



MWAS Media Policy

Adopted by Board – 19/12/2013

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1. Purpose

The relationship between the Mid West Academy of Sport (MWAS) and the media (that is newspapers, magazines, radio and television) is essential in letting the general public know who we are, what we do and importantly who our sponsors are.

The MWAS media policy is referred to in the athlete terms and conditions and is applicable to all coaches, staff, and athletes at MWAS. It is important to follow the advice below to ensure the objectives, image and values of MWAS are portrayed consistently, credibly positively and legally.

2. Our principles

When dealing with the media we will be:

- Open and honest
- Consistent with our messages
- Timely
- Treat journalists respectfully
- Accurate and factual
- Legal

3. Our key messages

- MWAS allows athletes to access specialised services locally, to reduce travel to the city.
- MWAS develops athletes, coaches and officials from all sports.
- By developing coaches and officials, the whole sporting community benefits.
- Athletes must be aged over 13 years and at the state and national levels.
- MWAS helps athletes to be both physically and mentally prepared.

Our mission statement: To provide an exceptional home training environment for talented Mid West athletes.

4. Media Communication Protocol

Emergencies or controversial issues

For staff, coaches and athletes, all enquiries about emergency and controversial issues are to be directed to the MWAS CEO in the first instance.

General protocol for staff

All enquiries are to be directed to the MWAS CEO in the first instance.

When taking a call from a journalist take the following details:

- Journalist name
- Contact details - phone / email
- The name of the publication, radio or television channel
- THEIR DEADLINE – this is really important. Relationships with journalists can be ruined by not getting back to them in time, and the opportunity of positive media coverage is wasted.
- The topic they are covering
- What they want – a quote, a statement, an interview

General protocol for athletes and coaches

If a media inquiry is about a particular athlete or sport, it is generally recognised that coaches and athletes will have, or will develop, individual relationships with journalists.

When commenting to the media, athletes and coaches are reminded of our key messages as outlined above.

Dealings with the media should always be 'on record' – if you don't want it broadcast or published, then don't say it.

Please let the MWAS CEO know when you have participated in any media activities.

If a media inquiry relates to MWAS operations, or to another athlete, coach, official, or sport, the enquiry must be directed to the MWAS CEO.

No other individuals are to represent the views of MWAS to media without the prior consent and a briefing from the MWAS CEO.

The following process will be implemented for all media enquiries and interview requests:

- Refer the request to the MWAS CEO
- The CEO will contact the person in question (e.g. consultant, scientist, coach or athlete) and will in turn contact the media with regards to details; or
- The media will be given clearance to contact the consultant/coach/athlete directly.
- Athletes will be given prior notice of their media responsibilities and where possible will be briefed on likely questions and suggested responses.
- Athletes should always try to include the support MWAS provides or mention the staff or coach in their interview where appropriate. A great way to assist is to ask the journalist to

include MWAS in the caption under the photograph or include MWAS scholarship holder in the article.

- If approached directly by any media outlet asking for an interview about a topic that you would rather not discuss or should not discuss, please re-direct the enquiry to the MWAS CEO. The CEO will always consult with a coach or athlete and advise of the media request prior to any commitment being made with any media.

Media Tips:

- Do not enter into public discussion on selection issues.
- Do not comment on matters that you are not fully informed about; refer them to the MWAS CEO.
- Never criticise MWAS or fellow athletes.
- Do not guess, or speculate
- Athletes should only comment on the details of their own performances and not that of any other person. However common sense will prevail, in that an athlete can state positive comments regarding another athlete's performance, e.g. "She raced very fast today and unfortunately for me, I just couldn't beat her to the finish line."
- Wear the MWAS uniform.
- Be humble in victory and handle yourself with dignity in defeat.
- Take your time to answer questions, do not rush
- If you are not sure how to answer, ask the journalist to rephrase the question
- If questions extend to issues or activities that you should not be talking about then direct the media back to the relevant sporting issue e.g. "I would prefer to stay on the topic of the event or the result if we can".
- Never say 'no comment' – say why you can't comment....I'm sorry but it wouldn't be right to comment on another athlete/sport/competition....
- Remember you do not have to answer questions there and then at the time of the interview. It is perfectly acceptable to ask for a bit more time - but remember their deadline and get back to the journalist in time
- MWAS athletes, employees, staff should recognise the essential support of MWAS sponsors and should therefore acknowledge MWAS sponsors in a positive manner in all scenarios.
- MWAS employees are not to represent MWAS sponsors without the prior consent of the sponsor.

All stakeholders of the MWAS, including athletes, coaches and officials are encouraged to assist with promoting MWAS. Appropriate examples of this are:

- a. 'Liking' MWAS on Facebook
- b. Tweeting a web-link of a MWAS online E-News
- c. Sharing a video from the MWAS YOUTUBE site on your Facebook page
- d. Asking friends and family to follow MWAS social media
- e. Positively 'commenting' on a MWAS Facebook post about a new MWAS sponsor. E.g. writing a comment that says "Thanks to *** company for sponsoring MWAS. This is helping me to reach my potential!"
- f. Using social media to congratulate other MWAS athletes on their performances
- g. Thanking MWAS and sponsors in a media interview

5. Privacy and Athlete Protection

In accordance with the MWAS Member / Athlete Protection Policy, MWAS will not publish photos or video of athletes who have not signed, and/or whose parent / guardian has not signed the MWAS

'Talent Release Form – Photographic and Video'. This form and the policy are available on the MWAS website www.mwaswa.com.au in the 'Policies' section.

6. Social Media

"Social media has blurred the lines between people's personal and professional time and space. It is important to understand that the impact of a person's social media presence can have repercussions in both their personal and professional lives."

The Communications Council, 2012

Active social media interaction is encouraged as a medium of expression and advocacy however, it is important to minimise the risk of inappropriate social media conduct harming the reputation of MWAS, our sponsors, or your own.

Our overarching guideline for all engaged in social media, both professionally and personally is to use 'good judgment'.

Consider carefully how people might perceive you as the representative/ambassador of MWAS. Be careful about the use of exaggeration, colourful language, derogatory remarks or characterisations.

Do not post content that is obscene, defamatory, threatening or discriminatory.

MWAS social media channels are controlled by the MWAS CEO and can be accessed through www.mwaswa.com.au

consider the following before posting information, photos, words or other forms of online communication:

- a. Is this going to hinder the reputation of myself, people who help me, MWAS, or MWAS sponsors?
- b. Is this against the MWAS Media Policy, the MWAS Code of Conduct or any other policies?
- c. Is this information accurate?
- d. Could this jeopardise my sporting and professional career and my continued support from MWAS and other sponsors?

Athletes, coaches or anyone receiving support from MWAS should only portray MWAS and MWAS sponsors in positive means. Failure to do so is a breach of the MWAS Code of Conduct and can result in expulsion of scholarship.

8. Training and advice

The MWAS CEO is able to provide advice, support and where applicable training on all aspects of media. Holders of scholarships are always welcome to contact the CEO for such advice.