

# The Successful Hometown Release

2008 ECAC-SIDA Workshop Table Topic • Amie Canfield, Sports Information Assistant, Rensselaer

The student-athlete. If not for them our jobs wouldn't be quite as challenging or exciting. Though we nominate them for conference honors and national awards, not all get the chance to be recognized for the hard work and effort they put forth with the juggle of academics and athletics.

One of the ways to tackle that problem is through the hometown release. A simple act that can be distributed in a number of ways, the advantages of a hometown release can stretch far and wide. It could mean recognition not just for your student-athlete but for the program and your institution as a whole.

**The Five W's and a little How:** Releases can vary in size, length and content. One of the ways that has proven successful in our office is to follow the standard five "w" process. A full example of one of our hometown releases is included on the reverse side.

- **Who?** - It's important to identify the reason why you're sending out the release: the student-athlete. Including their class year, position and the team they play for in the opening line helps to direct the focus to the specific sport as well.

Ex. RPI junior Jamie-Lynn Stewart is a forward on the Rensselaer women's ice hockey team.

- **What?** - Adding the player's most up-to-date statistics gives the hometown media a chance to see what the student-athlete is doing at their respective school.

- **Where?** - There are several points in this section that can help maximize your reach. For instance, mentioning the hometown and the high school/previous team can help the hometown media get a solid beat on where your student-athlete came from. Combined with the player's statistics, it makes for a more well-rounded release.

Ex. In 18 games, the Cambridge, Ont., native has eight goals and six assists for 14 points. A former standout for the Cambridge Jr. Fury, Stewart also has four power play goals.

Another important factor is guiding the hometown media to your player. A nice touch to the hometown release can be including the direct link to your student-athlete's bio page so the media can see their info for themselves.

Ex. For more information about Jamie-Lynn, please go to <http://www.rpiathletics.com/roster.asp?playerid=297&sport=16>

- **A little bit of everything!** - Letting the hometown paper know how the team is doing and when they're back in action can be beneficial as well. Including the team's record, any streaks or milestones, when they're back in action and the opponent could generate interest in coverage.

Ex. Rensselaer, which is 8-11-0 overall and 4-4-0 in ECAC Hockey, has won five of its last seven games, including four against league

opponents. The Engineers return to the ice on January 6-7, hosting league foes Brown and Yale at the Houston Field House. Both contests begin at 2pm.

- **How?** - Sending out hometown releases through email has become one of the standard forms of contact in our business. One of the advantages is that you are able to build a database for a number of papers throughout the country and beyond. Another important factor is to make sure to include your contact information so that the hometown media knows how to get in touch with you should they want further info on your student-athlete.

- **When?** - Do I send out the hometown release at the start of the season? Should I be doing it every week? It's important to decide for your office when the best time to send out hometown releases.

One of the ways it can be done is on a rotation. Typically in our office we send out hometown releases a few weeks into the season. At the half-way mark is another option as well so that the hometown media knows what's been happening and where things are going. As the team near the end of its season, or is in the playoffs or on the verge of playoff contention is another good time. Lastly, it's always a good idea to wrap up the season with the hometown release so that the media knows how things went and what the student-athlete did during his/her year.

**An Important Segway!** - Be concise! Whether it be in the length of what you're sending out or the amount of times you're sending, you always want to remain concise. It's easy to get across what you want to say without writing a book and it only needs to be said a few times.

**Being Respectful** - An average team has at least 15 players. In our office for example, we have 23 sports. When sending out hometown releases, we make sure to stick to the sending dates to avoid inundating the hometown newspapers with information. It's important to remember that your hometown releases are not the only ones getting sent out and as such, the information you send is likely one of many that they receive. Make sure to set a schedule for when you feel releases should go out.

**Making Use of Your Resources:** Don't know where Rockton, Illinois, is? One of the easiest ways to find out is through the internet. Yahoo, Mapquest and even Google can offer a location

to give you a better idea of where you're sending a release.

So you've found Rockton, Illinois but finding a paper in that location is proving difficult. Should the internet not be able to provide you with a newspaper in that area, there are other ways to be successful in sending out your release.

- Ask! - Don't be afraid to pick up the phone and call a fellow SID. It's possible that there is a student-athlete on their roster from Rockton, Illinois and they know where to send stuff to.
- Ask again! - So you've called your colleagues and nothing has come from it. Another way to help you out is to call an SID at an institution close to that hometown. After all, they would know their own media best.

**Beyond the Hometown Release:** In addition to sending out the hometown release, there's nothing wrong in supplementing with noteworthy performances by your student-athletes. If Jamie-Lynn Stewart had an outstanding performance in Friday's game, don't be shy about sending it to her hometown paper as well. It could generate more interest down the road. In addition, any Player of the Week, Academic All-America or other releases about awards won will also help to supplement in lieu of the hometown release.

**Are They Getting It?** - There are a number of ways to find out if the information you are sending out is reaching your intended audience. Google Alerts (<http://www.google.com/alerts?hl=en>) are email updates of the latest relevant Google results (web, news, etc.) based on your choice of query or topic. Simply enter the keywords you are searching for and emails regarding those words will be delivered to you.

**Following Up!** - If you're not sure, follow up! Our office has been fortunate to have student-athletes profiled, mentioned or even fea-

tured by their hometown media. Often times the media asks for various things, a headshot, an action shot, etc. Sending pictures through email always makes me nervous. Did it get there? Was it the right size? All of these are valid questions that can be quickly answered by following up. If you're unsure that the picture made it, send a separate email and ask, or better yet, pick up the phone and call.

Ex. ~~~Original Message~~~

From: Amie Canfield [mailto:canfia@rpi.edu]  
Sent: Tuesday, December 12, 2006 1:47 PM  
To: Solon, Kelly  
Subject: RE: Macomb Native (12/12) ...

Hello again Kelly,

Just wanted to make sure that the photo came through alright for you? Let me know if there were any problems. Thanks ~ Amie

**The Personal Touch** - You've sent out your hometown releases and even better, you've seen the fruits of your labor in a mention or article from one of the various papers you contact. Don't be afraid to call that paper and thank them for the time. Sometimes a personal touch or thank you can go a long way in establishing a solid relationship between your office and the media outlets to which you contact.

**Remember Why!** - There's no way to sugar-coat it, hometown releases in any form take time and often that's not a commodity that we as SID's have a lot of. It's important as you're typing away, staring at current stat sheets or searching for emails that you remember why you're doing it. For your student-athletes!

**Hopefully some of these tips have been helpful to you and will help your office create some Successful Hometown Releases of your own! Good Luck!**

#### **HOMETOWN RELEASE: Full example**

From: Amie Canfield  
Sent: Tuesday, December 12, 2006 9:54 AM  
To: sunsports (VAN\_Exchange)  
Subject: Burnaby Native (12/12) ...

RPI sophomore Ashley Mayr is the leading goaltender for the Rensselaer women's ice hockey team. In 16 games, the Burnaby, BC, native is 7-9-0 and has a goals allowed average of 2.38. Mayr, who played for the BC Breakers prior to attending Rensselaer, also has a save percentage of .892.

In eight conference games, Mayr is 4-4-0 with a 2.67 goals allowed average. She owns an .893 save percentage and is a two-time selectee to the ECAC Hockey's Weekly Honor Roll this season.

For more information about Ashley, please go to <http://www.rpiathletics.com/roster.asp?playerid=316&sport=16>

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For more information or photos, please feel free to contact Amie Canfield, sports information assistant, at 518-276-3988 or [canfia@rpi.edu](mailto:canfia@rpi.edu). Thank you.