent on your team. In those cases, feel free to address the media, because you're most likely the best spokesperson we have on this subject.



But what happens when the news is not so good?

High school and middle school sports generate a great deal of pride in schools across the county. But there are times when sports news is so negative in nature that it requires a response from administration. In these instances, the high school principal along with the athletic director will help coordinate the response.



MCPS

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**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

COACHES' GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE MEDIA RELATIONS



2009-2010

WHEN THE NEWS IS NEGATIVE:

Media Guidelines for Coaches

1. The proper protocol for responding to media inquiries about student and employee discipline, official investigations, VHSL review and release of videotape is to direct reporters to the school principal or the Athletic Director who will coordinate the response.
2. You should not respond to requests for information regarding student discipline or potential student discipline. This is an area fraught with legalities. The Family Educational Right and Privacy Act (FERPA) and School Board policies and regulations include strict guidelines for what information can and cannot be released relative to student records.
3. You should not respond to requests for information regarding employee discipline or potential employee discipline. This is an area which calls for spokespeople who have operational responsibility or expertise in employment law, policies, and regulations.
4. You should not respond to requests for information regarding a school



system and/or police investigation or Virginia High School League (VHSL) review. When a sports-related incident comes under investigation from central administration and/or the police, those agencies should determine what is and is not appropriate to release to the media and who will serve as spokesperson.



5. You should not respond to requests for information if an employee, student or volunteer associated with your team has been charged with a crime or arrested. In such cases, the police or other appropriate law enforcement agency will determine what is or is not appropriate to release to the media.

Video Guidelines

You should not release videotapes/digital images of games, practices or other athletic activities, if an incident has occurred in one of those venues and has come under investigation or review by the police, central administration or the VHSL.

When cameras and videotape that are the property of Montgomery County Public Schools are used to record athletic events,



the video should be regarded as the property of the school system not the property of teams and coaches. Therefore, such videotape should not be released without authorization of the school principal.



When coaches, volunteers, parents and others tape games with their own equipment, the school system has no jurisdiction over its release with the exception of cases when a school is reimbursing an employee for videotape. In those cases, the videotape in question is the property of the school system. Even if a videotape in question is your personal property as a coach, we ask you to remain mindful that releasing it could interfere with an official investigation.



Photo courtesy of B. Wendell Jones