

# 2018 Sport Tourism FORE-um Round Table Summary

## Table 6 | Tactics for Managing an Event Media Crisis hosted by Barb MacDonald

Topic Sponsor: Sport Tourism Saskatoon

### Recap

#### Various issues that constituted a crisis that warranted media attention

- Shooting at a hotel – involved media release and police
- Doping case with the highest ranked athlete – days prior to the event
- Man barricaded into athlete residence
- National anthem screwup – singer forgot words to US anthem in Canada
- Major sizing issue with sponsor clothing – reproduced and delivered without media attention
- Disqualified athlete – other athlete defending at a press conference – and changed direction of story
- Athlete goes public with disappointment at not being named to a team
- Bus crash on way to event – all kids safe – but media member on the bus
- Incorrect spelling on medals in French translation
- Fireworks ash destroyed ski jump track night before event
- Athletes expected to win gold, finishing 5<sup>th</sup> and not talking to media afterwards
- Athletes stuck in elevator – match delayed by 40 minutes
- Protesters blocking access to a venue or picketing/striking.
- Scandal in a judged sport – Salt Lake Olympics – figure skating

### Tips & Takeaways

- Leadership is key.
- Have a plan – incorporate media relations into any risk management planning.
- Get out in front of the issue. Timeliness is critical.
- Have a ‘quarterback’ guiding the actions.
- Be open, up front, honest and transparent.
- Apologize as appropriate.
- People want to see empathy in tragic circumstances.
- Turn negative to a positive where you can.
- Anticipate potential issues and be prepared with responses/reactions/advance key messages.

### Summary – Steps in Crisis Management

- Find a way to create space/time – if something is breaking on twitter acknowledge it and release a holding statement until you know more details.
- Figure out a way to say “no comment” without saying “no comment”
- Deescalate the situation where you can.
- Know who is appointed to speak on the issue and prepare draft statements/messages
- Decide who needs to know within the organization and ensure they’re not caught off guard.
- Be ready in both languages in Canada – spokespeople and statements.
- Update regularly in an ongoing situation.

