

Publicising Your Club

How to issue a press release and generate positive publicity for your club



Phil Foster

These guidance notes include:

What is the value of local media relations?

How to write a press release - Game report

Example press release - News Story

What makes a good media story

Case studies/Personal stories

Photographs/Picture Captions

How to issue your press release

Different types of media

What is the value of local media relations?

We have produced this guide to help basketball clubs and organisations to make the best use of the media to promote their work and how it benefits the local community. Many clubs find that publicising a grant or funding success is a good opportunity to raise public awareness of their work, whilst seeing match reports in local newspapers can help to attract new people to the club.

Paul Nilsen, a journalist for FIBA Europe, who also regularly produces articles for the British Basketball league (BBL) and the Newcastle Eagles, believes building a good partnership with the local media can prove to be extremely successful for basketball clubs:

“Having travelled across Europe covering the sport, it is noticeable how effective communication with the media breaks down barriers and can help transform basketball clubs at all levels in all countries. In my experience of dealing daily with clubs and players in various countries, from lower league amateur teams to EuroLeague clubs, NBA players and National Federations, my own views and indeed their respective reputations are often due to the way they communicate.

It is no different in the UK. It might sound like this is for others, for only the pros but believe me, even for clubs who do not have significant resources, some simple and effective measures can really help to get your club on the map and you could reap the rewards.

The good news is that the digital age presents significant opportunities for everyone at little and often no cost. The biggest plus is that you can get the media to really work for you and your club. It can help you get your message across to the general public, customers, potential customers, fans, potential players, the local community, sponsors, potential sponsors, competitors.... the list is endless.

Best of all, get creative and you could find some budding basketball writers who want to get some experience on their CV and they will often help you do media releases for nothing.

No matter how busy you are, don't tell yourself you don't have time for establishing good media relations because the truth is, you really can't afford not to.”

Paul Nilsen,
Journalist (FIBA Europe)

If you are planning to contact the media, here are some basic guidelines for writing a press release and negotiating media coverage, which we hope you will find helpful.





How to write a press release / game report

The general guidance would be to look at a report that is between 250-300 words in length. If a paper decides to use your press release, they may only use parts of it and will cut from the end - so try to make sure that you have the basic points of the story in the first paragraph.

You need to include in your press release:

Name of Organisation

XXXXXX Basketball Club

Date

XXXXXX

Headline / Result

Keep this short and punchy and summarising the story but don't worry too much as most journalists write their own.

Main Text

For an effective opening paragraph make sure that it tells the story in two or three sentences, please include the outcome of the game at this stage. The rest of the article should outline the main aspects of the game such as key baskets made/missed, scoring runs, breakdowns for each quarter/half time and the final result.

The article will also be more comprehensive if it has after game comments from the Head Coach or Team Captain included.

Ends

Put the word 'ends' at the end of your press release to let journalists know they have all of the text. If your press release is longer than one page, insert the words 'more' at the bottom of the first page.

Notes for Editors

At the end of your press release include a 'notes to editors' section with any additional background information about your organisation (including website address) which might be useful to them. This allows you to keep the press release as short and punchy as possible.

Contact Details

Also make sure you include contact details, with the name and phone number of someone at your organisation who can be contacted outside of office hours.

Example Press Release - News item

Example / Template

Organisation
name and/or
logo

PRESS RELEASE

(INSERT DATE)

HEADLINE in bold and uppercase

LOCAL BASKETBALL CLUB RECEIVES FUNDING BOOST

The Newton Hill Basketball club, based in Newton Hill, Wakefield is celebrating having received vital funds from the government which will ensure the centre continues to provide coaching in the local community. The club successfully applied to the Small Grants scheme run by Sport England and received £x,xxx to support the clubs community basketball programme and promote its work in the local area.

The Club currently provides basketball opportunities to over 500 youngsters, enabling them to develop and learn key skills within a fun environment.

Joe Bloggs, the club's chairperson said, "Without this funding we simply wouldn't have been able to continue to provide the local opportunities to play the sport. We have created many new sportspeople in the community and the work has also developed some new volunteer leaders and coaches from the local area, who will now be the catalyst for future basketball development."

Lucy Painter, a local resident who daughter attends a weekly session run by the club said, "It's fantastic that the club can continue to coach the local boys and girls, without these session I fear that my daughter and some of her friends would not take part in any sports activity."

BODYTEXT should be 1.5 line spacing

- ends-

For further information:

Joe Bloggs, Tel: 020 0000 0000; email: joe.bloggs@newtonhillbasketball.co.uk
mobile: 0700 000000

Notes to Editors:

- * Newton Hill Basketball Club was founded in 2003 by Joe Bloggs
- * For further information about Newton Hill Basketball Club visit our website www.newtonhillballers.co.uk
- * The Sport England Small Grants Programme has been set up to support local community sport projects which seek to increase participation, sustain participation or develop opportunities for people to excel at their chosen sport. For more information visit the Sport England website www.sportengland.org

INFORMATION AND NOTES TO EDITORS should be single line spacing

What makes a good story?

Before contacting the media with a story you need to think carefully about what is the most interesting news angle or selling point of your story. It's best to focus on how your news will help the local community. The type of 'news' they are interested in are things that are out of the ordinary, exciting and dramatic that will be of interest to their readers or humorous or quirky.

It could be an announcement of successful funding, a fundraising appeal, a call for volunteers, or the launch of a new project or information campaign.

Case studies and personal stories

Journalists often want to speak to a 'real person' who has benefited from your clubs work, this can need some time to arrange if you are dealing with sensitive issues.

If you have a beneficiary who is willing to be interviewed make sure it would be appropriate for them to do so and that they understand what is involved - set up the interview yourself and always avoid giving the journalist the individual's contact details.

If someone is prepared to be interviewed anonymously make sure the journalist is very clear on this - and be present at the interview. You may wish to produce anonymous case studies - be careful to make sure they are anonymous.

Photographs

Newspapers are always looking for pictures to liven up their pages and having a good picture to accompany your story increases its chances of being used. Look at the media you want to target to see what kind of photographs they tend to use. Most newspapers no longer use 'grip and grin' presentation pictures.

If you can afford it, you can pay for a professional photographer to take pictures for you. Bear in mind that the press may not use them, so if your budget is tight we wouldn't recommend doing this unless you can use the pictures for other purposes, such as a newsletter.

Picture captions

If you send a picture to your local media remember to include a picture caption for each image sent. Captions need to include names of the people in the picture (left to right or clockwise) and their job title/why they are relevant to the story, where they are and a very brief outline of what they are doing. The whole caption should be no more than two short sentences.



How to issue your press release

Once you've identified a story you need to do the following:

Decide which publications the press release should be sent to. You need to make the story relevant to the publication - local media want local stories.

Decide how to issue the press release. It's best to talk to the journalist about your story to get their interest and then email or fax the press release for their attention. If you send via email, send the release within the body of the email. Most newspapers will block unsolicited email attachments including photographs.

Decide when to issue the press release. Different papers have different deadlines and you should try and find out the best time to send a release. If the paper is a weekly, then this is usually a couple of days before publication.

Be aware of other sporting events in your area that will be a priority for the media and could overshadow or push out your story. If it is a release that can go out any day within a five day period for example, which is likely to be the quietest day for sports coverage? Consider sending it the day before and it might come as a welcome relief for some sports editors.

The different types of media

You are most likely to deal with:

Regional, daily & evening newspapers

- Highly influential in the community, wide circulation
- The news editor would be the right person to contact about a news story

Local weekly newspapers

- Limited circulation covering a specific town or district interested in human interest news stories relating to villages or towns they cover
- The news or features editor would be your main contact
- There are also local free weekly mass distribution newspapers

Specialist local publications

- Limited circulation to a selective readership
- The editor would be your main contact

Local radio

- Target the news desk
- CSV Action Network on BBC local radio
- BBC local radio news desks often share information with the TV news desk

Websites

- There are many different specialist sports and dedicated basketball web-sites. If possible, make contact and establish a rapport with those who run and edit these sites.
- Consider using social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook groups.

Others

If you have a database of fans or people who give support to the club including volunteers and sponsors, make sure you consider including them by sending out an e-mail.

Any community related stories should ideally be sent out to local councilors and community leaders. You might also want to consider head teachers. An e-mail circulation list is the best way of doing this.