

**MASSACHUSETTS INTERSCHOLASTIC  
ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION**



**WORKING  
WITH  
THE MEDIA**

**A Handbook For  
Tournament Directors and  
Athletic Administrators**



**MASSACHUSETTS INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION  
“WORKING WITH THE MEDIA” HANDBOOK  
FOR TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS AND ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATORS**

---

**A. MEDIA COORDINATOR**

With all the other duties that site managers are expected to handle for MIAA tournament events, it is strongly suggested that you appoint a Media Coordinator to work with the media. This person could not only handle all requests for credentials, but could also be placed in charge of overseeing the press box/row and coordinating post-game interviews. A retired sports editor from the local newspaper or the senior sports editor from the school newspaper are suggestions of people that could be utilized for this role.

**B. REQUESTS FOR MEDIA CREDENTIALS**

Most members of the media should know that they are to contact you directly in advance to request credentials for events. For a variety of reasons, some will not contact you in advance but should still be admitted to your event provided space is available.

When you are contacted, obtain what needs the media outlet has for covering your event and explain what policies and guidelines you have established. A clear exchange at this point should help eliminate problems at the event.

Make sure only legitimate media representatives are requesting credentials. Should you have questions about someone's legitimacy, contact the sports or managing editor of the newspaper or the news or sports director of the television, local cable, or radio station. When media representatives arrive at your event and you still have concerns about their legitimacy, ask them to present an employee identification card. (Note that authorization on letterhead signed by the editor/director listed above is acceptable)

Credentials may not be transferred to friends, fans, family members or coaches who are not performing a legitimate duty. Abuse of this policy will result in loss of credentials for the media outlet for your tournament and others.

For MIAA tournament events executed MIAA contracts or membership passes are a pre-requisite for broadcast media. It is best to issue printed credentials so that the media can be easily identified by game personnel and allowed proper access.

Once you or a staff member compiles an initial list of those who have requested media credentials, make sure that all gate and press box/row personnel also have this list and that these people are informed of any updates. This should help avoid conflicts of who should or should not be admitted.

**C. PRIORITIES IN ISSUING CREDENTIALS**

If press box/row availability is limited, priority should be given to media in the following order:

1. Daily newspapers and TV/radio stations that regularly cover the participating teams or individuals.
2. Weekly newspapers that regularly cover the participating teams or individuals.
3. Wire services.
4. Other publications and stations (specialized magazines, out-of-town newspaper and radio stations, etc.)

If questions arise regarding priority, contact the athletic administrator or head coach from the participating schools.

The general rule is that a media outlet should be provided space for no more than two reporters/announcers at an event. Some major daily newspapers will request more, and all attempts should be made to accommodate them because of their extensive coverage.



**MASSACHUSETTS INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION  
“WORKING WITH THE MEDIA” HANDBOOK  
FOR TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS AND ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATORS**

---

**D. ACCOMMODATIONS**

Seating at your events should be reserved in the press box/row for members of the media. If you do not have enough space, arrange to have a special section of your bleachers blocked off for the media.

Included in both the press box/row and the special media section should be tables for the media for writing, electrical outlets for computers.

Obviously, programs and rosters should be distributed to the media prior to game time. In addition, results should be distributed to the media after an event as soon as possible. Priority should be given to those on deadline.

**1. PRE-GAME ACCOMMODATIONS**

Special accommodations should be made for radio and television stations covering events on either a live or tape-delay basis. Tournament personnel must be at the site early enough to allow the station adequate time for set-up, and arrangements should be made for adequate seating and television camera locations.

**2. POST-GAME ACCOMMODATIONS**

The site manager and/or his/her designee must be prepared for newspaper reporters to spend anywhere from an hour to 90 minutes upon conclusion of the event to write and transmit stories back to the newspaper. An adequate alternate site should be made available for media use if the press box/row is not available after an event. Please inform the media both when they request credentials and when they arrive for the event what alternate post-game work arrangements have been made. Also, make sure all tournament staff members understand these post-game arrangements.

**E. TELEPHONES**

The telephone is the lifeblood for a newspaper reporter. To transmit stories via computer to the newspaper, a telephone somewhere on the premises is an absolute must.

If a telephone is not available in the press box/row, site managers should arrange for one to be available somewhere at the site. Inform the media both when they request credentials and when they arrive for the event what alternate post-game telephone arrangements have been made.

When providing a telephone, the preferred type is one in which the line can be disconnected from the back of the mechanism or can be removed from the jack itself.

The media should understand that all their calls must be collect, credit card or 800 numbers.

**F. POST-GAME INTERVIEWS**

Please note MIAA award ceremonies take precedent over all interviews. Players and/or coaches are not to be accessed until completion of the appropriate ceremony.

When possible and applicable, a specified area should be set aside for post-game interviews with coaches and requested athletes. With the site manager likely tied up with other post-game duties, a media coordinator would come in handy in assisting in this area.

Consideration must be made for equal access for all members of the media at post-game interviews, regardless of whether it is the print media or the broadcast media.



**MASSACHUSETTS INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION  
“WORKING WITH THE MEDIA” HANDBOOK  
FOR TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS AND ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATORS**

---

**G. GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH STILL AND TELEVISION PHOTOGRAPHERS**

- ✓ Guidelines for where still and television photographers are permitted access should be clearly defined prior to the event
- ✓ All attempts should be made to provide a designated photo area.
- ✓ Use of strobe lighting or on-camera flashes by photographers must be approved by the site manager. Requests should be made well in advance.
- ✓ Be considerate of photographers who arrive late at an event or leave early. More often than not your event is just one of several the photographer has been assigned to cover that day.
- ✓ Television photographers will likely be accompanied by a reporter.

**H. ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH RADIO AND TV**

- ✓ When more than one radio or television station is covering an event, attempts should be made to seat them a reasonable distance apart due to potential overlapping audio. This proves to be less important in basketball with overall crowd noise than in football, where broadcasts are usually in an enclosed press box.
- ✓ Television and radio stations should be seated within reasonable distance of a power outlet and their telephone lines.
- ✓ With the increasing number of stations using cellular telephone set-ups with antennas, a space near a window would be advantageous.

**I. OTHER GUIDELINES TO FOLLOW**

The best way to avoid conflicts with the media is to clearly explain your rules and expectations prior to the event. This should be done on the telephone when the media representative calls to request credentials and again when the media arrive at the event. You may wish to take excerpts from this document, incorporate your own rules and expectations and provide a printed copy of guidelines for the media when they arrive at your event. Some other general guidelines to be considered:

- ✓ Media personnel are permitted access to locker rooms for interview purposes only with the prior consent of the tournament director/designee and the participating coaches.
- ✓ Policies regarding such items as parking for the media, installation of telephone lines and the availability of extra tickets for media to purchase should be explained well in advance of the event.
- ✓ Information should be exchanged well in advance with stations doing live or tape-delay telecasts or live sportscasts with regard to the type of power needed, number and sizes of trucks and their parking needs, and policies regarding the running of cables at your site.
- ✓ Radio and television stations planning to do live or tape-delay broadcasts should be informed well in advance as to what the MIAA procedure/contract requirements and tournament rights fees will be and to whom the checks should be made/remitted.
- ✓ Be prepared to assist media members who call with requests for information such as participants, contest dates and contest times.

**J. OVERVIEW**

The media are professionals who have a job to do. They are guests of the MIAA. Please treat them as such and not as “the enemy.” Obviously, it is a two-way street, and media members have the responsibility to act professionally if they expect to be treated the same way.

Hopefully, the above guidelines will be of help to you as you manage your events. Should you have any major problems, do not hesitate to report them to Sherry Bryant at the MIAA office.