

Quick Guide to Sports Interviewing

1. Prepare for a Sports Interview:

Interviews come in many different forms. When it comes to sports journalism, they can be short news interviews, long form oral histories, vox populis (interviews with the general public) or current affairs interviews. Understanding what kind of interviewing you will be preparing for is imperative.

Quality preparation for an interview requires:

- Diligent research, that covers as many bases as possible
- Ensuring recording equipment is ready and can last the time you need it
- Knowing what the beginning, middle and end will look like
- A full idea of what the finished product will be
- Knowing what kind of interview style you want to use. Will you interview for: **information, accountability, discovery** or is it a **live cross**?

Note: What do these styles mean? [Read more here.](#)

2. How to do a Sports Interview

1. Prepare

As previously mentioned an interview **REQUIRES** preparation. Questions will be written out extensively and should be ticked off. A structure for the interview should be written out too. When preparing questions, think from the perspective of the listener - *what would you want to learn about the guest?* This will also help you understand the tone of the interview, if you know your audience, you'll know how to structure the interview.

2. Meet your interviewee

Whether a member of the general public or a sports person, your interviewee will need to be run through the process of the interview in advance. Consent forms and other important documents will need to be read and signed by them first.

3. Conduct the interview

Interviews are just like structured conversations, so please **listen to your guest!** Interviews need to convey a lot of vital information through this conversation. Despite this, things happen and interviews can change on a whim. As an interviewer, you should be open to the variability of conversation. A good interviewer can take a tangent, run with it and bring things back into focus in a natural way. *This may come with practice, however.*

4. Listen back to and edit the recording

Within reason, listen back to a portion of the interview with your guest still there. If you need to do any re-records, now is your time! There is nothing wrong with needing to editorialise an interview in hindsight. Entire questions or sections may need to be cut out due to time constraints, divergences from the intended point and other reasons. Picking which sections may need to be edited out will ensure the final product is entertaining and informative. **Make sure you thank your guest!**

3. Important tips for Sports Interview

- It can't be said enough, preparation is absolutely required. Getting to know your interviewee in advance will help with knowing how they talk and how they are interviewed. There is nothing wrong with watching past interviews, or reading pieces they are featured in, to get a sense of who they are.
- You should go over your questions with your guest. It's never fair to throw an unexpected question on a guest. It's only fair if you are prepared for the interview, that your guest is too. Once you're finished, remember to thank them authentically, but also keep their mind open for follow-ups with other members of their team or even follow-ups with them.
- Nerves are expected! As a sports journalist, you may have a deep connection to sport and sports people. If you score an interview with an idol or someone you admire, it's best to remember they are a person just like you. They may be nervous too! *Breathe, focus, and remain in the moment.*
- Vox populi interviews (vox pops), by nature, are volatile. Come to vox pops with the expectation some interviewees may purposefully act uncouth, or with an exaggerated personality. The quicker an interviewee's anti-social behaviour is noticed, the quicker you can move on and find a new interviewee.
- Be aware of your microphone and where it is. There's nothing worse than conducting an interview and finding out later the microphone was placed in a bad spot. Check up on your mic often. Did something not record right? Within reason, you can have your guest repeat themselves.

4. Links to find out more:

Remember, the most important person to consider when you are performing an interview is the listener. American Radio DJ Wolfman Jack once said:

"You don't work for the radio station. You work for the people out there."

- The CMTO [has this exhaustive guide to interviewing.](#)
- The ABC [also provides an exhaustive guide to interviewing](#)
- The CBAA [provides this resource for interviewing members of the LGBTQIA+ community](#)
- The CBAA also [has a guide to interviewing musicians.](#)

Tip: Swap out any music-related points for sports and it's exactly the same!

- NPR training [has this guide on microphone technique and delivery.](#)
- AFTRS Media Lab [has this guide on interviewing skills](#)

See Section 3, pages 10 - 12