

# **Tennessee Senior Olympics Media Training**

Introduction

General Messages

Interview Tips

- Newspaper

- Radio

- Television

Role Play

Questions and Answers

### **General Messages to Consider**

- BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee is committed to creating a culture of health throughout the state, which is why we support programs like the TSO
- The games not only highlight athletics, but also a healthy lifestyle
- Our hope is that it will inspire Tennesseans of all ages to live a healthy and active lifestyle
- As an ambassador, your role is to enhance the visibility and image of the TSO
- Consider yourself a reliable, and credible source of information
- You are the public face who exemplifies the image of health and fitness
- Use your knowledge of your own personal story and communicate the messages of what TSO embodies

### **Key Words and Phrases**

- Inspire active lifestyles
- To promote and encourage healthy lifestyles for seniors through sports, fitness and active involvement in life
- Culture of health
- An opportunity for recreation and fellowship among seniors
- “Olympic-style”
- Recognize people who have achieved and maintained good health
- Adopting healthy lifestyle behaviors
- Encouragement

## Interview Tips

### **Do's**

- Know your topic! Study your key messages and fact sheet prior to the interview. Suggested information for your fact sheet:
  - Events offered
  - Dates and locations of games
  - Age groups
  - Cost of general registration/participation
  - Who to contact for additional information
- If you don't know the answer to a question, don't guess. Just tell the reporter that you don't have those details, but anyone can call the Tennessee Senior Olympics headquarters for more information or go online to [www.tnseniorolympics.com](http://www.tnseniorolympics.com).
- Be conversational. Don't be afraid to let your personality shine through. Reporters want a story that: relates to people, is memorable, is non-technical, shows credibility, and tells a story. Be concise, clear and compelling.
- It's okay to pause and gather your thoughts before answering a question
- Sometimes at the end of an interview, the reporter will ask you if there is anything else you'd like to add. Never say "no." Always give another key message or simply encourage seniors to participate and others to simply come out to enjoy the competition and support their local athletes.
- Mention sponsors. BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee is the presenting sponsor of the games. There will also be local sponsors. Be sure to get their names from your district coordinator.

### **Don'ts**

- Don't feel like you have to answer to every question, or that you have to wait for the perfect question.
- Don't be nervous, shy, defensive, or negative

## Newspaper Interviews

The key to a newspaper interview is knowing that the reporter is writing down what you say. The reporter will not write down everything you say, but he/she will write down the points he or she feels are most important and interesting.

### Tips for newspaper interviews

- Always be courteous to the reporter and return phone calls promptly.
- Know the facts about the games or be prepared to provide the contact information for the person with the answers, i.e., district coordinator, Senior Games executive staff.
- Since the interview is not usually taped, speak clearly and slowly for the reporter. Note, slow is a relative term since reporters can write pretty quickly.
- Newspapers are unique in that they use photos for their visuals. Photos of you competing or practicing are perfect for newspapers because they show action. There are three ways to get a Senior Olympics photo in the paper:
  - The reporter will schedule a time to take a photo (usually at the time of the interview).
  - You may have an outstanding photo that can be used.
  - The TSO staff or BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee may have a photo.
- Remember that everything you say is fair game for the reporter to use. If you don't want it to be printed, don't say it.

## Radio Interviews

### **Newscasts**

- Interviews of this type are always taped. Either the interview will be done by phone or in studio....most likely by phone.
- After your interview, the reporter will edit your comments down to 10-15 second sound bites. It is very important to keep your comments to 2-3 sentences.

### Tips for newscasts

- Since you won't be seen, you may refer to your notes...but don't make noise shuffling your papers and do not read the note verbatim.
- Study your key messages in advance.
- Remember to speak clearly and concisely
- If done over the phone, conduct the interview in a quiet room without distractions.

### **Talk Shows**

- Talk shows are more often than not done in the studio. On occasion, a radio talk show host will interview a guest (you) over the phone. Be prepared, though, for an in-studio interview.
- Talk shows are longer than any other broadcast interview, usually ½ hour to an hour. If you are scheduled for a talk show, TSO staff will let you know the length so you can be prepared to talk for that amount of time.

### Tips for talk shows

- Some talk shows take call-in questions from listeners. Always be courteous to the callers.
- As with TV shows, there will be people moving around or coming in and out of the studio. To avoid being distracted, always look at the talk show host.

## Television Interviews

### General Tips

- Remember, TV frames your face
- Look at the interviewer, not the camera
- Sit or stand up straight
- Don't fidget or rock/sway
- Always assume the camera and microphone are ON (includes "cutaways" to commercials, etc...)
- Don't look at notes during an interview. Study your materials in advance.
- Keep calm and pleasant. Remember to smile.
- Do interviews in a location that's comfortable for you – be aware of your background, i.e., avoid white walls, distractions, noisy chairs, etc.
- Wear a TSO polo shirt or T-shirt. Solid, bold colors work best.
  - Avoid sunglasses, dangling earrings and distracting accessories.
  - If you wear glasses, it is your choice whether or not to wear them during the interview. If you squint without your glasses, wear them.
  - Check your appearance in the mirror before the interview.

## Television Interviews

### **Live**

- Live interviews are usually done during newscasts or talk shows.
- Everything you say will be instantaneously communicated to the audience.
- There are no “do overs” or editing.
- Live newscasts are usually very brief (1-3 minutes). Everything you say will be on the air. You must keep your answers short but informative.
- Live talk show interviews will be a little longer (3-7 minutes), but still keep your answers short and informative.

### Tips for live interviews

- Arrive at the television station early. TSO staff will tell you the time the interviewer requested you to be at the station.
- Review your list of important points.
- If possible, talk with the interviewer before you get in front of the camera and let him/her know about the subjects you would like to cover. Also find out the interviewer’s special interests.

## Television Interviews

### **Taped**

- The reporter will go back to the station and edit your comments down to short sound bites that will be used in a story running about 1 to 2 minutes.

### Tips for taped interviews

- A taped TV interview is a bit more relaxed than a live interview. If you don't like your response to a question, ask if you can begin again. However, always remember that the reporter can choose to use anything he/she has taped.
- After asking several questions, the interviewer may ask to get some footage of you engaging in your sport. The TSO staff will let you know if the reporter is planning on getting this footage so you can be prepared.
- Review your list of important points.
- If possible, talk with the interviewer before you get in front of the camera and let him/her know about the subjects you would like to cover.

## Role Playing and Preparation

### Tips

- Breathe
- Take a few minutes to gather your thoughts
- What are the two to three main points you want to get across
- Is there an example that helps to illustrate your point

### Potential Questions to Practice

- What are the Tennessee Senior Olympics?
- How old do you have to be to compete?
- What are some of the sports that athletes in which athletes can compete?
- How long has BlueCross been involved with the Tennessee Senior Olympics?
- Where can people learn more about the Tennessee Senior Olympics?