

APPENDIX E: NEWS CONFERENCES

News conferences should only be held if there is something to announce that cannot be done simply through the media release (e.g. sponsorship announcement, local community support or involvement).

For SSC Canadian Championship/Selection meets and international sanctioned competitions, it is recommended that a news conference be held within a week prior to the actual event, focusing on the number of provinces or countries represented and the number of athletes expected to participate.

If you are planning a media conference, follow up the invitation with a reminder phone call to your media contact. This will help determine how many media will be attending.

E.1 Organizing a News Conference

1) Date and Time

When selecting a day to host your news conference, try to evaluate what activities or events are scheduled in your area so you do not conflict with other events. A news conference held in the mid-day period (between 10 am and 2 pm) usually works best for the media and allows them plenty of time to write, research and submit their story for the evening news. If you are unsure of what would be an appropriate time for a news conference, you may contact your local media or SSC's marketing and communications staff for advice.

Never start your press conference more than fifteen minutes past the scheduled start time. If it has to start late, for one reason or another, make sure to announce this at the expected start time and give an idea of the new timeline to the media.

2) Location

Find a location that will allow for easy access for media and guests from all parts of the city. Possible locations to consider are arenas or community centres, which can be reserved for little or no cost to community groups, or a hotel meeting room.

Make sure the room has adequate lighting and that sound is well transmitted throughout the room (i.e. avoid cavernous sounding rooms).

3) Invitations

Invitations can be mailed or e-mailed to members of the media and guests. This should be approximately seven days prior to the date of the news conference. Always make sure that you include an RSVP contact name, email and phone number. It is important to follow-up with reminder e-mails and telephone calls to key media contacts a few days prior to the news conference to remind them of the event.

4) Media Kits

Media kits should be available at news conferences for media and guests. The kits may include, but are not limited to, the following information:

- Media release by SSC, the provincial branch and the host club, as well as National Sponsors when applicable
- Background information on the event
- An event program
- List of competitors with helmet numbers, if already available at the time of the press conference
- Final schedule of competition, practices, and social functions to which the media is invited (include invitations where necessary)
- Location of media centre and equipment that will be available as well as the system for printing and distribution of statistical information
- A list of important contact information for people on the Organizing Committee
- A list of the awards, when and where they will be presented, and where possible, the names of VIP's that will be presenting the trophies
- Athlete Profiles
- A summary of competition rules
- A sheet acknowledging all sponsors
- Article or guide on "how to watch the event" (rules & regulations, spectator's guide to speed skating, etc.)
- Background information on host club

5) Refreshments

It is not a requirement that refreshments be available for a news conference; however, it is a service that is well appreciated by media, guests and dignitaries alike.

Depending on the time of day, you may offer sandwiches, water, coffee and soft drinks. Alcohol is not recommended.

6) SSC Representation and Guests

The President of SSC or his/her duly appointed representative should be invited to attend and speak at any news conference hosted to promote an SSC sanctioned national and international competition. The president of the Provincial Federation/Association concerned or his/her representative should also be invited to address this news conference.

If the Organizing Committee or SSC has the commitment of financial support from title sponsors or major sponsors, their representatives should be invited and introduced. The most important sponsor may be asked to say a few words.

7) Equipment Needed and Room Set-Up

The room should have a lectern and a microphone at the front of the room, and a table and chairs on either side of the lectern for guests and VIPs. Chairs should be set theatre style, facing the lectern, for those in attendance.

Tables can be placed at the back of the room for food and beverages.

A table and chairs should be placed at the entrance of the room to greet the media and guests as well as distribute name badges and information kits. If you have a sign-in sheet for the media and guests, this will help identify who attended the event as well as developing your media list for future events.

8) News Conference Protocol

A script should be written for the news conference, outlining the order of the speakers and their topic. All news conferences should be in both official languages, but the ratio of English and French is to be determined by the language of participants and media in attendance.

For SSC Canadian Championships/Selections and international sanctioned competitions, the script should include the introduction of the duly appointed SSC representative and representatives of the Branch. The names of the Branch representatives will be supplied to the Organizing Committee by SSC's marketing and communications staff or by the host Branch. The SSC marketing and communications staff will supply the name of the SSC representative.

For SSC Canadian Championships/Selection meets and international sanctioned competitions, the SSC representative should be asked to speak at the press conferences.

Sample Agenda

Time	Responsibility
11:00 am	M.C. makes brief welcome and statement of purpose of media conference and introduces guests and speakers as well as the president (SSC and Branch)
11:05 am	President comments
11:10 am	M.C. thanks president and introduces chairman of event
11:12 am	Chairman speaks
11:17 am	M.C. thanks chairman and introduces sponsors
11:20 am	Sponsors' remarks
11:23 am	M.C. thanks sponsors, introduces guests in audience, calls athletes to front if present and introduces them
11:27 am	M.C. thanks media for coming, opens for questions from floor and announces time for individual interviews
11:30 am	Food and drinks available, individual interviews are coordinated
12:30 am	Room cleared

9) Communications with the National Office

All hosts of SSC Canadian Championships/Selection meets and international competitions must forward a copy of all media releases to the marketing and communications staff at the SSC National Office prior to the press conference so they may be posted on the SSC website and distributed to key interest groups, such as members, media, sponsors, etc.

The SSC National Office will assist its members in the promotion of their events wherever possible and appropriate.