

# ***Communications/Public Outreach***

# Win With Integrity spreads the message of living a healthy, active drug-free life



Since the inception of the Win with Integrity program in October 2004, nearly 100

athletes have spoken to more than 50,000 young people from coast to coast, and many more students have been reached through athletes visiting schools in their hometown communities.

Win With Integrity is aimed at educating youth, parents, educators, and coaches about the positive results that come from leading a physically active, drug-free and healthy lifestyle. A program in which the heroes of track and field work directly with young people around the nation, it has grown from a start-up program to one of USA Track & Field's most successful initiatives.

At each Win With Integrity visit, athletes speak to children about living with integrity, staying away from drugs of all kinds, being healthy and staying fit. Children interact with the athletes, asking them questions relevant to their own lives.

For more information on USATF's Win With Integrity program, visit [www.usatf.org](http://www.usatf.org)

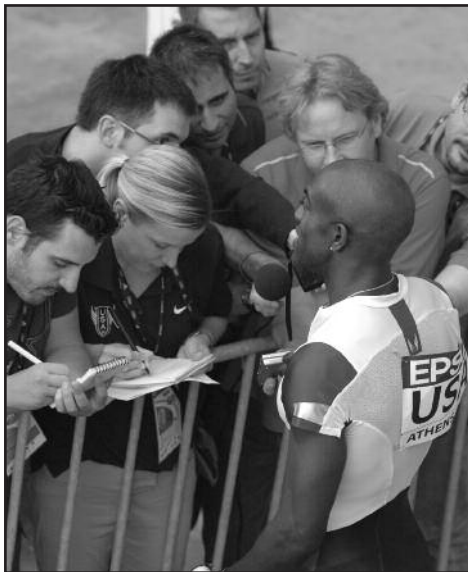


# MAKING THE MOST OF THE MEDIA

As all of you know, being a professional athlete for the World's #1 Track & Field team involves more than just training and competing. One of the key areas for any member of Team USA is working with the media. It's a part of the job that can be exciting and a terrific opportunity – depending on what you make of it.

The USATF Communications Department over the last nine years has put a special emphasis on trying to increase the visibility of USATF athletes in all event groups over a wide range of media. Thanks to the cooperation of you and your representatives, we have seen a good deal of success. Whether one of our athletes is appearing on the "Tonight Show," we are hosting a New York Media Tour, we are advising advertisers on working with athletes or are generating coverage for one of our junior athletes in her local paper, we are working at all levels to make you more visible. Why?

Arranging media opportunities with athletes accomplishes several key objectives: it promotes the sport and it promotes the organization, but most important, it promotes you as a professional athlete. Media exposure can create more competitive and financial opportunities for you and for others in our sport. An athlete earns a living through prize money and endorsement contracts, and putting yourself in the public eye can help put you in a position to take advantage of both sources of income.



## **The power of media**

*Never underestimate the power of the media. Your performances on the track and in the field are, of course, the ultimate measure of your success athletically. But the media and the buzz they help create can do a great deal for your long-term career. An athlete who works well with the media will get favorable coverage; when a track fan sees that coverage, they want to come to a meet to see you; when people fill the stands, meets are successful; when meets are successful, they can pay more prize money and get TV time; when they get TV time, you gain exposure; when you gain exposure, more meet directors and potential sponsors know who you are and what your story is.*

*You get the idea.*

*Think about the movie industry. These days, movies are financially successful not based on individual performances, necessarily. It usually has more to do with how successful the actors are at promoting the movie on talk shows, to newspapers and others. It's got to be a drag sometimes for the actors to do all of the promotion, but it pays off in the end. A hard-core group of fans will show up to see the best acting performances no matter what, but to gain the attention (and dollars) of the public at large, they need the help of the media.*

*Of course, track and field gets a microscopic fraction of the attention the*

*movie industry gets, but it's the same principle. Except in track and field, the athletes are the actors, and the sport itself is the movie. It is the actors (you, the athlete) who create the buzz for yourself and for your movie (the sport). Working together, our own industry – and your virtual, financial and competitive place in it – can grow.*

### **“Create your own buzz”**

*We realize that taking time out to speak with the media can at times be inconvenient. Sometimes you must work around your travel schedule or training schedule, or perhaps things haven't been going well for you lately and you're not feeling particularly talkative. But the most successful athletes with the*

*media are those who understand that working with the media is a win-win situation: the reporters get a story, and you gain visibility.*

*A phrase we like to use with athletes on all levels is that, in order to become more visible and draw the attention of sponsors and the public, you must “create your own buzz.” That means that you seize opportunities to tell your story to the media, rather than have them write your story without your input or, even worse, have them not write your story at all.*

*Someone who in 2005 did an outstanding job of creating his own buzz was Adam Nelson. Opting to forgo a shoe contract, Adam “sold” himself on eBay, soliciting a sponsor for the outdoor season. He not only got a sponsor, he got extensive press coverage, including TV Guide and Sports Illustrated. An SI feature*

ERROL ANDERSON



on him in late 2005 generated additional possible sponsor interest. A businessman by training, Adam recognized an opportunity to gain a sponsor and raise his profile at the same time.

In 2008, Lolo Jones unintentionally created her own buzz by the way she carried herself. The media throughout the year found her engaging because of how “real” she is with them, coming across as very genuine. But more than anything, it was the grace with which she handled herself after hitting a hurdle and going from first to seventh at the Olympic Games that created the most buzz. She became a star because of what she brought to her career beyond the athletic realm.

### **Making Friends and Influencing People**

Although their job is usually (but not always) to report objectively, reporters are people, too. Generally speaking, if you treat them well, they will treat you well. That does not mean that if you perform poorly that they won't report on it. But it does mean that your chances of being treated fairly are greatly increased.

Conversely, if you are uncooperative with the media, that doesn't mean they won't report your successes. But it does increase the chances that, if a difficult situation comes up, they may not give you the benefit of the doubt. In short, it's much more desirable to have the media as your friends, rather than your enemies.

What does cooperating with the media mean? Of course working with the media should never mean compromising your performances or fitness, but there is a lot you can do:

- Work cooperatively with USATF Communications to participate in press conferences, teleconferences and other events. Media around the world participate in these events and appreciate athlete cooperation.
- Answer questions in the mixed zone after a competition, even if you don't do well. If you are not up for talking (you're hurt, you've got another race in 40 minutes, etc), just tell them why you can't speak right now, and let them know when you will be available. They will appreciate it.
- Get to know members of the media by name.
- Be sure to discuss your desire to work with the media with your agent, if you have one. Let him or her know that you consider it a priority to comply with interview requests. Only some of the media interview requests during the off-season come through the USATF offices; many reporters will contact your agent directly. Track & field has some terrific agents, and you need to ensure that you're on the same page when it comes to the media.
- Work to accommodate TV interviews, including those done the day or two before an event.

How can you create your own buzz?

**Go positive, not negative.** Remember than anything you say could appear on TV or in a newspaper. As a result, do not ridicule your opponents – it will make you look bad and might give them more motivation! If you badmouth the sport, fans or your competitors, you effectively badmouth yourself.



**Promote the sport, don't put it down.** This is the biggest item we can stress. (See **The Big Stuff**, below). Track and field is stronger than it has been in many years in the United States, with sell-out crowds and more opportunities, but many people in the public have it stuck in their heads that track is somehow "struggling." Your comments (in addition to your performances) can illustrate that is not true. Talk about how GREAT the crowd is, regardless of its size. You never hear an NBA player, Major League Baseball Player or WNBA player say, "boy, I played hard, but the fans weren't making much noise/the arena wasn't set up well/I wish there were more people here." Who wants to support a sport like that? Instead, there could be 10 people in the stands, all of whom are gagged and blindfolded, but they'll still say, "The crowd was great! What a great game!"

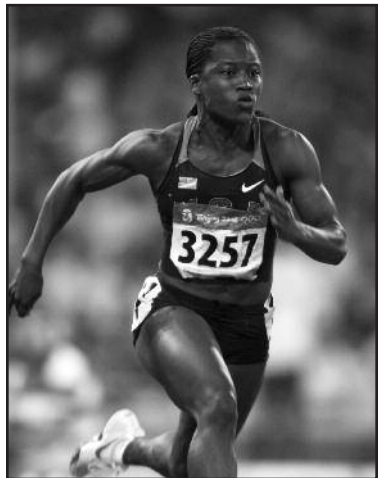
**Give personal anecdotes.** People love the story-behind-the story. Don't give away any information you're uncomfortable with, but little anecdotes go a long way toward establishing an athlete's public identity. (Dwight Phillips' revelation that he broke both his legs as a child was an eye-opener for the media, who latched onto the story; Lauryn Williams' father and his efforts to get to Athens also became a big story. More recently, Nick Symmonds has become a favorite of the media for his accessibility, and he readily relates stories of how he grew up playing hockey and how he competed at his first USA Outdoor Championships in his high school jersey ... small anecdotes but ones that the press love.)

**Smile! Let your human side show.** The international media appreciate athletes who are friendly and accessible. These athletes may not always feel like smiling or being courteous when they are approached by a reporter in a crowded European hotel lobby, but they manage to do it anyway. A big, warm smile is the "Beyonce Knowles Effect" – it will immediately put a person at ease and make them inclined to like you. And that is the first step toward raising your profile and getting covered by the media.

### **Patience is a virtue**

Of course, athletes are human – even if your performances are super-human – and sometimes you get media attention whether you want it or not. We know that working with the media can be a trying experience, especially when you've been asked the same question approximately 3,214 times ... and it's even more frustrating when it's a "stupid" question. But being patient and polite – or addressing the question with humor – can go a long way.

That said, what the media want more than anything is a new story. In 2004 and 2005, it was the "young guns" who caught the eye of the press; fresh faces like Lauryn Williams, Jeremy Wariner, Allyson Felix, Sanya Richards and others were as notable for being a cohesive group on Team USA as they were for their individual talents and personalities. The press loved it. The IAAF and the media themselves remarked at the 2004 Olympics and 2005 and '07 World Championships on the professionalism and likability of our current crop of athletes – and they (YOU!) are winning gold medals, to boot. Those young guns are now experienced vets, but new developments in their careers, as well as the emergence of new talent like Lolo Jones, Kara Goucher, David Oliver, LaShawn Merritt and Ryan Hall, keep the media machine turning.



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*Athletic success + great personalities + professionalism = positive coverage for you and the sport. People who fulfill this equation are the ones who get the most publicity. The athletes who sponsors want to sign to contracts are those who get publicity. It is of course no guarantee, but it sure helps.*

### **The big stuff**

*Before we list some basic tips for working with the media in an interview situation, we should discuss two topics that come up constantly.*

*The first is that athletes will often be asked a version of the question, “why is track struggling in the United States”? This is the most frustrating question we face, because it is false. Track and field is incredibly strong in the United States. So when asked a question like that, consider responding with the following:*

*Despite more than 40 countries around the world winning medals at the Olympics, Team USA is still the World’s #1 Track & Field Team, leading the world in medals won at events such as the Olympic Games, World Indoor Championships, World Outdoor Championships, World Youth Championships, and World Junior Championships.*

*USATF’s budget has nearly tripled since 1997, and the Visa Championship Series is putting more money than ever into the pockets of U.S. athletes.*

*Track & Field/Cross Country is the #1 junior high and high school participation sport in the United States.*

*There has never been more track & field on television. In addition to USA Track & Field’s 10-event Visa Championship Series, the IAAF World Championships are returning to NBC, and track will be on TV at least 17 times in 2009. Track’s TV ratings are going up – including a 30 percent rise in ratings in 2008 – while most other sports are losing audience share.*

*USATF’s television ratings on ESPN, for the 2009 Visa Championship Series, were up 22 percent!*

*Meet attendance continues to go up. The 2008 Olympic Trials were sold out months in advance; the Penn Relays – a meet older than the modern Olympics – has broken attendance records four times since 2000, including in 2006, and draws more than 112,000 fans over three days; classic meets such as the Drake Relays, Texas Relays and state high school championships around the country all have set records in the last four years; the Nike Prefontaine Classic set an all-time attendance record in 2008 and the 2008 Reebok Grand Prix was standing room only.*

*And that’s just the start of the good news about track and field.*

### **THE “D” WORD – DOPING**

*The other topic that athletes can’t get away from is doping. USA Track & Field has been a leader in the push to rid our sport of performance-enhancing drugs, and we support the efforts of anti-doping organizations to do just that. When cheaters are caught, it is good for the sport. While negative headlines might be the immediate effect, the long-term effect is positive – a clean, even playing field is what we all want. USATF has been a leader in the fight against drugs dating back to the 1980s and we hope that professional sports in the U.S. and around the world will begin to treat drug testing seriously.*

*Up until 2005, the media didn’t seem to care that track took the fight against doping seriously. But thanks to the steroid scandal in baseball, and the realization by Congress and others that sports such as baseball barely tested and rarely punished athletes, track and the Olympic movement are now referred to as the “Gold Standard” in drug testing.*

# ZERO TOLERANCE

As a result, media stories are now more often on the sport than they are about doping. And when doping does come up, it often is in a more positive context – the context that track is tough on dopers.

USATF's new CEO, Doug Logan, has taken an extremely strong public stance against doping in sport from his very first day on the job, condemning it as a moral and cultural outrage.

Athletes have different comfort levels when asked by the media about doping issues, and understandably so: the topic is enormously complex, rife with high emotions, politics and misunderstanding by the media and the public. We encourage you to speak your mind against drugs and the athletes who use them. This is not a topic for political correctness. Having the public know that athletes oppose drugs is crucial.

That said, you should never be pressured into saying more than you are comfortable with. And there is always the potential that the more you talk about doping, the more that doping – even a positive spin on it – will be the story, rather than you. Some athletes take a very active stance on doping and discuss it in detail. Those athletes do a tremendous job, and USATF supports all stands against drug use. The only downside to this approach is that with certain reporters who focus only on the negatives of sport, it can lead to spending much of your time talking about drugs instead of the real news of your accomplishments.

## **If they go negative ...**

If are not comfortable with a question a reporter asks you or the tone/line of questioning, there are various ways you can respond. For instance, if you are asked, "What do you think about the doping rumors circulating around Jane Doe?" you might reply with something like, "I just concentrate on my own performances and my own training, and doing it clean. I don't worry about what other people are or aren't doing. But I do strongly believe that anybody who uses drugs should be out of our sport." Taking a stand against doping is great; getting involved in finger-pointing is dangerous. Directing your response back to yourself and your own story is the most effective route to take in most cases. And it's always OK to speak in general about opposition to cheaters without speculating on if a particular person is cheating. Do not hesitate to answer the same way if the reporter continues with similar questions.

You might also get asked by a reporter who is uninformed about doping procedures, "What do you think about USATF's anti-doping program?" It is important to let people know that USATF does not administer the domestic anti-doping program for track athletes, it is the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA). However, you can and should comment on the strong philosophical stance that USATF and Doug Logan take against drugs.

In the world of "creating your own buzz," it's very difficult to keep buzzing about positive things when you're getting mired down in something that you have no control over – namely, how organizations like USADA, WADA, the IOC and the IAAF administer their doping protocols. You should always stick to what you know when it comes to talking to the media, regardless of the topic. You, not the reporter, control your answer.

**Some key points that many U.S. athletes have made to the media about doping, especially in the post-BALCO world, are:**

Our clean team in Athens came back with more medals (25) than we've won in any Olympics since 1992, and the 2005 and 2007 World Championship team set a record for gold medals. America once again won the medal count at the

2008 Olympics, with 23. You can not only compete clean in track & field, you can win clean. And that's what the vast majority of athletes want to do.

*Our sport has no room for cheaters. Everyone wants a level playing field; punishing cheaters is the way to do it. Nobody wants to lose out on medals and money to a cheater.*

*The information that BALCO has brought to light has really brought together not just track & field, but the Olympic world and even other U.S. sports. People know more than ever how to combat cheating, and we are more determined than ever not to cheat – and not to let cheaters win.*

*Also as a result of BALCO stories, the American public now has a better idea of just how seriously track & field takes doping – you face a possible lifetime ban, and possibly even jail time – especially in comparison to other sports... no matter how big of a star you are.*

*The sport has moved beyond BALCO and the athletes involved in it (none of the athletes facing doping cases made the Olympic team) and we are looking forward to an even brighter future.*

*USATF's Zero Tolerance policy toward doping has set the standard, showing athletes, coaches, agents and the public how seriously the sport takes doping. Programs like USATF's Win With Integrity help athletes spread the message to young people that living clean and healthy is the only way to go.*

### **Lifetime Bans**

*A possibility of lifetime bans for first-time steroid offenses has become a cornerstone of media coverage of USATF and the Zero Tolerance policy. As part of the Zero Tolerance policy, USATF in 2003 passed a resolution calling for lifetime bans for first-time steroid offenses. The Athletes' Advisory Committee unanimously voted for this measure, as well, and the IAAF athletes commission has since favored implementing such a policy globally.*

*USADA assigns penalties for doping violations, has and they have yet to impose such a first-time, lifetime ban, but their bans have ranged from 2-8 years for first-time offenses since 2003. However, other organizations are now looking to lengthen first-time bans as well. WADA is considering a 4-year ban for first-time offenses.*

*In 2006, USATF also revised its Zero Tolerance policy to withhold benefits from coaches and other support staff who may be involved in doping activities. The Project 30 Report also recommends more stringent rules for athletes seeking to return to the sport after serving a suspension.*

### **What does it all mean?**

*What all this means is: when it comes to the media, if you be yourself, relax and have a good time with it, you will excel. Be engaging, not defensive. Be accommodating, not exclusive. Don't let it detract from your training, but whenever possible, find a way to work it in to your schedule. It can pay off for you, your colleagues and the sport. Win, win, win!*

## **TIPS FROM THE SPEAKING SPECIALISTS**

*Know Your Audience - Who are they? What is their level of knowledge and expertise in track & field? What do you want them to know or do? Being prepared with this information before you speak to a group or to the press will help you say the right thing to your audience.*

*Know Your Message - Have a single key point; repeat, reinforce, personalize, be definitive. Avoid saying, "I think", "I feel", "I believe". Do not stray away from your subject.*

*Anticipate All Questions - Consider issues and determine answers before you speak or are interviewed; concentrate on your answers to the questions. Do not be caught off guard. Spend some time thinking about what you will say to the press before you go to a competition.*

*Avoid Jargon - Avoid words or phrases that may be confusing or that your audience will not understand. Keep the message simple. Be careful of acronyms, clichés and technical terms.*

*Use Physical Animation - Your voice and body work together. Use physical movement to enhance your vocal delivery. Scan the room; maintain high energy.*

*Do Not Repeat Negative Phrases - Rephrase questions to reinforce what you are doing and make positive statements. Negative phrases can be picked out as a single sound bite and give the appearance that you said something you did not mean.*

*Keep Your Cool - Respond rationally to emotion. Don't get flustered or defensive.*

*Speak Only for Yourself - Don't talk about other rivals or competitors. Concentrate on yourself and your own position.*

*Avoid "No Comment" and "Off The Record" - Be careful of phrases like "between you and me" or "I shouldn't be saying this, but". If you say it, expect that it will be printed, broadcast or reproduced somewhere. It will also influence subsequent on the record questions.*

*Tell the Truth - Honesty ultimately enhances believability.*

*From Sue Castorino and Randy Minkoff at The Speaking Specialists.*

# ATHLETE BIOS

The USATF Communications staff creates and maintains approximately 200 track and field/LDR athlete bios, plus additional Mountain/Ultra/Trail bios, in any given year. These bios appear in the USATF Media Guide and FAST Annual, the USATF Web Site, and in various media kits at major events. In addition, they are provided to the press in order to aid them with stories throughout the year.

## **Track & Field Bios (from the USATF website):**

To be eligible for a USATF athlete biography, an athlete must:

- Be ranked in the top 5 in the U.S. for the previous calendar year by Track & Field News, provided that his/her event has at least five athletes ranked in the top 25 in the world; OR
- Be ranked in the top 3 in the U.S. by Track & Field News if his/her event does not have 5 athletes in the top 25 in the world; OR
- If not ranked in the top 5, have spent the previous year out of competition due to injury, pregnancy or other circumstances; have a high media interest; be a current or recent U.S. champion competing at the World/Olympic level; be a World or Olympic Team USA member in the current year, competing at a high level; or compete in an event where the U.S. is inordinately strong (men's 110m hurdles and dashes); AND
- Not be the subject of anti-doping disciplinary action that could result in suspension.

## **Mountain/Ultra/Trail Bios**

In addition to being a current member of USATF, an athlete must satisfy one or more of the following:

- Have at least one win in a major mountain, ultra, or trail race within past three years (Masters and age-group wins included).
- Have raced on a USATF-sanctioned national team within the past two years.
- Have at least one major trail record or "FKT" (Fastest Known Time) on a major trail (e.g., John Muir Trail, Appalachian Trail, etc.).
- Have placed in the top three in a USATF Mountain/Ultra/Trail Championship within the last three years.
- Have broken an American or World mountain, ultra, or trail-running record (Masters and age-group records included).

The staff does their best to keep athlete bios as up-to-date as possible, coordinating with the Elite Athlete Programs department to try to keep abreast of coaching, location and agent changes, especially. But your help can make them even better. Please check out your bio periodically at [www.usatf.org/athletes/bios](http://www.usatf.org/athletes/bios) and let us know if any of your information has changed.

**TO CHANGE YOUR BIO INFORMATION or PHOTO:** For women's bios, contact Vicky Oddi ([vicky.odd@usatf.org](mailto:vicky.odd@usatf.org)); for men's bios, contact Tom Surber ([tom.surber@usatf.org](mailto:tom.surber@usatf.org)).